



## Gender and Cultural Bias in Danielle Steel's *Silent Honour*: A Postcolonial Feminism and Ethnocentrism Perspective

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### Abstract

This research study investigates the gender and cultural biases represented in Danielle Steel's *Silent Honour* using postcolonial feminism and ethnocentrism. Using a qualitative approach, the study looks at the portrayal of oppressed female characters, Hiroko and others, who are subjected to social and patriarchal pressures that prevent them from exercising control over their lives and getting an education. This research investigates how postcolonial power relations and ethnocentric perceptions sustain gender oppression, with a specific focus on how gender is constructed and constrained by cultural norms and expectations. The results show that the novel at the same time challenges and confirms conventional gender norms, including the example of cultural prejudices such as the preference for sons and the denial of education to women. These biases are seen to have adverse effects on the characters' lives, especially during a war time, when women's voices are silenced. Also, the analysis of the work shows how the gender and cultural identities and the struggles of the female characters are intertwined. The research underscores the need for a more inclusive and egalitarian approach to gender and cultural practices, advocating for women's empowerment and greater agency within postcolonial and patriarchal contexts.

**Keywords:** Gender Bias, Cultural Bias, Postcolonial Feminism, Ethnocentrism, *Silent Honour*, Patriarchy, Women's Empowerment, Educational Inequality, Traditional Gender Roles, Cultural Stereotypes.

### Introduction

Gender stereotypes are widely accepted and represent the ways in which men and women differ in their outlooks and behaviours. Importantly, gender stereotypes also affect how men and women describe themselves and are perceived by others, which reinforces and contributes to these preconceptions (Ellemers, 2018). Even our most progressive workplaces still experience gendered and cultural bias. However, there is increasing evidence suggesting that hiring, as well as all other aspects of employment, from performance to promotion, may indeed be tainted by biases. Gender and cultural background affect evaluation to promotion (Fan, 2019). There are scholars who have studied how workplaces reproduce inequalities based on axes of gender, race, class, and other axes of identities and differences (Laer et al., 2021). The processes of

perception on gender issues remain a fundamental aspect of the maintenance of these inequalities.

The feminist literature includes multiple studies about gendered power relations in male-dominated workplaces (Bridges et al., 2023). A smaller number of studies examine how gender and gender perceptions affect interaction processes specifically in fields where females dominate (Tafvelin et al., 2020). When discrimination occurs due to attributed biases that stem from gender differences this phenomenon is called gender bias which leads to exclusive behavior patterns. People experience gender bias as unbalanced resource availability in addition to stereotypical cultural messages and societal rules that restrict specific roles according to gender identity (Saini, 2022).

Society maintains patriarchal systems that control acceptable conduct and position assignments through gender-based norms which penetrate both cultural, politics and workplace settings. Through literary depictions authors show women usually appear stagnant and secondary while men maintain active participant roles in storytelling narratives (Hawkesworth, 2021). The habit of using individual cultural standards as the basis to judge other cultures frequently produces perceptions about cultural superiority. Ethnocentrism represents one example of cultural bias because individuals who practice it consider their own cultural customs as "correct" even though other cultures seem unfamiliar or odd according to their beliefs (Miller, 2023). During literary representation marginal cultures receive false depiction through simplified versions that spread false stereotypes and strengthen dominant colonial attitudes. From a postcolonial standpoint cultural bias represents continued oppression by imperial powers when they forced their cultural standards onto colonized nations thus generating enduring historical inequality in present-day representations (Smith, 2023).

Differences in cultural background lead to false judging by applying standards of your own culture that results in complications during interpersonal communication. When people judge cultural differences as either deficient or deviant misconduct causes damage to personal relations plus employment criteria and teaching environments as well as government legislation. Through ethnocentrism individuals demonstrate cultural bias by concluding their cultural framework represents the correct or superior version which leads to detrimental forcings that harm other cultural groups (Khan & Raza, 2020). According to Roller (2013) gender equality exists as a social construction that grants equal privileges along with balanced results and opportunities and equal authority and status to women and men. Heilman and Caleo (2018) explain that gender equality demands people to participate equally in both political spaces and community life and familial relationships as well as enjoy defense against violence along with fair resource allocation and usage. When a community works toward achieving gender equality residents of all genders have clear knowledge about economic resources such as employment opportunities alongside health facilities medical loans and educational facilities as well as the skills needed to utilize them. Both gender equality and access to resources by both men and women establish its all-encompassing value. All genders require sufficient time alongside unlimited mobility in order to freely access available resources (Parker and Funk, 2017).

Both gender and cultural oversight create multiple barriers against people from marginal gender groups and minority cultures. Postcolonial feminist scholars reveal women's oppression in postcolonial societies emerges from colonial histories together with historical patriarchal values (Mohanty, 2022). Women in non-Western traditions experience specific barriers emerging from how their cultures collectively react to Western colonial administration and traditional gender-specific roles. Postcolonial literature shows the difficulties characters face when trying to express their strained identity among people who enforce pervasive marginalization because of gender and cultural origins (Nnaemeka 2021). Gender together with

cultural biases merge in two ways that impact both the authentic experiences of marginalized women and their literary depiction.

Literature demonstrates strong power to display and modify social values through its dual function of reflection and innovation according to Walker (2021). The genre of Evolution demands active opposition to the lingering gender and cultural prejudices which literature has been preserving for a long time. Such biases present certain minority groups as being inferior through inaccurate depictions that sustain the existing stereotypes and create social inequalities. Depending on Walker, literary evolution is a process of bias recognition and response for the purpose of realism and proper depiction of complex lives of diverse global communities. This simultaneous development of literary progression enhances the canon content along with the social progress that leads to a better mutual understanding between the societies in the global village.

Meanwhile, conventional psychological measurement is based on the cultural norms of male perspectives-This format has been criticized for its conceptual biases towards female perspectives. Cultural biases retain profound importance since they modify how gender materializes, while also requiring feminine-while-intersectional academic analysis to enliven critical thought concerning prevailing societal beliefs. To Rutherford in 2021, this indicates that psychological understanding progresses through methods in equitable ways that are influenced by cultural sensitivity. Gender stereotypes run throughout the continent of Europe and have assertions of how political institutions are combined with occupational arenas and domestic relations. These gender biased beliefs endure beyond their initial existence but become strengthened by cultural and institutional practices that block gender equality (Damann, Siow, & Tavits, 2023).

### **Significance of the Study**

The research provides substantial value for researchers because it investigates gender and cultural bias skills by applying the theoretical frameworks of postcolonial feminism and ethnocentrism to *Silent Honor* by Danielle Steel. Through its narrative the story serves as an advanced platform for investigating the effect of gender discrepancy with cultural constraints in postcolonial environments. Research findings will reveal how cultural along with gender stereotypes reflect or change in recent literary works. This research uses both ethnocentric and postcolonial feminist frameworks to extend our understanding of literary representations of gender and cultural dynamics along with their expressions in postcolonial literary spaces. The research outputs will enhance academic knowledge about women's representation particularly marginalized women in literature which assimilates colonial narratives with gender norms thus deepening the analysis of biased perpetuation across literature and its social repercussions.

### **Research Questions:**

1. How are gender and cultural biases represented in *Silent Honor* through the lens of postcolonial feminism and ethnocentrism?
2. How does the narrative challenge or reinforce traditional gender roles and cultural stereotypes within the postcolonial context?

### **Research Objectives:**

1. To analyse the portrayal of gender and cultural biases in *Silent Honor* from postcolonial feminist and ethnocentric perspectives.
2. To evaluate how *Silent Honor* addresses the intersection of gender and culture, and its impact on marginalized female characters.

## Literature Review

Safdar and Kosakowska-Berezecka (2016) examine how gender roles result from cultural construction while showing they differ between societies based on their historical traditions together with social and cultural influences. While standard gender identity is set by cultural systems, enforcing role types differs across communities, and so does adopting progressive roles. The authors study the influence of globalization on changing cultural exchange patterns together with changing societal norms disrupting established gender roles while reshaping gender relationships. With sociocultural scrutiny, this book illuminates how we have avoided generalizing conclusions regarding gender by viewing these roles in proper contexts while delivering a comprehensive view of analysis concerning gender. This research allows us to glimpse deeper into how culture constructs gender dispositions and behaviours expectations that shapes ongoing discourses on equity and diversity.

Through her analyses, Boehmer (2009) examines postcolonial literary constructions of gender identity focusing on how colonial histories shape nations while also having a bearing on gender relations during processes of nation-building. While national discourse often marginalizes women's voices, postcolonial literature situates women centrally in the struggles for independence and social justice, according to the findings of the research. Arundhati Roy and Buchi Emecheta's works are analysed side-by-side to illustrate how women's realities are directly inspired by colonial background with developing multi-layered postcolonial identities. The author demonstrates how literary texts represent the resilience of women yet these narratives remain obedient to patriarchal constructs in telling stories creating clamours for honest stories about both sexes in postcolonial literature. This research provides a rare insight into some aspects of the manner colonial engagement intersects with gender as it calls for redistributing acknowledgment to women with an interest in claims towards nation-building projects once colonialism has come to an end.

Lionnet (2018) perceives in postcolonial and gender relations not individualism but a complex and multi-layered circuit of practices of literary representations of postcolonial women. Ideologies of colonial history formed the very basis through which definitions of women's roles, on an individual level, were made and remodelled by life experience. When connected with the elements cultural and forces of gender, the study deals with how the colonial systems joined together to produce social and literary restrictions upon women. In these contexts, each postcolonial woman opens up agency-driven counter-narratives, stories that can poignantly question the imposition of constraining societal norms on women. Literature recaptured thereby enables the construction of new concepts of the established gender traditions from which new representations of women arise, ones that subvert the stereotypically confining images. The postcolonial literature creates a fertile space to deconstruct the cultural practices that further revised newer existing discourses prevalent amidst their identity issues in approach to the colonial history. This analytical way presents the reader with great opportunity and pleasure in figuring out both the long-lasting impact of colonial exploitation and the postcolonial feminism's capability of confronting the fairly prevalent social prejudice against women in the colonizers' narrative: both the struggles and creativity of story-telling.

By using postcolonial feminist analysis, Rather (2023) examines how women from the Global South have been portrayed from Western viewpoints. The perceptions of Third World women's personal and social lives that are commonly held in the West are challenged by this study. Rather uses a postcolonial feminist theoretical framework to analyse how cultural exploitation, dominance, and imperial power have shaped perceptions of women in non-Western nations. For Third World women, the article illustrates how gender, along with race and class, creates unique avenues of oppression and resistance. The review hence points to the simplification of Western feminists through criticism that engenders diverse perspectives on the non-standard

realities of these women. Considering recorded colonial processes and the consequences of these processes on gendered identities, along with a shift from West European feminist perspectives towards the experiences of excluded women enables the research to demonstrate the need for feminist thinking to broaden its horizon.

Lionnet (2018) uses literature to show the many ways women from postcolonial backgrounds are represented in their cultural representations. Women in literature spend a long time reflecting on how long colonial experience has impacted their lives collectively on three fronts: identity, social status, and experience. The discussion explores how colonial legacy, gender biases, and cultural traditions coalesce to render women socially marginalised in several aspects, including their participation in literature. Focusing on postcolonial contexts, the analysis demonstrates how women are asserting their agency using narrative strategies to dismantle socio-cultural constrictions. Through literary reclamation processes, the writers construct post-colonial views of gender relations that also enable authors to formulate more agentic representations of women than those commonly created in stereotypical archetypes. Postcolonial literature is a powerful lens for examining changes in cultural sensibilities and norms, which can lead to fresh understanding of how women navigate the post-colonial landscape. This critical lens allows researchers to analyse ongoing colonialism while investigating postcolonial feminist thought combatting cultural biases at certain depictions of gender oppression in both literary and theoretical spaces. These artefacts present new transformative elements and analytical hurdles.

Rubab et al. in their literary analysis of Bapsi Sidhwa's story 'A Gentlemanly War' (2021) draw from postcolonial and feminist theory. Their paper excels at proving Sidhwa's critique on patriarchal institutions of society founded during the colonial era. Examining gender disparity, power dynamics and sociocultural differences, the study illustrates how British colonial control righted systems male-dominance by creating distinct systems that separated the genders. Reading Sidhwa through this lens the authors noting, for example, that the gendered nature of oppression there persists today helps readers understand how the story pushes back against the norms of patriarchy while also allowing marginalised women's stories to shine. To illustrate the implications of remaining colonial traditions on contemporary social organisation, this essay looks at gender with post-colonialism. Sidhwa uses her story to disrupt colonial power and gender oppression, overturns patriarchal social systems, and makes considerable gains in feminist and postcolonial theoretical knowledge as we also find our way back home, of sorts, through her story.

Using the work of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Arab (2023) explores the intersection of patriarchal hegemony and colonial oppression as it informs the experience of female protagonists in literature. The essay charts a postcolonial feminist reading of Ngũgĩ's historical and socio-engaged writings, which portray women as subordinated subjects or as actors of colonial resistance. Through an analysis of Wangechi from *Petals of Blood* and Mumbi from *The River Between*, Arshad shows how women reclaim their agency and power by transcending patriarchal structures that are both colonial and indigenous. This dissertation demonstrates that postcolonial feminist analysis is essential to understanding the complex gendered networks that emerged during periods of colonial dominance, along with the realities in literary circles in Africa.

By analysing Virginia Woolf's novels *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, Annette (2005) determines important critiques of institutional power relationships and social gender conventions. In her books, Woolf evokes how women vie for recognition and place in patriarchal societies while trying to find their own freedom. Woolf employs internal thought processes in her female characters, exposing the demeaning social roles that women are

expected to perform while exposing the recurring tensions between personal desires and the demands placed on femininity by society. Woolf shows how women's limited access to emotional and intellectual freedom is impacted by male omnipotence through her narratives.

Using the feminist viewpoints of Virginia Woolf, Ma (2021) explores the relationship between gender equality and New Public Management methods. In addition to performance and privatisation strategies, the study looks at how Woolf's feminist theories of role and expectation critique improve the actual implementations of NPM by emphasising public sector efficiency. The research by Ma reveals how NPM produces effective organizations yet disregards gender equality concerns yet Woolf's feminist principles confront this disregard directly. By adopting Woolfian principles of self-direction together with intellectual freedom and power investigations the article proposes increased gender-sensitive approaches in public administration which enables equal leadership opportunities for women and men. The study uses this analysis to prove Woolf's feminist theories still offer solutions to modern gender equality problems in different institutional frameworks. Arshad et al. (2025) perform a feminist critical discourse study of Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Through an investigation of gender identity myths and the American family system. The authors examine how this family drama positioned inside confined spaces contains critical points about traditional gender assignments and social rules that organize familial structures. Through their application of feminist analysis they show how Albee breaks down traditional American family relations to expose how society constructs and sustains gendered identity norms. Through their traditional gendered characters George and Martha simultaneously reveal an unstable evolution of their gender identities. Through the psychological distress and character-based manipulations Albee shows how societal family norms restrict personal structure but also reveal gender-based expectations. A feminist reading helps readers to see how the play examines social gender role expectations while exploring the difference between individual self-perceptions and community norms.

In his article Lopez (2022) examines the gender and cultural biases which affect Jig's character and marginalization throughout Hemingway's short story "Hills Like White Elephants." Lopez uses the iceberg theory by Hemingway to study Jig's essential dialogue and actions and displays how the central male figure controls Jig's independence and deeper emotional states. According to the research Jig's emotional responses meet societal suppression since the patriarchal establishment ignores or derides her priorities. The study employs power dynamics analysis with cultural evaluation along with gendered language analysis to demonstrate how traditional gender stereotypes emerge from the male-centred narrative structure in which Hemingway's story is written.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The research evaluates gender and cultural biases in *Silent Honour* by exploring narrative constructions of gendered and cultural roles alongside their implications for postcolonial and ethnocentric dynamics. Due to its focus on interpreting literary content this study adopts a qualitative method instead of relying on quantitative data. The research design provides a strong analysis of both theoretical approaches and text material which reveals sophisticated perspectives on how gender and cultural elements manifest within the narrative.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This research relies on Postcolonial Feminism together with Ethnocentrism principles.

## **Postcolonial Feminism**

Postcolonial feminism as according to Al-Wazedi (2020), is a theoretical framework analysing colonial effects on gender relations and women's suffering during former colonial times. The approach questions Western feminist structures by showing how formerly colonized region women experience different forms of oppression while demanding both cultural awareness and a decolonization movement within feminist scholarship to restore native viewpoints and backgrounds.

## **Ethnocentrism**

People who endorse ethnocentrism consider their culture superior so they develop prejudiced judgments about other cultural representations. Postcolonial studies evaluate Western societies which have imposed superiority claims over colonized cultures because they have marginalized and distorted traditional customs of subjugated communities. This analytical framework provides essential ways to understand the way the Western self-perception shapes depictions of both non-Western identities and non-Western cultures. (Brewer, 2023)

Through this framework we analyse how Danielle Steel establishes gender roles and cultural biases and power dynamics in *Silent Honour* while she builds male and female along with international identities.

## **Data Collection**

*Silent Honour* (1996) by Danielle Steel serves as the primary data source for this study along with secondary literature needed for context. The whole novel serves as our main data set for analysis because we specifically examine sections that explore gender dynamics and cultural conventions as well as their possible conflict. The collected secondary data consists of scholarly literature about postcolonial feminism together with books on ethnocentrism and gender studies and related critiques.

The research checks for occurrences of gender prejudice and cultural prejudice during the representation of Asian and Western characters in the book. The analysis examines dialogue between characters and descriptive descriptions within a postcolonial power context concerning Western and Asian characters.

## **Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis is a widely-used, qualitative analytic method for using data to find patterns in a data set. Most of the thematic analysis will center on the following:

**Gender Representation:** This section analyses narrative character portrayals through analysis of traditional gender roles and their associated expectations and their power dynamics around men and women.

**Cultural Bias:** The writer explores and contrasts the cultural identities of Western and Eastern points of view which manifest cultural bias against the two cultural worlds.

**Postcolonial Feminist Themes:** The framework for analysis incorporates post-colonial critiques on colonial legacies as well as the impact of these legacies on gender identities in post-colonial societies.

**Ethnocentrism:** An examination of the way Western heartland values overshadow non-Western cultures and their institutional impact on interactions and behaviour decisions.

The study examines these themes across the lines of postcolonial feminism and ethnocentrism in conjunction with the gender and cultural dynamics represented in the narrative text.

## **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations in this research include:

**Confidentiality and Integrity:** The study incorporates exclusively an existing literary work therefore protects participant confidentiality completely. The researchers commit to sustain ethical integrity through consistent proper citation along with appropriate reference to primary and secondary source materials.

**Bias and Objectivity:** Objective research methodology will be applied together with sensitivity toward recognizing bias factors during interpretation of gender traits along with cultural values. The evaluation process of this research document will conduct in-depth analysis while both preventing cultural misunderstanding as well as generalizing perspectives.

**Respect for Cultural Sensitivity:** Detailed attention will be dedicated to cultural portrayal analysis because of its sensitivity which must raise respectful standards and avoid reinforcing negative stereotypes.

## **Limitations of the Study**

There are a few limitations in this study:

**Textual Scope:** The study examines *Silent Honor* which provides ample materials for gender and cultural bias research although it represents only a small section of Danielle Steel's complete literary works. Research gains stronger perspectives when one considers the author's entire body of work beyond *Silent Honor*.

**Interpretive Framework:** The interpretive framework of qualitative research makes thematic analysis findings subjective because they depend heavily on applied theoretical lenses. The same textual evidence can lead scholars to opposing interpretations during gender and cultural analysis.

## **Data Analysis**

Danielle Steel's *Silent Honour* (1996) highlights various critical issues, with a prominent focus on the intersection of gender and cultural bias. The novel displays women through stereotypical ७२२ images which illustrate ancient patriarchal and nationalist societal perspectives. Throughout the narrative most female characters demonstrate their respect for established societal positions and their traditional gender roles. Through Hidemi's portrayal as Massao Takashimaya's wife the book demonstrates societal prejudices about women. Within Kougyo Sanjirail Hidemi emerges as a character with minimal education who holds deeply to family standards that exist since her ancestors' time. The character demonstrates clear opposition to modern progress by keeping out of her husband's political science work as an educational leader at the University of Kyoto. This approach constructs a criticism about cultural viewpoints combined with gendered stereotypes which constrict women's capacity to take action while perpetuating native centric perspectives.

According to the text:

“She had no intention of moving an inch in honour of more modern inventions. And when it came to family matters, she clung to all the old ways dogged determinations” (Steel, 1996, P.16).

Throughout the text Hidemi shows complete loyalty to traditional values while resisting modern customs in order to preserve her heritage-based beliefs. Hidemi stands by her "old ways" in family decisions because society expects women to protect cultural heritage while



avoiding modern developments. Through this presentation Hidemi stands opposite to her modern male partner who carries intellectual progress which strengthens gendered contrasts between traditional women's practices and modern advancement. The narrative criticizes her cultural approach through a depiction of traditional attitudes as obstacles to make an implicit pro-gender bias linking women to static behavior with men to dynamic movement. Through this portrayal the narrative simultaneously restricts female empowerment and authorizes rigid stereotypes between progress and culture-based customs whose sole existence obstructs so-called modern advances.

Traditional patriarchal societies embrace male infants as symbols of honor and social achievement whereas female infants match a social failing due to paternal norms.

“But the baby is a girl, His mother-in-law lowers her eyes in grief that her daughter has so badly failed her husband, by giving him a daughter” (Steel, 1996, P.21).

The text expresses the cultural force which pressures women in patriarchal societies through its clear connection of feminine value with the birth of male babies. A combination of societal beliefs reinforces the belief that daughters create burdens instead of value yet every girl's birth signifies dishonour to the family. These societal norms *thiên* dehumanize women and sustain continued gender-based discrimination which leads women to adopt the roles of enforcing oppressive cultural traditions. Such examples show extensive bias incorporation into family structures which preserves institutional discrimination against women between different generations.

According to the novel protagonist Hidemi faces heavy influences from societal gender stereotypes and cultural preconceptions because the community follows traditional values. Above all she decides about her daughter's education while maintaining her traditional perceptions toward women's roles. Within this text we see her refusal to embrace contemporary thinking because she holds steadfast in preserving her cultural traditions as well as female social norms.

“A lot of wild American habit, Hidemi said disapprovingly, and Massao sighed in despair. She was a wonderful wife, but she had very definite, and very traditional ideas about their children particularly their daughter.” (Steel. 1996. P.42).

In this excerpt we see how Hidemi lets her background attachment to cultural tradition alongside prejudiced gender notions prevent her from understanding the value of diverse learning scenarios. Hidemi expresses her dislike for American wayward conduct to display her discomfort toward anything that threatens her traditional patriarchal and local worldview. Massao demonstrates his confusion through deep feelings of disappointment at Hidemi's unwillingness to see how their daughter would grow in an innovative setting. The tension between tradition and progress fully exposes cultural biases which prevent women from intellectual and social growth as opportunities for development exist. High levels of protective behavior toward her daughter by Hidemi originate from caring intentions but are principally a resistance to change and reflect cultural restrictions that block women from reaching their potential.

In the novel early marriage becomes a central element which drives women's lack of learning because social prejudices toward both gender and traditions play a substantial role. Massao favours the educational move of their daughter to California because he believes it will enrich her world view. Hidemi rejects this educational opportunity because traditional cultural expectations combined with gender norms stop her from considering anything else better than marriage for their daughter. A married woman's identity stands above all else in the patriarchal views which reduces female opportunities to receive proper education or gain personal liberty.

Social expectations known throughout society trap women into fixed social roles which work against their freedom to advance their skills and personal power.

“Hidemi did not want to send her daughter abroad. She wanted to send her to be a Buddhist nun or call a go-between and find her a husband” (Steel, 1996, p.42).

Hidemi refuses to let her daughter study abroad although she supports traditional Japanese cultural expectations for women. Instead of pursuing her daughter's educational growth Hidemi insists her daughter must take part in domestic duties whether through a Buddhist nun or becoming a wife. Traditional cultural gender beliefs limit women's worth just to their household roles so they become more important than their intellectual or individual advancement. From Hidemi's viewpoint we learn that these deeply-rooted beliefs strongly control women's independence while maintaining culturally acceptable expectations that limit their pathways beyond domestic roles.

During wartime the cultural and gender prejudice led to the demonstration of women's illiteracy in the book. After arriving in America to study Hiroko discovered she would face an enemy status following the bombing of Pearl Harbor which led to a wartime declaration. Education becomes impossible for Hiroko because cultural prejudices toward Japanese during wartime unite with expectations about gender roles after Pearl Harbor. During the war Japanese people face camps while fighting to survive yet the combined impacts of societal cultural and gender-based biases stop Hiroko from receiving education.

“At the end of March, the armed soldiers ordered Japanese communities to sell their homes and businesses in six days. The army was setting up camps for them” (Steel, 1996 p.205).

During wartime Japanese communities suffered harsh challenges because of widespread cultural and racial discrimination that disrupted their daily existence. Forcible Japanese dislocation while dealing with coerced business disposals demonstrates both discriminatory ethnic prejudice and official rights suppression. The loss strikes women from these communities twice as hard because it reduces both their personal freedom and educational resources and growth potential. Moved forward by oppressive societal mechanisms which combine cultural prejudices with gender barriers the Japanese population particularly their females remain susceptible to both exploitation and social disempowerment leading to worsened conditions for their marginalization.

Amid the heightened racial tensions during World War II, Japanese individuals, particularly women, faced significant cultural biases that impacted their safety and opportunities. As evident in the text:

“The Deans informed Takeo that because of political climate at the moment and the way girls apparently are reacting to it Hiroko is not safe here, we cannot be responsible for her, if things like this can happen, and for own sake we cannot, let her stay here” (Steel, 1996, p.193).

This passage highlights the impact of cultural and gender biases on Hiroko's safety and future, particularly during politically charged times. The decision to remove Hiroko, based on her gender and the prevailing political climate, reflects an underlying belief that women are more vulnerable and less capable of navigating societal upheavals. The Deans' conduct illustrates the cultural prejudice towards Japanese people in regard to the war, while the dismissal of Hiroko's agency is shaped by her gender and ethnicity. This illustrates a more profound and systematic denial of her personal autonomy that sustains broader cultural and gendered oppression that curtails her freedom and options. In terms of the previously mentioned child

neglect, this demonstrates how those societal factors marginalize women and restrict their education and self-growth.

Under traditional gender roles and cultural bias, women raised in a patriarchal environment tend to remain ill-educated and gullible towards practices that have come down from many generations.

This just goes to show how deeply respect for traditions can be instilled in one, as is the case with Hiroko, being a product of such a background and whose father holds more modern views. Her reluctance to embrace education, even when offered the chance to study abroad, reflects the strong influence of these inherited customs, which restrict her potential. As evident in the text: "Hiroko had been schooled in a very possible ancient tradition before her grandmother died the year before, and Hidemi herself continued all of them with great passion" (Steel, 1996, p.42). This passage underscores how traditional gender expectations and cultural biases shape Hiroko's identity and choices, limiting her opportunities for growth and education.

In *Silent Honor* by Danielle Steel women's lack of education and easy belief systems show strong associations with both society-based gender expectations about sons and cultural traditions of son preference. Under the influence of her uninformed status and traditional patriarchal environment Hidemi accepts that only male children serve her husband faithfully while female children generate negative social consequences. Within this cultural worldview she demonstrates how female identities narrow down to only manifest through their role in producing sons. Her strong belief in all things makes it difficult for her to critically evaluate traditional beliefs so she continues believing in worthless conventions. As evident in the text:

"I pray every day that it will be a son" (Steel, 1996, p.14). "You must not say that, Massao San! She was afraid that even thinking about a girl just now will bring on to them. You must have a son" (Steel, 1996, p.14). Through these lines we realize the ongoing cultural biases and gender prejudices which control Hidemi's thinking while maintaining women's minority status in conservative society.

## **Conclusion**

In *Silent Honor* (1966), Danielle Steele details the ways in which gender and cultural barriers are presented in her characters' narratives, specifically examining the social restrictions placed on women in a patriarchal, culturally biased society. Through Hideki's strict practice of traditional cultural values, the book shows how cultural stereotypes limit Hiroko's educational opportunities while undermining her pursuit of personal independence. Drawing on postcolonial feminism, Steele examines how women throughout society struggle with cultural rules imposed by entrenched patriarchal traditions. This analysis shows how women experience marginalization through cultural intersections with gender, which limits their activities beyond social conformity.

Throughout *Silent Honour* (1996) traditional gender roles are challenged because the story follows characters caught within cultural prejudices though the storytelling proves how challenging freedom becomes while dealing with these realities. Through opposition from her traditional mother Hidemi Hiroko seeks to discover trends in modern schooling along with Western culture. Personal empowerment fails to balance against societal pressure which makes cultural values and traditional gender roles collide. By using an ethnocentric and postcolonial viewpoint the book examines how prejudices and stereotypes establish boundaries that prevent women's progress and build human marginalization. The story delivers its message about

dismantling these biases because it establishes that society needs change towards more inclusive equality for postcolonial women.

In order to develop integrated approaches to address the gender and cultural biases present in *Silent Honor*, it is necessary to develop methods that support women in maintaining their independence in patriarchal post-colonial societies. When schools prioritize women's education and break away from old cultural gender norms, women from marginalized communities gain the strength they need to overcome social limitations. The emerging intercultural dialogue should maintain respect for different cultural practices while giving women the opportunity to make life choices without discrimination. When communities challenge traditional cultural beliefs and ensure gender equality through their structures, we can shape a modern future where women transcend cultural boundaries that exist in timeless customs.

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