

EXPLORING DANIYAL MUEENUDDIN'S *IN OTHER ROOMS, OTHER WONDERS* THROUGH HEIDEGGER'S CONCEPTS OF THROWNNESS, FACTICITY, AND AUTHENTICITY

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Abstract

This study explores how Daniyal Mueenuddin's In Other Rooms, Other Wonders reflects Martin Heidegger's philosophical concepts of thrownness, facticity, and authenticity. The research examines the lives of the characters to understand how their personal situations, life circumstances, and choices relate to these existential ideas. Using a qualitative approach, the analysis focuses on selected lines from the short story and interprets them through the lens of Heidegger's thought. The findings show that the characters' struggles, limitations, and decisions highlight the tension between the conditions they are born into and the authentic choices they make. This study contributes to literary criticism by connecting philosophical theory with contemporary Pakistani fiction.

Keywords: Daniyal Mueenuddin, In Other Rooms, Other Wonders, Heidegger, thrownness, facticity, authenticity, existentialism, Pakistani fiction.

Background of the Study

Daniyal Mueenuddin's short story collection "In Other Rooms, Other Wonders" (2009) offers a vivid and realistic portrait of life in Pakistan, showing the deep divisions between the rich and poor, the powerful and powerless. His stories revolve around ordinary people who often face situations they did not choose but must live through. This reflects the human condition described by Martin Heidegger in *Being and Time* (1962), especially his concepts of thrownness, facticity, and authenticity.

Thrownness refers to the idea that humans are born into conditions they never selected, such as their family, culture, time in history, and social status (Heidegger, 1962). In Mueenuddin's work, characters like Saleema, Husna, and Rezak are born into poverty and limited opportunity. They do not choose these circumstances, but their lives are shaped by them. Heidegger explains that this is part of the human experience, we are "thrown" into the world without our consent. In addition, facticity means accepting that certain facts of life cannot be changed. It is about living with the reality of one's background, social position, and past experiences (Heidegger, 1962). In *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders*, facticity appears in the way characters understand their limits. Saleema, for example, knows that her social background makes it almost impossible to rise in society, even though she tries to do so.

Moreover, authenticity in Heidegger's philosophy means living in a way that is true to oneself, despite limitations. It requires recognizing one's thrownness and facticity, and then making choices that reflect one's true self. In Mueenuddin's stories, some characters accept the roles

given to them, while others try, sometimes unsuccessfully, to live more freely. For example, Husna chooses to live with Haroun, a wealthy landlord, in hopes of improving her life. Whether this is authentic or not depends on whether she is acting from her own genuine desires or merely adapting to societal pressures.

In short, this research connects modern Pakistani fiction with Heidegger's existential philosophy. It shows how literature can reflect deep truths about human existence, especially in societies marked by inequality. While Mueenuddin's work is deeply rooted in Pakistan's social and cultural realities, Heidegger's ideas provide a universal framework for understanding the struggles of his characters. By combining these two perspectives, the study aims to highlight the timeless question of how people live with circumstances they did not choose and how they search for meaning within them.

Research Objective

To examine how Daniyal Mueenuddin's *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* reflects Heidegger's ideas of thrownness, facticity, and authenticity in the lives of its characters.

Research Question

How does Daniyal Mueenuddin's *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* reflect Heidegger's ideas of thrownness, facticity, and authenticity in the lives of its characters?

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore how Daniyal Mueenuddin's *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* shows Heidegger's ideas of thrownness, facticity, and authenticity in the lives of its characters.

Literature Review

This study reads Daniyal Mueenuddin's *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* through Martin Heidegger's ideas of thrownness, facticity, and authenticity. The literature relevant to this project comes from three main areas: (1) core Heideggerian concepts and how they are used in literary study, (2) critical work on Mueenuddin's stories (especially themes of class, gender, and representation), and (3) methodological guidance for close/textual and thematic reading. The scholar summarizes the important findings from these areas in simple language and show where my study fits.

In addition, Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* explains the three key ideas this study uses. Heidegger says people are always "thrown" into a situation they did not choose (their family, era, social position). These given conditions, what he calls facticity, limit and shape possible choices. Authenticity is the hard work of facing those facts and living honestly from them rather than hiding behind social roles (Heidegger, 1962).

Philosophers and literary critics have used Heidegger to read novels and poems because his ideas help explain how characters respond to limits set by history, society, or the body. The Stanford Encyclopedia entry on Heidegger provides a clear summary of these concepts and shows that Heidegger's ideas have been widely applied beyond philosophy, in literature, art, and cultural studies (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, n.d.). Many scholars find Heidegger useful because he links inner experience (mood, choice) with social and historical structures, precisely what we need to study characters like Husna, who live inside a class system.

Besides, since its publication, Mueenuddin's collection has attracted attention from reviewers and scholars for its careful, sometimes ambivalent depiction of Pakistan's rural and elite worlds. Critics praise the book's craft, the clear, quiet style and the way it shows people at different social levels (Americana E-journal, 2010). At the same time, several academic studies have focused on politics of representation, gender, and class in the collection:

In this connection, some scholars argue that Mueenuddin's stories highlight class divisions and social dependency. Linguistic and stylistic studies (e.g., transitivity analysis) show how language in the stories constructs class differences and material concerns (Butt et al., 2021). These studies demonstrate that the text repeatedly shows how ownership, possessions, and social roles define characters' lives.

Furthermore, feminist and postcolonial critics have examined how women in the stories are often vulnerable and how their bodies and choices are shaped by a patriarchal society (various journal articles and theses). A recent paper in a Pakistani humanities journal reads the collection as engaged in contested representation of rural Pakistan, pointing out how the text can both humanize and exoticize its subjects for Western readers (Nazir, Hussain, & Hussain, 2022).

Several studies also describe Mueenuddin's art as a social tableau: the old feudal class, the servants, and the nouveaux riches all interact in ways that expose changing power structures in Pakistani society (review and critical essays). These studies are helpful because they show what is already known: the collection is deeply concerned with class, power, and gender. But most existing work analyses these themes through sociological, postcolonial, or linguistic lenses rather than through existential philosophy.

Additionally, methodological literature shows that applying a philosophical concept to a text requires careful, text-based evidence and clear steps: choose relevant passages (purposive selection), code them by concept, and interpret them in light of theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2014). Literary scholars have successfully used Heideggerian readings to show how characters' choices and moods reveal deeper structural conditions (see reviews and thematic applications in literary journals). This supports the method used in this study: close reading guided by Heideggerian categories.

Moreover, scholars have thoroughly discussed Mueenuddin's themes of class, gender, and representation, and linguists have shown how language builds social difference. Heidegger's ideas are widely used in literary criticism, but there are few detailed Heideggerian readings of Mueenuddin's stories, and especially little that focuses on a full interplay of thrownness, facticity, and authenticity in a single character study.

This study fills that gap by applying Heidegger's three concepts directly and in detail to Husna's story. It does this through purposive selection of passages rich in existential meaning, and it uses a thematic-textual method (close reading and thematic coding) to show how Husna's life is shaped by unchosen conditions and how her attempts at agency move between inauthentic performance and rare authentic recognition.

Research Methodology

This chapter explains how and why the research was carried out, the type of research, how the data was collected, and the method used to analyse it.

3.1 Research Type

The present study is qualitative in nature. Qualitative research is used when the aim is to understand meanings, experiences, and concepts rather than to measure them in numbers. As Creswell (2014) explains, qualitative research "explores and understands the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 4).

Since this research focuses on applying Heidegger's philosophical concepts (thrownness, facticity, and authenticity) to Danyal Mueenuddin's short story *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders*, it requires in-depth interpretation of language, events, and characters, something numbers cannot capture. Therefore, a qualitative interpretive approach was most suitable.

3.2 Data Collection Method

The data for this study was collected through purposive sampling from the text of the short story *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders*.

Purposive sampling means selecting the material that is most relevant to the research objectives (Palinkas et al., 2015). In this case, only those sections of the story that clearly illustrated Heidegger's concepts were chosen. The documentation method was used to collect the data. Bowen (2009) explains that the documentation method involves "a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents, both printed and electronic" (p. 27). Here, the "document" was the literary text itself. Passages that were rich in the existential themes being studied were highlighted and extracted for further analysis.

The reason for using purposive selection rather than random selection was that not all parts of the story relate to Heidegger's concepts, and the study aimed to focus on the most relevant sections. This made the analysis more focused and meaningful.

3.3 Data Analysis Method

The study used thematic textual analysis. Thematic analysis is defined by Braun and Clarke (2006) as "a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (p. 79). In this research, the "themes" were already guided by Heidegger's philosophical framework, thrownness, facticity, and authenticity.

The analysis process involved the following steps:

1. *Reading and Familiarisation*: The short story was read several times to fully understand the characters, events, and context.
 2. *Identifying Relevant Passages*: Passages that clearly reflected the chosen Heideggerian concepts were underlined.
 3. *Coding*: Each selected passage was coded under one of the three key concepts (e.g., "T" for thrownness, "F" for facticity, and "A" for authenticity).
 4. *Interpretation*: Each coded passage was interpreted in the light of Heidegger's definitions, with reference to the broader context of the story.
 5. *Connecting to Theory*: The final step connected these interpretations back to Heidegger's existential philosophy to see how the concepts are represented in Husna's life and decisions.
- This combination of purposive sampling, documentation, and thematic analysis allowed for a deep, focused, and theoretically grounded exploration of the story.

3.4 Theoretical Framework

This study uses Martin Heidegger's existential philosophy as the main theoretical lens. Heidegger, in his work *Being and Time* (1927), explores how human beings (*Dasein*) exist in the world. According to him:

Thrownness (*Geworfenheit*) means that people are "thrown" into circumstances they did not choose, such as their family, culture, time in history, or social class. This starting point is beyond their control but shapes their life.

Facticity refers to the fixed, factual conditions of life, things like where we are born, our past actions, and unchangeable situations that we must acknowledge.

Authenticity means living in a way that is true to oneself, making conscious choices rather than blindly following social norms, even within the limits of thrownness and facticity.

In *Other Rooms, Other Wonders*, these concepts help in understanding how characters navigate the constraints of their birth, social position, and personal histories, and whether they act authentically or inauthentically in response to these conditions.

Analysis & Discussion

Thrownness (Geworfenheit): we are born into situations we did not choose (family, history, class).

Facticity: the concrete facts of our life (body, social status, memories) that limit what we can do.

Authenticity / Inauthenticity: Authenticity is accepting those facts and acting genuinely from them; inauthenticity is hiding, pretending, or living by roles imposed by others.

1. Thrownness: the world Husna did not choose.

Husna is thrown into a broken aristocratic past and a rigid social system. She did not pick her family history, her class, or the gender expectations that limit her choices.

Her grandfather had still owned thirty or forty shops in the Lahore Old City, but these were sold off before the prices increased... Husna's family, a cadet branch, had not so much fallen into poverty as failed to rise."

"When she went out in society with Begum Harouni, Husna was not a guest, not even really a presence, but a recourse for the old lady, to fetch and carry..."

These lines show Husna's inherited position, a family that used to have status but now survives at the margins. Her social role (companion/servant) is not chosen; it is given to her by history and gender norms. That is thrownness: arriving in a life shaped by forces outside her control.

She had spoiled herself with daydreams, until her parents were afraid of her moods... She despised them for living so much in the past, retelling the stories of their grandparents' land and money.

Her parents' nostalgia underscores their "thrownness" into a post-colonial economic order where old wealth dissipates, leaving Husna with only the "stories" of lost privilege.

The aforementioned lines portray that Husna's *thrownness* is triple-layered: historical (family's decline), economic (lack of capital), and gendered (servitude as the only viable role). Heidegger's thrownness reveals how her agency is circumscribed by these pre-given conditions. Her attempts to "rise" are always already mediated by her facticity.

2. Facticity: the hard facts that limit Husna. Husna's possibilities are shaped by bodily, social, and material facts that she cannot simply undo.

The irregularity of her features, her straight, dry hair, her small mouth, all caused her to cringe inwardly... She had neither talent nor beauty. Only determination and cunning distinguished her, invisible qualities."

Wearing clothes just better than those of a maidservant, she saw them [elite men] from a distance at weddings... Their sons became ministers at thirty, immaculate, blowing through dull parties.

"The bare concrete steps, layered with dust, leading up into rooms without windows, the walls painted bright glossy colors, as if to make up for the gloom.

The said lines from the short story indicate three kinds of facticity such as:

Bodily facticity: Husna's looks are a fixed fact that affects how others treat her and what opportunities appear.

Class facticity: Her upbringing and poverty keep her close to wealthy people but outside their circle.

Material facticity: Her home and surroundings are concrete reminders of limited social mobility.

These facts do not disappear when she tries to act differently; they shape how others see and respond to her.

3. Authenticity and inauthenticity:

Heidegger says authentic life accepts thrownness and chooses meaning within it. Husna rarely lives authentically; she more often acts in ways that hide or deny her situation.

Lines that show Inauthenticity

She sensed that all this might come to her through Harouni, if she became his mistress... She had expected this to be as simple as the signing of a check, a payment. "

"Their eyes met; they both saw the joke, and he allowed himself a tight-lipped smile... 'Your crocodile smile, the one I like.

Husna treats becoming K.K.'s mistress as a transactional shortcut, a role she can play to get money and status. Her smile and flirtation are performances: ways to manipulate appearances rather than to live from an accepted self. These strategies are understandable responses to her facticity, but they are not authentic because they avoid a clear acceptance of her life and its limits.

Lines that reflect authenticity

For a moment the romantic girl awoke, who would have accepted another man, one her own age, from her own station... Goodbye to the life she would never have. "

"I have no power. You are important people, and I'm nothing, and my family is nothing. I have to obey.' The finality of this rang true, the absence of appeal.

In brief reflections Husna recognizes what she has sacrificed and what she will never have. When she admits, "I have no power... I have to obey," she faces the truth of her condition. That admission is an authentic moment: she owns her thrownness and facticity without pretending otherwise.

In short, Husna's life dramatizes Heidegger's existential structure. She is thrown into a declining elite family and constrained by gender and class. Her facticity, her looks, poverty, and social position, limits her choices and pushes her toward performative, inauthentic strategies (using charm, becoming a mistress, hoarding goods). Only in rare moments of honest recognition does she approach authenticity by admitting the truth of her situation. The story therefore shows how social structures can prevent authentic existence: Husna's attempts to escape her facts only deepen her alienation until loss forces a brief, too late clarity.

Findings

This research examined Danyal Mueenuddin's *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* using Martin Heidegger's existential concepts of thrownness, facticity, and authenticity.

1. Thrownness

The characters in the story are placed into situations and social classes without their choice. For example, servants and lower-class workers in the feudal setting are born into poverty and must live within a rigid hierarchy.

Heidegger's idea of thrownness (*Geworfenheit*) means that people are "thrown" into the world in specific circumstances that they did not create. In the story, Husna's life is shaped by the fact that she is born into a poor background, limiting her opportunities. This shows that her starting point in life was not her choice, yet it determines her struggles and decisions.

2. Facticity

Facticity refers to the unchangeable facts of life, such as one's birthplace, family, or social status, that create limitations. In the story, Husna's poverty, gender, and dependence on Malik Sahib's household are examples of facticity. She cannot change her background or the patriarchal structure of the society she lives in. These "facts" define the conditions within which she must act. The characters' attempts to improve their lives, often by forming relationships with powerful people, show how they navigate within their facticity.

3. Authenticity

Authenticity means accepting the truth of one's situation and making choices that reflect one's own understanding of life, rather than blindly following social expectations. In the story, most characters live inauthentically because they conform to societal norms or try to survive without questioning the system. Husna partly acts authentically when she chooses to live with Malik Sahib, knowing it is the only way to secure stability. However, she also compromises her independence, showing the tension between survival and self-defined living.

Conclusion

The study finds that *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* reflects Heidegger's view that human beings are always born into specific, uncontrollable situations (thrownness), must live within certain unchangeable facts (facticity), and face the challenge of living true to themselves (authenticity).

Furthermore, Danyal Mueenuddin's portrayal of the feudal society of Pakistan shows how deeply these existential conditions affect people's lives. The story reveals that while individuals have some freedom to act, their choices are heavily shaped by the circumstances into which they are born. Husna's life journey demonstrates that achieving authenticity in such a restrictive world is difficult, especially for women in lower social classes.

Lastly, this analysis proves that Heidegger's existential philosophy provides a powerful lens for understanding not only individual struggles but also the broader socio-economic and cultural forces that shape human existence.

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