



Repression of Women in Bapsi Sidhwa's Novel “The Pakistani Bride”

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses deeply into the issue of female corporeality and how the individual transforms the ensuing anguish into psychological strength. This research paper explains how their physical suffering turns into a safe sanctuary for their mental and emotional needs, offering them a space to reflect of their own and decide for themselves. The characters she created are hardly revolutionary; rather, they are imaginative, lovely, strong-willed, bold, and modest. It is made abundantly clear in the book that Sidhwa aims to depict both the reactionary and subservient sides of women's character. Women are constantly expected to be passive and obedient. They don't have the right to speak out against men's immorality. However, the paper also demonstrates the fearless and defensive qualities of women's nature in the face of society's mistreatment of them.

Bapsi Sidhwa is the best English-language novelist in Pakistan. She was born in 1939 to a well-known Parsi family in Karachi. She holds citizenship in Pakistan, India, and the US but she would rather be called a "Punjabi Pakistani-Parsi woman". English literature was brought to life in Pakistan only by Bapsi Sidhwa. It is for this reason that she became known in Pakistan as a pioneer of women writers and of the English language. The only person in Pakistan who was able to revitalize English literature was Bapsi Sidhwa.

Bapsi Sidhwa's writings frequently include female characters whose bodies are the target of attempts by male characters to control them sexually, physically, and mentally. These characters, however, make it clear that they reject the societal norms and conventions that justify the exploitation of women by men. They disagreed with the rules and regulations that patriarchal society had imposed. The narratives in most of her works depict ordinary Parsi society, making them largely autobiographical in nature.

One can examine Bapsi Sidhwa's feminist views as they are expressed via the many characters in her novels by reading them. Sidhwa is among the best English-language novelists in Pakistan. She has also written and published several books and short tales. *The Bride from Pakistan* is the most significant piece of feminism-related literature written by Sidhwa. *The Pakistani Bride* is a heartbreaking book that portrays the dreadful pre-wedding experiences of a girl named Zaitoon and her subsequent life in the predominantly male Kohistan, Pakistan. The story of the book revolves around the life of Zaitoon, an orphan raised by Qasim. The tale opens with partition-related rioting, during which Zaitoon's parents are killed by the mob. Following her parents' murder, Qasim adopts Zaitoon, raising her as if she were his own. Afterwards, she is forced to wed a tribal man who destroys her marriage. The novel's central theme is how men in traditional tribal society restrict women in an environment of psychological and sexual harassment.

Three significant female characters in the book—Zaitoon, Carol, and Saki's mother, Hamida—serve as symbolic facets of the issues that women in the patriarchal society face. These various issues become metaphors for the horrific experiences that suppressed women have to deal with. Women's lives are getting worse. *Bride* highlights how the female bodies convert this corporeal pain into psycho-emotional empowerment.

Simone de Beauvoir addresses issues of women's freedom, marriage, and parenthood in her book *The Second Sex*. According to Beauvoir, women have traditionally been assigned to marriage by society. According to her, marriage has always been very different for men and women, on the other hand, are incorporated into households headed by fathers and brothers, and women and The masculine society permits to attain self-fulfillment as husband and father.

Bride tells the tale of the fearless bravery of a Zaitoon girl who, after her adoptive father's pledge to his clan's man, married a Kohistani tribal. She had to give in to her father's demands in order to protect his honor and her own romantic aspirations to lead a life straight out of a fairy tale in Kohistan. She encounters the harsh realities of a Kohistani "tribal" life as soon as she marries him. Her husband

beat her, mistreated her, and behaved as though she were a nonhuman animal whose only purpose was to carry out his whims. She first accepted the physical and psychological harm that men—mainly her husband—inflicted on her body, internalizing the resulting scars. When Qasim has made arrangements for her to wed a young guy who comes from his own mountain tribe. The news shocked her more than a bit. She is ignorant of the local tribes and the highlands, nevertheless. There was a strange thrill she got from her marriage and her goals. However, Qasim's decision was not supported by Miriam and Nikka, who argued that she should have married a guy from the plains. When she finds out about living in the highlands, she begs her father to put off their marriage. He was unfazed, though, and now threatens to kill her if she disobeys and violates his word.

The Pakistani Bride (1990) defines corporeality/body under a variety of terms since it stands at different points on a continuum of anguish and the ensuing sublimation. It is a notion that is connected to both mental and emotional suffering in addition to physical or corporeal pain. Body/corporeality tortured and sexually abused (with reference to Zaitoon, who must endure not only physical but also psychological suffering) and sexual assault twice, once at the hands of her own husband and again by two strangers.

"Monica Ali and Bapsi Sidhwa" (2015) Sivangi Rudra focuses on Pakistani women as victims of male brutality, including physical assault, rape, domestic violence, and psychological abuse, who are objectified both culturally and sexually and suffer both physically and socially as a result. But the primary goal of her research is also to investigate any connections that might exist between the abuse that women experience as a result of their oppression in Pakistan's patriarchal society and their mental illnesses.

Status of Women in Pakistani English Fiction: A paper of Pakistani Postcolonial Fiction (2012) by Zia Ahmed is another pertinent research paper that examines the many roles that Pakistani women play in the sociocultural framework of Pakistani society. The writer has identified the neglected and suppressed status of women in Pakistan, as highlighted by Pakistani writers Ahmed Ali, Zulfiqar Ghosh, Bapsi Sidhwa, and Nadeem Aslam (2004).

By showcasing the diverse social origins of Pakistani women—the wealthy and the impoverished, the learned and the ignorant, the young and the old who prove to be each other's pillars of support and strength—Zia Ahmed provides a broad picture of their life. The writer endeavors to investigate the psychological issues that Pakistani women encounter due to persistent subjugation,

physical aggression, and sexual mistreatment; yet, he falls short of portraying the shifts in women's societal perspectives and their rejection of patriarchal roles. Despite her suffering, she managed to escape the cruel cruelty and forbidden norms of Kohistani society. She endured the torments on her own, turning her psycho-emotional suffering into strength and power from tortured body and suffering spirit. When things got tough, she helped herself. She forced herself and called on her inner resources to help her live whenever she felt like she was on the edge of passing out.

After considering the issues mentioned above, it can be said that Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride* traces the history of female servitude in Pakistan and reflects the stereotyped societal conventions that prevailed in the country at the time of division. Every single female character in the book, Afshan, Zaitoon, Hamida, Mariam, or Carol; in particular, Zaitoon, who overcame adversity to accomplish her goal, bearing physical reminders of her wretched escape. Zaitoon rose to become a symbol of strength, bravery, and tenacity.

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