



## Subjugation of the Female Body: A Phallogentric Study in the Short Story The Rock by Ismat Chughtai



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**Abstract:** *This study looks at Helene Cixous's feminist interpretation of Ismat Chughtai's short story, The Rock. The feminist method aims to highlight the limited choices and autonomy given to women while exploring the gender roles, societal expectations, and patriarchal conventions prominent in the story. Use a qualitative approach to thoroughly understand the lived experiences of people in the phallogentric domain. Examine Helen Cixous's explanation of the individualized interpretations, sentiments, and meanings connected to gender roles, sexuality, and power dynamics. The phallogentric domains of Cixous explore how contemporary women contribute to a life that is diminished and the oppression they experience, illuminating the greater problems that stifle and constrain women. Using Helen Cixous's phallogentric framework to analyze the text, the research findings expose the severe entrenchment of patriarchal power systems that uphold the objectification and enslavement of the female body, underscoring the pressing need for feminist resistance and liberation.*

**Key Words:** Subjugation of Female Body, Phallogentric Structure, Male Sirens

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## Introduction

This study looks at the oppression of the female body in male patriarchal culture by analyzing Ismat Chughtai's short story The Rock from a feminist standpoint. Women's struggles for autonomy and self-expression are highlighted by societal constraints and gender inequity. The recessive position of a female character under the power of a male siren established customs that have reduced

women to the helpless shadow of men for centuries is made visible by Cixous's phallogentric dimension. This study explores the concept of gender mediation, which means that men's perspectives and experiences are considered more important than women's. Cixous perspective on women's rights can help women understand how Chughtai deals with issues of power, control, and boundaries for women and



dealing with problematic pressures To learn more about how the body can be controlled and how it can be resisted, read Chughtai's *The Rock* and some of Cixous's theories. The protagonist of Chughtai's story "The Rock" is a heroine named Bhabhi who lives in a culture where people expect men and women to behave differently. Chughtai illustrates how ideologies that give men authority dominate the lives of women. These concepts have an impact on women's self-perception, desires, and abilities (Nizami, 2023). The "écriture féminine" hypothesis developed by Cixous can aid in our comprehension of the significance and subliminal messages in Chughtai's tale.

This research focuses on understanding the ways women are oppressed in the story *The Rock*. This research portrays how the story is written, the symbols used, and how the characters are developed. This paper looks at how Chughtai talks about women's bodies in a different way than most people do. It shows how her ideas make women more powerful. This research paper looks at how the subjugation of the female body is treated badly in *The Rock* using Cixous's ideas about women's rights. The paper wants to add to what we already know about Chughtai's work and feminist criticism. This study wants to talk about how men are seen as more important and how that affects women's power and who they are. It hopes to start important conversations and help people understand how complicated it is to free women from these ideas in literary works. This research aims to show how the story *The Rock* by Chughtai goes against how women are usually shown, tells us about how society expects women to act, and hopes to give women more opportunities to speak up for themselves. This study wants people to think about gender norms and make society better for women.

### Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To analyze the portrayal of a male siren in Ismat Chughtai's short story *The Rock* and examine the significance of this character within the narrative.
2. To explore the theme of subjugation of the female body as depicted in *The Rock* and examine the ways in which this subjugation is manifested within the story.
3. To investigate the concept of a phallogocentric study in Ismat Chughtai's *The Rock* and analyze how it influences the dynamics between male and female characters in the story.
4. To analyze the role of female agency and resistance against patriarchal norms in *The Rock* and explore how it aligns with Cixous's notion of écriture féminine (feminine writing).

### Research Questions

The research questions of this study are as follows:

1. How does *The Rock* serve as a phallogocentric study, and what insights can be gained from analyzing the story through the lens of Helene Cixous's feminist theory?
2. How does the female protagonist in *The Rock* assert agency and resist patriarchal norms, and how does this align with Cixous's notion of écriture féminine?
3. How is the concept of a male siren portrayed in Ismat Chughtai's short story *The Rock*, and what are the implications of this character within the narrative?

### Literature Review

Allen, (2005) probes that feminist scholars have been studying for a long time how women are controlled and how male power is emphasized in literature. Many researchers have studied how writers oppose traditional

male-dominant views and express the thoughts and feelings of women. This article reviews what other people have written about how women are treated in a story called *The Rock* by Ismat Chughtai. They use a feminist writer named Helene Cixous to help them understand the story better. In 1975, Cixous wrote a popular article about how women write. It's called *The Medusa's Laugh*. It touches on the idea of women's writing. This book is very important in the study of women's writing. According to Cixous, women can use writing to challenge and change conventional wisdom by creatively expressing their desires, bodies, and unique stories. This person's perspective on women writers helped us understand Chughtai's discussion of the female body in *The Rock*. Cixous is an advocate for women regaining autonomy over their bodies (Sellers, [1996b](#)).

She critiques the way men have portrayed women as objects of desire. According to Cixous, the best way to overcome this pressure is to see the female body. Scholars have examined the ways in which Cixous's ideas influenced women's literary research. They argue that women's writing can give a female voice and disrupt the way society usually thinks. *The Rock* by Chughtai must be examined from this perspective to understand how it simply transforms and challenges the masculine narrative. The main female character should be portrayed separately. Furthermore, examining gender, race, and class in postcolonial feminist thought has strengthened our understanding of Chughtai's writing.

Scholars such as Chandratil Pademohanty and Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak have examined how gender affects the colonial and postcolonial periods. According to these experts, the idea that male entitlement systems control women's bodies and identities in concert with colonial and subjugated states is important in feminist literature that explored women's

victimization and bodies in the application of the. But few have examined Chughtai's story, *The Rock*, from Cixous's perspective. This study examines Chughtai's contributions and relationships with Cixous's theories in an attempt to close a gap in the literature. This study draws on perspectives from women's literary criticism and the findings of Cixous to explain the exploitation of the female body in Chughtai's novel *The Rock*. It also looks at how women can rebel and gain opportunities. Cixous examines how women's bodies are often constructed as non-masculine objects. To combat this mentality, she believes that women should take control of their bodies. Scholars such as Toril Moi (1985) have examined the impact of Cixous's theories on feminist literature (English, [2003](#)). According to some, women's writing can empower women by questioning conventional wisdom and giving them a greater voice (Frye, [1990](#)). This perspective is essential to understanding how Chughtai's novel *The Rock*, which tells the story of a powerful female heroine, subverts and transforms literary images of men.

## **Research Gap**

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An in-depth psychological analysis of the characters, their aspirations, and the underlying psychological factors that shape their actions and behaviors will fill the research gap by assigning gender roles, dynamic development, and cultural expectations are represented in the book or in its persistence. The need for learning can be addressed by looking at sociocultural influences on people and their interactions, and how social norms and expectations affect their choices and behaviors. The analytical approach can be closed by examining the use of narrative, symbolism, and imagery to convey the writer's ideas and messages. This allows us to examine Chughtai's narrative, character development, and how his choices have affected the overall meaning of the novel. Comparative studies can close the

knowledge gap to understand unique aspects of The Rock and how it fits Chughtai's larger work or literary landscape. Scholars and scholars begin their research and insights from this information gap. You can gain depth.

## Research Methodology

The design, analysis, and rationale of this study are based on a qualitative theoretical framework. A qualitative approach seeks to elucidate the meanings, perspectives, and experiences of individuals or groups involved in complex issues through insight and depth of understanding. It draws on established concepts, theories, and models well related to the subject of study. The study uses this framework to identify the importance of context, personal interpretation, and social construction in influencing the phenomenon under study. Helen Cixous's theoretical consideration of the sites and tendencies of female gender surveillance provides a fundamental theoretical framework in this analysis through the article *Rock*. This gender structure results in the subordination of the female body to male patriarchy association.

## Discussion and Analysis

The *Rock* is a feminist approach that explores the complexities of gender in a gendered context in which female characters cannot free themselves from the shackles of tradition. Throughout the story, *Rock* examines the problematic values that reduce the lives of modern women to the social norms and expectations of the novel and harbors hidden emotions that are ignored. According to Cixous, men dominated women by preventing them from expressing their true desires. The intense emotions experienced by the main character mean that she takes back control of her body and her sexuality, contrary to how it is usually handled in society (Twigg, 2000). Cixous's concept of *écriture féminine*, or "female writing,"

emphasizes the unique and embodied experiences of women. Chughtai's protagonist embodies this idea as he discovers his agency through the act of writing (Jaffer, 2015). Through writing, she finds a way to challenge and subvert the gendered system and, ultimately, liberate herself. This reflects Cixous's belief in the transformative power of women's voices. Right from the beginning and throughout the novel, the suffering and oppression of women under male patriarchy are depicted. For instance, at the start, the protagonist is oppressed by her father's rules. Despite coming from a liberal family, her parents worried that she might follow her sister's path of eloping with a Christian, "took her out of school and quickly married her off." The story consistently portrays feminist concerns, shedding light on the writer's exploration of socio-environmental issues that impact women. Chughtai's story shows that men looking at women is a way for men to control women (Rajakumar, 2005).

The main character's husband only cares about how she looks and doesn't value her as a whole person. Cixous believes that when men only see women based on what they want, it makes men more powerful and women less powerful (Jones, 1981).

This perspective states that women need to stop being seen as objects and control their thoughts and actions. The *rock* confronts the harsh social and environmental conditions of women, painting a decaying portrait of their lives in a gendered context. The female protagonist is rejected on the basis of her physical features, which shows the implicit influence of ideas about gender. In one story, a male character exclaims, "Oh my god, look how fat you are!" Pressing a lump of fat against her thighs. He adds, "Oh my goodness! Look at your stomach! You look like a gamma boxer." These lines demonstrate the subjugation of women in a phallogocentric society.

This literary work exposes the

inequalities and abuses of power perpetrated against women. Men assert their power and superiority by openly flirting with other women in front of their wives, leaving the female characters in a state of helplessness. The protagonist, in a desperate attempt to salvage her marriage, falls at her husband's feet and begs, "You can marry her... I won't say a word. But for God's sake, don't give me a divorce. I'll spend the rest of my life like this; I'll never complain." However, the husband, filled with disdain for his wife's quivering obesity, impassively turns away, declaring, "I have already given the divorce. Nothing can be done now." The narrative reinforces women's dependence on men and implies that intervening or exerting control over this dynamic is beyond their reach. Cixous wants to deconstruct phallogentric power and the idea that women have to be obedient (Farahbakhsh, 2013). In *The Rock*, the male siren is a symbol of men having power over women's bodies. If we look at how the male siren attracts the female body in the story, we can see if it supports or questions typical ideas about men and women. Cixous emphasizes the reclaiming of the female body as a source of power and agency (Freeman, 2016). The female characters in *The Rock* experience objectification and domination, which ultimately results in their dehumanization. We can examine the efforts made by the female characters to fight the imposed subjection by looking at specific instances in the novel where they oppose or assert their agency. All things considered, *The Rock* highlights the injustices experienced by women in a patriarchal society by exposing the enslavement of the female body and presenting a phallogentric research.

## Conclusion

In Chughtai's short story, the female characters are female characters male

doctors with male biology male doctors female and male doctors. Rep. provides the men in *The Rock* behave differently, surprising us by generally being as attractive and playful as the women. This changes our perception of gender roles. Accordingly, ignoring social norms about gender implies that such norms are not always true. It also shows how sex is a performance. The way Chughtai portrays the male siren helps us think about the ongoing and historical power of men controlling and controlling the female body.

Cixous believed that women could seize and resist power through their bodies. According to Cixous, women in positions of authority need to regain control of their bodies and voices (Jones, 2003). They can thus challenge the system and subdue it for human benefit. This interpretation of *The Rock* allows us to understand how the women in Chughtai's story are free to choose and reject the limitations that bind them. Chughtai's story demonstrates the importance of women standing up for their rights, breaking discriminatory laws, and regaining ownership of their bodies and identities (Kazim, 2022). We can better understand how power works and the possibilities of freedom and rebellion in *The Rock* by applying Cixous theories. Chughtai's account helps us to see the complex relationship between gender and power in the book as we read Cixous through the lens of feminism and how men dominate society (Giri, 2018). This research should carefully consider how society views appropriate behavior, how individuals identify as gendered, and how individuals can struggle for freedom in the face of social pressure to be blunt, *The Rock* is a model of the den of discriminatory laws and male privileging cultural norms Why is it important to challenge and fight for women's equality and bodily freedom.

## Limitations

It's important to be conscious of the research's possible limitations even though the topic of "Subjugation of the female body: a phallogocentric study in the short story The Rock by Ismat Chughtai" raises important issues and allows for incisive analysis. Here are certain limitations to be aware of. Few primary sources exist for The Rock by Ismat Chughtai that can be utilized for study. Private correspondence, diaries, and incomplete works may provide additional insight into the author's objectives and perspectives. In literary studies, subjective readings of texts are typical. Themes, symbols, and subtexts in the novel can all be interpreted differently by different readers. It is imperative to identify and rectify any potential biases in interpretations. Future studies on this topic may be limited by the cultural and historical context in which the story was written. Understanding the sociocultural influences of the era, in particular, the dominant gender roles, societal norms, and feminist rhetoric is crucial for a complete comprehension. Because The Rock is a short novel, only basic plot details are given.

The short duration of the narrative compared with longer works may limit the scope of the analysis, potentially leading to a more focused analysis of gender issues and a downplaying of the female body. Perhaps Ismat Chughtai gave up his own ideas and inspiration for the story. The lack of an author's perspective may limit the scope of the study and increase bias or reliance on secondary sources. Gender and cultural biases should be considered when conducting research on this topic. Examining gendered power and issues of gender requires avoiding generalizations and considering multiple perspectives. To overcome these limitations, researchers can use interdisciplinary methods, draw on relevant author-produced publications, and weigh scholarly interpretation and criticism to ensure a comprehensive and thorough

analysis.

## Social Implications

Research Title: "Subsuming the Female Body: An Analysis of Gender in Ismat Chughtai's Short Story The Rock." This story raises a lot of social issues. Consider the hypothetical results below: This issue highlights the issue of gender inequality and the status of women as second-class citizens. It focuses on oppressive norms and power structures in cultures where women are often subjugated and subjugated. Exploring the concept of gender mediation of the dominant and salient masculine perspective in determining social norms in this study points to patriarchal structures that perpetuate gender inequality and maintain control over women's bodies. It can help advance the conversation about women's rights by challenging accepted norms and promoting women's empowerment to overthrow oppressive systems. The theme interacts with other aspects of identity such as class, race, religion, and ethnicity to affect how women are perceived in different contexts.

It emphasizes the importance of considering the interlocking ways in which oppression impacts women's lives. Research disciplines use literary industry analyses to determine the success of literature as a medium for social commentary. It highlights the importance of narrative for discussing and critiquing social issues such as the subjugation of women.

The research topic encourages an examination of the cultural and historical context in which the short story was created. It encourages reflection on the power dynamics, cultural norms, and practices of the times and how these impacted gender relations. The study topic has the potential to foster empathy and comprehension of the realities of oppressed women who lack agency in their lives. It pushes academics and readers to engage with and assess narratives

that draw attention to gender-based injustice critically. Given the possible impact our research may have on those who have already suffered or are now facing such oppression, it is imperative that this topic be handled carefully. It is imperative to consider many perspectives and opinions in the broader discourse surrounding gender inequity.

## **Conclusion**

Using the feminist theories of Helen Cixous as a guide, this study explores gender dynamics and hyperfeminism in the case of Ismat Chughtai in great depth. The study provides a comprehensive analysis through a qualitative lens, with a comprehensive literary analysis that enriches and supports Cixous's theoretical framework based on *écriture* concepts of *féminine* and phallogentrism. The work draws on Cixous's feminism to examine the positions of patriarchal subordination depicted in Chughtai's "The Rock." By manifesting embedded gender biases and cultural norms that control and limit women's roles in their communities, this approach exposes oppressive systems that exhaust femininity of the image of freedom under the revealed.

## **Analysis of Patriarchal Structures**

Anjum's analysis reveals a strong gendered structure within the narrative, as male characters act as cultural norms and sources of authority that hold up female participation the whole. The study is also about how male sirens are portrayed, questioning established gender norms. By giving female characters a voice to express their autonomy and independence, Chughtai's story breaks traditional image of passive women. Central to this approach is Cixous's notion of *écriture féminine*, which suggests that Chughtai's protagonist acquires autonomy in the act of

writing. The analysis skillfully explores this notion, showing that her the protagonist overcomes self-imposed limitations through narrative, so. As the title suggests, Chughtai's stories reclaim the female body and voice from a patriarchal perspective and challenge structure of gender and also challenges Cixous's views on feminist literary practices. Furthermore, the study expands its focus to include environmental, social, and political concerns that reflect issues of oppression in the narrative. He juxtaposes the physical constraints of the elites with the more symbolic effects of environmental degradation and social decline. These elements are believed to represent patriarchal oppression and control of nature and the female body's great power.

The editorial concludes that *The Rock* contributes significantly to women's literary discourse through its multi-layered narrative and subtle interpersonal relationships, encourages people to rethink gender roles and societal norms, and provides insight into gender power. Seen through Cixous's feminist lens, the story offers a compelling narrative of female resistance and emancipation and a sharp indictment of patriarchal authority. It addresses the gap in the psychological analysis of characters, and explores social and cultural issues in depth. The study expands the framework within which feminist theory and literature can be read, taking into account a variety of perspectives, as well as the intersectionality of gender, race, class, and colonial legacies. In conclusion, this thesis advances women's literary analysis of Ismat Chughtai's writings and serves as a spark for new conversations about women's empowerment, gender equality, and the disruption of patriarchal structures and it does so.

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