

## Interrogating Hegemonic Masculinity: Analyzing Dadu's Role as a Victim in Tariq Rahman's Moustache

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### Abstract

*The male facial adornment of a moustache has always been a symbol of flamboyant masculinity in many different cultures. This study aims to examine how such a seemingly innocuous item of male personal grooming can become an expression of Hegemonic Masculinity working to the detriment of not only men themselves but to society and humanity at large. Dadu is such a male character in a short story called Moustache by Tariq Rahman. This character is driven by his patriarchal setup to simulate masculinity by growing a bushy upturned moustache. To his sorrow, he learns that real power lies not in a moustache but in the supremacy of the patriarchal system which reinforces traditional gender roles stating that men should be strong and aggressive. This study brings this phenomenon under the lens of the theory of the archetypes of the mature masculine as postulated by Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette in King, Warrior, Magician, Lover: Rediscovering the Archetypes of the Mature Masculine (1991). The objective is to recognize the role of patriarchal systems in the formation of hegemonic masculinity and to work toward dismantling these systems in order to create a more inclusive and equitable society.*

**Keywords:** *Masculinity, honour, power, patriarchy, feudalism*

## **Introduction**

Masculinity is a combination of behaviors, attitudes, and practices traditionally and culturally deemed to be not feminine (Itulua-Abumere, 2013). From this perspective, it can be surmised that masculinity is, at one and the same time, a positive and a negative entity. Further, the role of tradition and culture in creating the social construct of masculinity is acknowledged in this definition. The concept of hegemonic masculinity refers to the idea of a dominant and idealized form of masculinity that is reinforced and perpetuated by societal norms and structures. Patriarchy plays a crucial role in the creation and maintenance of this idealized form of masculinity, as it is rooted in the idea of male dominance and control over women and other marginalized groups. Patriarchal systems often reinforce traditional gender roles, which dictate that men should be strong, aggressive, and unemotional, while women should be submissive, nurturing, and emotional. Mike Donaldson has this to say about Hegemonic Masculinity: “It is exclusive, anxiety-provoking, internally and hierarchically differentiated, brutal, and violent” (Donaldson, 1993). This reinforces the notion that men who exhibit these traits are more masculine and superior to those who do not. As a result, men who do not conform to these traditional gender roles may face discrimination and marginalization, as they are not seen as “real men”. This creates a culture in which the idealized form of masculinity is the norm, and any deviation from this norm is seen as weak or inferior.

### **Marginalized Masculinity**

Even at a very early age, males are enjoined to act and even feel in ways which conform to norms existing in their society. In patriarchal societies, these norms are characterized by dominance, aggression, and assertion. On the other hand, for the purpose of this study, the term “Marginalized” is drawn from the following definition of “Marginalization”: “Essentially, Marginalization describes both a process and a condition that prevents individuals or groups from full participation in social, economic, and political

life. It derives from exclusionary relationships based on power” (Alakhunova et al., 2015). Considering the foregoing, the main problem while discussing Marginalized Masculinity arises at the very outset when skepticism is expressed at the suggestion that men in a patriarchic society can actually be marginalized. (Haywood & Johansson, 2017). But, bell hooks has this observation: “Patriarchy demands of all males that they engage in acts of psychic self-mutilation, that they kill off the emotional parts of themselves” (Hooks, 2004). The male who succeeds in this self-damage develops an apathetic attitude to anyone else who does not share such a condition with him, thus expressing his masculinity as hegemonic. Corollary to this condition is the state of marginalization which such males experience.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To identify elements of the narrative in Moustache which depict Hegemonic Masculinity
2. To determine how these elements, affect Dadu as a young male in a patriarchal society

### **Research Questions**

1. What social pressures influence Dadu to make his moustache an expression of his masculinity?
2. Which personal motives impel Dadu to make a flagrant display of masculinity?

### **Literature Review**

This section deals with the research articles and papers which touch upon the objectives of this study. However, the present researcher was unable to find material which brings the spotlight of the archetypal theory of masculinity to bear upon issues encountered in the short story Moustache. Hence, the research gap that this study has been able to identify. The works consulted are dealt with in chronological order as follows:

Blais and Dupuis-Déri, in their research paper, maintain that feelings of marginalization among males have given rise to Masculinism which, in its discourse, claims that men are in crisis due to the feminization of society (Blais & Dupuis-Déri, 2012). This and allied ideas were instrumental in the rise of the Mythopoetic Men's Movement which resulted in many men evincing a desire to return to traditional and natural, even wild, masculine stances. This prompted fears of violent anti-feminism on the rise (Gilchrist E., 2017). However, Robert Bly (1991), emphasizes that his concept of the "Wild Man" is not that of a savage male. Rather, it denotes a man who has discovered or rediscovered his place among the natural scheme of things and is, therefore, in harmony with other male and female humans (Bly, 1991). This reinforces the view that women play a significant part in how males perceive their own masculinity (Haywood & Johansson, 2017). Bell Hooks augments this view by propounding that issues of masculinity cannot be addressed without the involvement of women. She further holds that patriarchal masculinity rather than masculinity per se is the main culprit where Hegemonic Masculinity and its attendant concerns are involved (Hooks, 2004). The seeds of such thinking can be traced back to C. G. Jung who holds that men and women possess elements of the opposite gender which need to operate in a balanced state (JUNG, 1977) With the value of female participation in the solving of masculinity issues established, the wider social aspect of addressing such matters comes to the forefront. Regarding this, Jaffe maintains that society falls short of equipping boys with the necessary training where the perception and exercise of their masculinity is concerned (Jaffe, n.d.). It has also been observed that despite the weakening of formal or open patriarchy, its insidious effects are ever present in various forms (Kimmel et al., 2019).

The advent of proactive Second Wave Feminism left many men with feelings of inadequacy which engendered the Mythopoetic Men's Movement. Phil McCombs describes how this movement shows men in modern society seeking meaning and assurance in

communal rituals of the past (McCombs, 1991). Fear of masculine inadequacy is created by a perceived loss of power over females and other males. It is this sense of lost entitlement which pushes men towards Toxic Masculinity (Mellström, 2016). From a different perspective, Toxic Masculinity is also attributed to geo-political changes resulting in rising militancy and extremism in the 21st Century (Mishra, 2018). Traditional concepts of masculinity are also held responsible for Toxic Masculinity (Salam, 2019), while Scabanci quotes Charlotte Perkins-Gilman and echoes Jung's opinion above (Scabanci, 2009). The terminology of discourse has reached a stage where men dread the term Toxic Masculinity because it can imply that all, or most, males are venomous and hegemonic by nature (Snyder, 2017).

All the above-cited works provide insight into the dynamics of how Hegemonic and Toxic Masculinity produce deleterious effects on the social and gender level, but they do not dwell on Marginalized Masculinity, which is the driving mechanism behind these effects. Moreover, the role of biracialism in engendering Marginalized Masculinity is not an object of these studies.

### **Research Methodology**

The study adopts a qualitative research design, allowing for in-depth exploration and analysis of textual material, character interactions, and societal contexts within the novel 'Moustache.' The primary data is derived from a close reading and analysis of the novel 'Moustache' by Tariq Rahman. Secondary data is collected from scholarly articles, critical analyses, and relevant literature on hegemonic masculinity and its impact on individuals. A comprehensive review of relevant literature is conducted to establish a theoretical foundation and contextual understanding of hegemonic masculinity. As the research focuses on Dadu's portrayal, purposeful sampling is used to select specific chapter of Dadu or sections of the novel that prominently depict the character's experiences. The textual data collected from the

novel and secondary sources is analyzed thematically to identify patterns related to Dadu's victimization by hegemonic masculinity.

### **Theoretical Framework**

R.W. Connell's theory serves as the theoretical framework to understand the concept of hegemonic masculinity and its manifestations in the novel. The study also considers the intersections of gender, class, and other social identities that may influence Dadu's experiences with hegemonic masculinity. The theoretical framework of this study also uses the archetypes of the mature and immature masculine as propounded by Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette in their book *King Warrior Magician Lover: Rediscovering the Archetypes of the Mature Masculine* (Moore & Gillette, 1991). They draw from the Jungian concept of archetypes and apply it to issues of mature and immature masculinity. Significantly, their observations and conclusions are not limited to a binary axis. Rather, they map active and passive characteristics of masculinity as dysfunctional deviations from an ideal mean on a representation of pyramids.

### **Data Analysis and Discussion**

#### **Masculine Archetypes Theorized by Moore and Gillette**

Robert Moore and Douglas, in their book *King Warrior Magician Lover: Rediscovering the Archetypes of the Mature Masculine* (Moore & Gillette, 1991), use a graphical representation to depict the various archetypes of the mature and immature masculine. The basic figure consists of a diagram of two pyramids in which the lower one covers the domain of immature masculinity while the upper one represents that of mature masculinity. Moore and Gillette also refer to these two as Boy Psychology and Man Psychology, respectively. The ideal archetypes of both domains lie on a vertical line passing through the tips of the two pyramids. To the left of this line are found the active dysfunctional archetypes while to the right, in the shaded zone, lie the passive dysfunctional archetypes.

Here, it must be noted that that these representations are not to be interpreted as fixed personality types. They epitomize masculine potentials which, even in one male, vary from time to time and from situation to situation. Thus, it may be surmised that any given male is a weighted combination of any number of these archetypes at any given time. Furthermore, the terms of ‘Boy Psychology’ and ‘Man Psychology’ are not limited to any concept of age brackets. Boy Psychology may certainly signify the adolescent male archetype but it may also very well denote the immature masculinity of a fully grown male adult of any age. In short, these pyramids illustrate the spectrum along which masculinity can be perceived as emanating from basic archetypes which may move in either active or passive dysfunctional modes in both mature and immature manhood. Of prime relevance to this study is the fact that Moore and Gillette hold the absence of ritual elders and processes as the main reason for the corruption of masculinity into decadent shadow systems. (Moore & Gillette, 1991).

Furthermore, the following observation is noteworthy:

Along with the breakdown of meaningful ritual processes for masculine initiation, a second factor seems to be contributing to the dissolution of mature masculine identity. This factor, shown to us by one strain of feminine critique, is called patriarchy (Moore & Gillette, 1991, p. xvi).

Additionally, they maintain that patriarchy is an expression of the immature masculine. They regard it as an attack on both masculinity and femininity, whereby patriarchal males are inclined to dominate men and women (Moore & Gillette, 1991). This desire to dominate is the hallmark of Hegemonic Masculinity. In view of the fact that there is a causal and correlational link between Hegemonic Masculinity and Marginalized Masculinity, Gillette and Moore’s concept of the Mature Masculine provides an apposite tool for examining the Marginalized Masculinity of Dadu in Tariq Rahman’s *Moustache*. Here, it is imperative to note an observation from the theorists: “Human development does not always

proceed so neatly, of course; there are mixtures of the archetypal influences all along the way” (Moore & Gillette, 1991, p. 14). This permutational element is evident as the character of Dadu is brought under scrutiny.

### **The King as Archetype**

#### ***Ideal Manifestation: The King in His Fullness***

“The King” is to be understood on both a primal and a universal level. Moore and Gillette describe at the primordial Man. It may also be defined as the Father energy which guides, governs, and controls everything in Nature: “The mortal man who incarnates the King energy or bears it for a while in the service of his fellow human beings...is...a human vehicle for bringing this ordering and generative archetype into the world and into the lives of human beings” (Moore & Gillette, 1991, p. 50). At its simplest, the concept of “The King” is one of benevolent strength.

#### ***Active Dysfunctional Manifestation: The Tyrant***

“The Tyrant” archetype comes into being when the Fatherly force of “The King” is perverted into the pursuit of earthly and vindictive directions. It must be noted that “The Tyrant”, lacking depth and dimension, is completely devoid of the power vested in “The King”. He is: “...very sensitive to criticism and, though putting on a threatening front, will at the slightest remark feel weak and deflated” (Moore & Gillette, 1991, p. 67). This happens because he comes face to face with his own emptiness.

#### ***Passive Dysfunctional Manifestation: The Weakling***

“The Weakling” is the passive manifestation of the mature masculine archetype of “The Tyrant”. This is a male archetype congealed into a passive desire for power over the people and circumstances around him. However, lacking the dynamism of “The Tyrant” he is subject to repressed rage and jealousy which burst out into the open in paroxysms of anger. He lives through life vacillating between brooding resentment and frenzies of rage.



## **The King: Immature Masculine**

### ***Ideal Manifestation: The Divine Child***

‘The Divine Child’ is a term used to denote the most primal of the immature masculine archetypes. In a grown man it is the stage in life when he feels that “A new phase of his life is beginning. Creative parts of himself that he had been unconscious of are now thrusting upward into awareness. He is experiencing new life” (Moore & Gillette, 1991, p. 20). At this stage he needs protection from his environment as his newfound creativity and innate purity are as yet fragile precisely because of their newness.

### ***Active Dysfunctional Manifestation: The High Chair Tyrant***

The metaphor used here is suggestive of a spoilt child throwing tantrums while sitting in a highchair. It represents the pathological narcissism and sense of entitlement which men suffering from immature masculinity exhibit at all stages of their life. “Characteristics of the High Chair Tyrant include arrogance (what the Greeks called hubris, or overweening pride), childishness (in the negative sense), and irresponsibility” (Moore & Gillette, 1991, p. 23). Such men think themselves to be the center of the universe.

### ***Passive Dysfunctional Manifestation: The Weakling Prince***

The difference between ‘The High Chair Tyrant’ and ‘The Weakling Prince’ is that the former has a proactive demeanour, while a marked lack of initiative marks the latter’s personality. Being hypersensitive to challenging energies, he tends to project a persona of weakness and helplessness. His predisposition to vacillate between his own archetype and that of ‘The High Chair Tyrant’ is likened to that of the reversed polarity of a magnet which changes the direction of the flow of current passing through it: “When such a reversal occurs...he will switch from tyrannical outburst to depressed passivity, or from apparent weakness to rageful displays” (Moore & Gillette, 1991, p. 26). Consequently, this kind of personality has a lot in common with “The Coward” under “The Warrior” archetype.

The personality of Dadu, as those of all other males, contains the embryonic forms of all the archetypes. However, the “King” element gets no chance to develop. For some time, he has aspirations to go down the Active Aberrant path by becoming a Tyrant like the other males he idolizes. But, overwhelming forces of feudalism crush him into becoming a cringing Weakling.

### **The Warrior as Archetype**

#### ***Ideal Manifestation: The Warrior in His Fullness***

“The Warrior” is certainly a violent mature masculine archetype. So-called civilized society, while paying lip-service to pacifism, tends to have a very demeaning attitude to this male archetype. Here, it is worth noting that, even though countless calamitous events in history are the handiwork of “The Warrior”, it is also “The Warrior” who has either redressed the wrongs perpetrated by his type or pre-empted the ones which might have come about. “It is a vital ingredient in our world-building and plays an important role in extending the benefits of the highest human virtues and cultural achievements to all of humanity” (Moore & Gillette, 1991, p. 79). Here we see the dilemma which lies at the heart of the masculine ideal.

#### ***Active Dysfunctional Manifestation: The Sadist***

The powerful and aggressive energies of “The Warrior” are always in danger of degenerating into ruthlessness. This is a hazardous dimension of the archetype which usually comes into play when revenge becomes a motive. Therefore, the regulating influence of the other ideal archetypes are crucial here. “Otherwise cruelty will sneak in the back door when he’s not looking” (Moore & Gillette, 1991, p. 89). This is the type most evident in Hegemonic Masculinity.

#### ***Passive Dysfunctional Manifestation: The Masochist***

The passive manifestation of “The Sadist” is “The Masochist”. They share the same energies with the difference that, in the case of the latter, these do not drive outwards but

fester inwards. The pressure of this inflow increases to the point where there is an explosion of anger and hatred. This mature masculine archetype “lies just beneath the Sadist’s rageful displays” (Moore & Gillette, 1991, p. 94). In other words, “The Masochist” is the inverse of “The Sadist”.

### **The Warrior: Immature Masculine**

#### ***Ideal Manifestation: The Hero***

Moore and Gillette present this archetype in a way rendered in a totally unexpected way by the terminology. The title correctly indicates that it is the most advanced form among adolescent masculine energies. But, this superiority remains static at the juvenile stage: “...when it is carried over into adulthood as the governing archetype, it blocks men from full maturity” (Moore & Gillette, 1991, p. 37). This observation has great relevance to the primitive and simplistic concept of masculinity idealized by Dadu, his peers, and his social milieu.

#### ***Active Dysfunctional Manifestation: The Bully***

The actual nomenclature used by Moore and Gillette is “The Grandstander Bully”. This type of male can be immensely imaginative, creative, and courageous. But, he is possessed by an irresistible urge to display himself and his qualities. To this end, he is willing to put himself and others through danger and destruction: “Denial of death—the ultimate limitation on human life—is his specialty” (Moore & Gillette, 1991, p. 39). Dadu goes through a fleeting phase of this archetype when he is, as yet, unfamiliar with the trauma of vindictive violence to his person.

#### ***Passive Dysfunctional Manifestation: The Coward***

In order to put the archetype of “The Coward” in perspective, it is necessary to discuss some more aspects of “The Hero”. Moore and Gillette stress that the latter stands as an impediment to the attainment of mature masculinity. This assertion is to be seen in the

light of the following statement from them: “The ‘death’ of the hero is the ‘death’ of boyhood, of Boy psychology. And it is the birth of manhood and Man psychology” (Moore & Gillette, 1991, p. 41). This happens after “The Hero” has striven to the utmost. In sharp contrast, “The Coward” is the one who remains paralyzed by fear and does not dare to attempt any endeavor. This is the category into which Dadu falls after the traumatic encounter with his attackers.

Dadu labors under the misconception that an upturned moustache and a strutting gait can automatically depict him as a Hero to other people. This desire itself is a manifestation of the Immature Masculine. Moreover, he is destined to slip further down into the Coward category after being severely beaten up by those who consider him an affront to their own hegemony.

### **The Magician as Archetype**

#### ***Ideal Manifestation: The Magician in His Fullness***

“The Magician” represents the mature male who has access to more knowledge than others around him. To other people, he appears to have occult powers. Such men are considered to possess a power equal to those of “The King” and “The Warrior”. Importantly, this power acts as an antidote to the negative functions of “The Tyrant” and “The Sadist”: “...it sees through denial and exercises discernment” (Moore & Gillette, 1991, p. 100). This is a state that Dadu neither desired nor acquired.

#### ***Active Dysfunctional Manifestation: The Manipulator***

The male who has the powers of “The Magician” but uses them in a corrupt manner in order to deceive others is typical of “The Manipulator”. He uses a deific gift of Nature for selfish and cruel purposes. “...the Manipulator maneuvers people by withholding from them the information they may need for their own well-being” Sometimes, the only motivation he has is to prove his own ascendancy over others.

### ***Passive Dysfunctional Manifestation: The Denier***

Moore and Gillette also call this archetype “The ‘Innocent’ One”. This is an ironic appellation. The implication is that such a male possesses the powers of “The Magician” but unlike “The Manipulator” does not actively use them to deceive and control, Rather, he conceals them and denies possessing them. He “...hides his hostile motives behind an impenetrable wall of feigned naivete” (Moore & Gillette, 1991, pp. 115-116). Again, this archetype is too sophisticated for Dadu to have any relation to it.

### **The Magician: Immature Masculine**

#### ***Ideal Manifestation: The Precocious Child***

This archetype of immature masculine is marked by an eagerness to learn and share his learning onwards with others. In grown men it is manifested in the personalities of explorers and adventurers: “The Precocious Child in a man keeps his sense of wonder and curiosity alive, stimulates his intellect, and moves him in the direction of the mature magician” (Moore & Gillette, 1991, p. 28). In his simple way, Dadu falls within this category as he has the curiosity and aspirations to explore the bounds of his existence. However, the opposing forces arrest any development along the main axis.

#### ***Active Dysfunctional Manifestation: The Trickster***

The Trickster is truly a shadow archetype of dysfunctional, immature masculinity. Simply put, he is a fraudster, a charlatan, and a swindler. His energy is destructive rather than creative: “He does not want to honestly earn anything. He just wants to be, and to be what he has no right to be” (Moore & Gillette, 1991, p. 32). His hubris usually leads to his nemesis. Dadu falls nowhere near this category.

#### ***Passive Dysfunctional Manifestation: The Dummy***

This archetype is mostly to be found under the power and influence of “The Trickster”. He is physically and socially inept and is usually found to be the butt of ridicule

from his peers. The noteworthy aspect of his maladroitness is that it is driven by a concealed sense of pride in himself: “He may grasp far more than he shows, and his duncelike behavior may mask a hidden grandiosity that feels itself too important...to come into the world. Moore & Gillette, 1991, p. 33). There are shades of this type in the character of Dadu as he is naïve enough to fail to perceive the true source of power in his social setup.

Dadu, the simple village lad, never has a chance to develop the charisma of the mature Magician type. However, his desire to gain recognition in the village points to his being a precocious child within the bounds of his personal and social settings. However, the overwhelmingly powerful and violent opposition he faces compels him to retreat from society and falls within The Dummy's classification.

### **The Lover as Archetype**

#### ***Ideal Manifestation: The Lover in His Fullness***

“The Lover” is a male archetypal manifestation of all the primal energies which drive the human race. These cover the whole gamut from biological through psychological to theological. Such a male is deeply sensual but always endeavors to connect this sensuality with the spiritual. He emphasizes feeling more than thinking: “The Lover’s connectedness is not primarily intellectual. It is through feeling” (Moore & Gillette, 1991, p. 122). The connotations are mystical and not at all physical.

#### ***Active Dysfunctional Manifestation: The Addicted Lover***

“The Lover” is always in danger of being overwhelmed by the ocean of sensations which surrounds all human beings. When this happens, the archetype of “The Addicted Lover” comes to the fore. As a result, the male loses sight of the golden mean. “He becomes the victim of his own sensitivity” (Moore & Gillette, 1991, p. 132). It may be argued that Dadu is so enamored of his concept of masculinity that he is blinded to the harsh realities of the power structure he lives in.

### ***Passive Dysfunctional Manifestation: The Impotent Lover***

The archetype of “The Impotent Lover” is the result of a male not being able to endure the intensity of his own desires. Consciously or unconsciously, he raises a shield between his ego and those desires. The result is a sad and subjugated male psyche. “People who are habitually possessed by the Impotent Lover are chronically depressed” (Moore & Gillette, 1991, p. 139). This is the state which Dadu experiences when he retreats from society and becomes a recluse.

### **The Lover: Immature Masculine**

#### ***Ideal Manifestation: The Oedipal Child***

Moore and Gillette do not use the term “Oedipal” in the sense popularized by Freudian psychology. Here, the concept of mother is: “...the Great Mother—The Goddess in her many forms in the myths and legends of many peoples and cultures” Moore & Gillette, 1991, p. 34). In the simplest of terms, this archetype of the immature masculine is one which is in perfect harmony with Nature in all its manifestations. It must be noted that this type is never to be found in a consistently pure form.

#### ***Active Dysfunctional Manifestation: The Mama’s Boy***

In this case, the term “Oedipal” is certainly used in its Freudian connotations. Such a male remains constantly searching for a mother figure in woman after woman. However, every relationship ends in disaster: “He does not want to do what it takes to have union with a mortal woman and deal with all the complex feelings involved in an intimate relationship. He does not want to take responsibility” (Moore & Gillette, 1991, p. 36). This study does not hold this point in consideration as the character of Dadu passes nowhere near this type.

#### ***Passive Dysfunctional Manifestation: The Dreamer***

As opposed to the “The Mama’s Boy”, “The Dreamer” does not actively seek a mother figure. He tries to find it in his imagination. Consequently, his relationships are with

intangibles, and he is bound to be isolated and depressed: “What this boy shows, in a roundabout way, is his pique at failing to achieve possession of the Mother.” (Moore & Gillette, 1991, p. 37). It may be speculated that Dadu’s reclusiveness is spent in such a state of mind.

Dadu naturally gravitates towards The Oedipal Child—an immature masculine type theorized as having a pure and strong love for Mother Nature. Needless to say, he is an uneducated rustic youth whose love for Nature can only be expressed in the immature masculine form of taking pride in his fulsome youth. The moustache and the swagger are forms of behavior which he picks up from role models around him. This immature masculinity is pushed further down by hegemonic feudal forces and Dadu is reduced to the level of being The Dreamer.

It is significant to note that, at the very outset of the story, we see that the elders of Dadu’s family were farmers whose cultivable land was ravaged by salinity thus forcing them to move to a village dominated by a powerful landlord. Even in their straitened circumstances, the men had romantic ideas about moustaches and masculinity “For the moustache and the turban had a way of becoming all one and somehow connected with honour” (Rahman, (n.d.) p. 17). During the initial years of this displacement, their main concern was food and thought of honor receded into the background. Then when the child narrator turned twelve, his cousin Allah Dad, known by his nickname Dadu, began to grow a luxuriant moustache. During this time, he had grown into a strapping young man and was a winner in most wrestling and kabaddi matches. He had no desire to follow in the footsteps of his elders by laboring in the fields. Significantly, his elders admired his ostentatious masculinity and dreamt of their younger generation restoring their lost grandeur. Quite inevitably, the powerful Chaudhary of the village was not happy with this situation. This led to a heated debate in Dadu’s family. At this juncture, the question of honor came up and Dadu inquired as to whose honor was being



referred to. The answer given in some anger implied that Dadu's moustache was an affront to the honor of the Chaudhry: "They don't like to see Kammis like us going around sporting huge moustaches. And they will see to it that it is cut down to size and droops" (Rahman, (n.d.) p. 85). Most of the elders disagreed with this analysis and expressed themselves in fulsomely crude and defiant language. The expected confrontation with the Chaudhry's men happened and Dadu was beaten up badly and reduced to a weeping whimpering heap on the ground. His moustache was cut off and stuffed in his bleeding mouth. The effect of this cruel punishment was such that Dadu remained a reclusive mute till his death ten years later. His elders were so cowed down by the event that "even the Chaudhry was mollified" (Rahman, (n.d.) p. 87). By mentioning the lessening of the perpetrator's anger, the author highlights the savagery of unleashed feudal power.

### **Conclusion**

This research has provided valuable insights into the portrayal of Dadu as a victim of hegemonic masculinity in Tariq Rahman's novel 'Moustache.' The study aimed to explore how Dadu's experiences reflect the impact of dominant masculine norms and power structures on an individual's life and identity. Through a qualitative analysis of the novel, it became evident that Dadu's character faced various forms of victimization due to the prevailing notions of hegemonic masculinity. His interactions with other characters, societal expectations, and internal struggles all showcased the detrimental effects of conforming to such norms. Dadu's subjugation to rigid gender roles and ideals resulted in feelings of isolation, emotional repression, and limited opportunities for personal growth. It is important to recognize that 'Moustache' offers a powerful critique of the harmful consequences of rigid masculinity constructs. By highlighting Dadu's struggles, the novel encourages readers to question and challenge prevailing gender norms, ultimately promoting more inclusive and equitable societies. This research contributes to the growing body of literature on masculinity

studies and gender analysis in literature. By examining Dadu's victimization within the framework of hegemonic masculinity, it sheds light on the complexity of gender dynamics and the urgent need to deconstruct harmful and oppressive norms. This study encourages future researchers to delve deeper into similar themes in literary works and societal contexts, aiming to promote more nuanced and progressive perspectives on masculinity and gender relations. Moreover, it calls for continued efforts to challenge and dismantle hegemonic masculinity, fostering environments that celebrate individuality and enable everyone to live authentically and free from oppressive gender expectations. Hegemonic Masculinity is a manifestation of immature masculinity. Its toxicity destroys mature masculinity while perpetuating the grip of patriarchy on society. This may be taken as an indication that patriarchy is a product of power-hungry feudalism and not of masculinity per se.

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