

# PORTRAYAL OF POWER DYNAMICS IN BAPSI SIDHWA'S NOVEL 'THE PAKISTANI BRIDE'

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## ABSTRACT

This research paper spotlights Michel Foucault's concept of power in Bapsi Sidhwa's Novel 'The Pakistani Bride'. The paper draws our attention to the fact that 'power is everywhere' and 'comes from everywhere' as stated by the French Postmodernist- Michel Foucault. The work will portray that it is the power that controls one's brain, body, conduct, and the choices that one makes. The accepted practices and norms are the result of power. The paper exhibits the traces of power concept especially the normalizing power in the novel 'The Pakistani Bride' and how it is used as a form of social control by taking few incidents from the novel.

**KEYWORDS:** Power, Knowledge, Discourse, Michel Foucault, control, The Pakistani Bride, Resistance, Discourse

## INTRODUCTION

The present research paper consolidates Foucault's conception of power to concentrate on how it has been depicted at different places in Bapsi Sidhwa's 'The Pakistani bride'. The fundamental point of consolidating Foucault's idea of power is to imagine his concept of power and to reveal an alternate insight into the manner in which it has been featured in Bapsi Sidhwa's 'The Pakistani bride' by taking few occurrences from the novel. Just like the works of other eminent writers, Foucault's works can also be elucidated in a number of ways. Accordingly, this research paper will show how power has been practiced in Bapsi Sidhwa's 'The Pakistani bride' and by what medium or procedure.

## PORTRAYAL OF POWER IN 'THE PAKISTANI BRIDE'

In the primary section of the novel, we discover that the central character, Qasim, who is a ten-year-old boy, has been handed a gun by his father and is being told that he's to be married as a fellow tribal who has failed to repay a debt has promised Qasim's father his daughter instead. This is the first instance of normalizing power

because the boy doesn't comprehend what a wedding may entail however agrees to what his father has said.

Qasim was ten years old when his father, hunching by a strident little mountain stream, told him: 'Son, you're to be married!' The pronouncement had little effect on Qasim, but a moment later, when his father placed a heavy muzzle-loader in his arms, Qasim flushed with pleasure (Sidhwa, 1983).

As indicated by Foucault, it is the power that shapes our convictions, wants and choices. Power is all over. Michel Foucault, the French postmodernist, has been immensely compelling in forming understandings of power, driving ceaselessly from the examination of entertainers who use power as an instrument of compulsion, and even away from the watchful structures in which those entertainers work, close to the possibility that 'power is everywhere', diffused and typified in the talk, information and 'regimes of truth'.

The novel 'The Pakistani Bride' also describes how the thought is built right from childhood which is also an outcome of the power that exists everywhere. Even if a youngster isn't educated by anybody that he ought to dominate a female or not, the thought of dominating a female is ingrained in his/her mind resulting in the power influence that exists everywhere in the society. When Qasim's father wanted him to marry at the age of ten, he readily accepted it thinking that he would have a playmate and also he would have the authority of teasing and dominating someone. But after the marriage when Qasim came to know that he had married a girl who is five years older than him, he was distressed:

Qasim was delighted. Not only did he have a gun; he was to be married also. As a proposed groom he was immediately adorned with embroidered waistcoats, turbans, and new clothes. Chickens and goats were slaughtered. The women bustled about, and he was the glorious centre of all their activity and attention. The jealousy of every unmarried fellow, his age, he was the recipient of man-to-man ribaldry and guidance. Above all, there was the prospect of a playmate he knew he would have the authority to tease, to command about and to bully! (Sidhwa, 1983).

When Qasim's father wanted him to get married, he acknowledged it cheerfully feeling that he will get a playmate and furthermore on the grounds that there was a possibility of a playmate to whom he would have the assent of bothering, commanding and menacing.

A few years ago Michel Foucault and Noam Chomsky showed up on a Dutch Television program where they bantered on the theme: "Human Nature: Justice versus Power" in which Foucault discussed power. He demanded the possibility that knowledge and power are interrelated. At the end of the day, power comes from knowledge. Foucault believes that power

controls us without fail and it is all over the place. There is some power that controls us and that power is a normalizing power.

The age of Qasim was ten while Afshan was fifteen years when they got married. This is the second instance of normalizing power. The couple didn't know each other's age at the time of their marriage however they got married as a result of an obligation by their parents. It's only after their marriage that Afshan got to know that she had been married to a child but she didn't react to it openly. She thought that she should live her life as per matters and conjointly for society. This is a quite common situation in society even today also because most of the people or youngsters accept what is being decided by their parents or society even if it is against their conscience:

Her heart choked with distress: she was married to a boy! Hastily she looked up. She looked in amusement at the childish, frightened face and the slanting, flinching eyes watching her as if she were about to spank him. Was this a joke? She looked beyond him, fervently hoping to see the man who had pushed his small brother forward to tease her. But there was no one. 'Are you my husband?' she asked incredulously. Qasim nodded with woe-begone gravity. The girl didn't know whether to laugh or weep. She had been told that her groom was very young, but she had thought that he would be, like herself, at least of fifteen years. She began to laugh but her tears of disappointment slid down her cheeks (Sidhwa, 1983).

Foucault challenges that power is used by individuals or people via 'wordy' or 'sovereign' demonstrations of control or pressure, seeing it rather as scattered and inescapable. 'Power is all over the place and comes from all over' so in this sense it is neither an organization nor a structure.

Sidhwa has completely and efficiently dissected the widespread issue of women's oppression and their smothered craving to survive with the minimum confidence level. She has fervently depicted the torn estimations of these womenfolk to accomplish concordance in the stifled methods for endurance in male predominant society.

In the second part of the novel when Qasim goes down to the Punjab plains looking for work, he rescued a young girl Zaitoon whose guardians were butchered. He then decided to take care of the little girl and started living in Lahore with Zaitoon. Their life was going smooth, however, when Zaitoon was sixteen years of age this cheerful section of Zaitoon's life reached a conclusion when Qasim, keeping a guarantee, weds her to his cousin's son back in the mountain area. Here we can see two examples of power: Firstly, Zaitoon doesn't have any desire to surrender the city life and secondly, her father constrained her to wed without knowing her decision and consent and furthermore without believing that the young girl's way of life doesn't coordinate with the boy to whom she will be hitched:

Bibi, we talked of your marriage. Zaitoon felt her body tremble. She froze, digging painfully into Qasim's legs. 'Sit down, child,' he said, 'what do you think of it?' Zaitoon pulled her chaddarahead over her face. Her voice was barely audible. 'Anything you say, Abba.' She waited. The hookah burbled moderately whenever Qasim drew on it. 'You saw the stranger I was talking to?' she nodded. 'That was Misri Khan, my cousin. I've promised you in marriage to his son Sakhi.' Zaitoon sat still and unmoved. A blind excitement surged through her (Sidhwa, 1983).

Zaitoon once attempted to converse with her father that she does not want to marry the boy who lives in the mountain zone as her way of life doesn't coordinate with the boy and his family yet

her father denied her solicitation. Zaitoon had no way out so she needed to acknowledge the decision taken by her father. This is what Foucault regards as 'Disciplinary Power'.

Discipline, according to Foucault's historical and philosophical analyses, is a form of power that tells people how to act by wheedling them to adapt themselves to what is 'normal'. It is power in the form of correct training.

Abba, she sobbed, 'I don't want to marry. Look how poorly they live; how they eat! Dirty maize bread and water! My stomach hurts' (Sidhwa, 1983).

In 'The Pakistani Bride', Sidhwa introduced three wedded couples, Afshan and Qasim; Zaitoon and Sakhi; and Carol and Farukh before the readers. The writer examines the organization of marriage. How the foundation of marriage is controlled furthermore, abused to give lawful approvals to the allotment and repeal of women's personal freedom. At the point when Afshan is married to Qasim, the son of Arbab, it isn't she who acknowledges him verbally rather an old aunt.

Thrice she was asked if she would accept Qasim ... as her husband and thrice an old aunt mumbled 'Yes' on her behalf (Sidhwa, 1983).

Even though these words are from a woman's mouth however she also has been raised and her philosophy molded in a male-closed-minded society where anything that authorizes some opportunity of the decision to ladies is viewed as distortion and a deviation from the standard. When Zaitoon turns ten, Mirriam who itself is a woman gives the following opinion that Zaitoon would be safe at her in-laws' house.

She'll be safe only at her mother-in-law's ... A girl is never too young to marry (Sidhwa, 1983).

In the last part of the novel, Zaitoon chose not to bear the existence brimming with the affliction

that she had gone through in the mountains. So she chose to flee from the life of mountains going out. She fled however she didn't have the foggiest idea about the courses in the mountains yet she makes this move to stop her suffering. In this manner, it is Zaitoon's own choice that has given her the fortitude to make the trying stride.

Foucault is one of the few writers on power who recognize that power is not just a negative, violent or repressive thing that forces us to do things against our wishes, but can also be a necessary, high-yielding and positive force in society (Gaventa, 2003).

Foucault believes that opposition is in power not outside to it. It is itself a part of power in which power involves obstruction. As indicated by Foucault, the opposition isn't something that makes us liberated from power. Power is practiced over a free individual.

Foucault no longer accepts that power stifles, disregards, isolates, disguises, or stows away rather he suggests that power is gainful.

Foucault researches the subject of power and gives another investigation. Instead of essentially expecting that power is belonging or that power is the infringement of somebody's privileges, or as the Marxist scholars have accepted that power relations are dictated by financial relations, Foucault certifies that power is not any more an item which can be controlled by somebody or a few gatherings. Foucault contends for the ramifications of power with knowledge so the entirety of the information we have is the outcome or the impact of intensity battles. There is no general public without power and accordingly, nobody can live outside the relations of power. Foucault analyzes the connection of individual and society believing that the individual isn't feeble against gatherings or social foundations. He doesn't lessen the imperatives forced to people, yet connects that force isn't restricted to a specific

circle, yet is dissipated all through the general public. Power is without a doubt related to persecution and mastery yet power is likewise profitable and makes advancement conceivable. Power is positive and gainful and it ought not to be viewed as just as severe and suppressive.

Power is closely linked with knowledge like the both sides of the same coin. So in this regard, "Mechanisms of power are simultaneously instruments for the formation and accumulation of knowledge (Townley, 1994).

So as stated above, according to Foucault, it is the power that shapes our beliefs, desires and decisions. Foucault insists that power is all over the place, not because it grasps everything, but it is because it comes from all over the place. He recognizes there is no power that is practiced without a series of aims. It results from the decision or choice of an individual subject. He additionally surrenders that 'where there is power, there is obstruction, but this opposition is never in a place of exteriority according to power.

## CONCLUSION

As indicated by Foucault, power is everywhere and it comes from everywhere. It controls one's brain, body, conduct, and the choices that one makes. The accepted practices are the result of power. The concealment looked by different characters in the novel are the aftereffect of the cultural talk that has been shaped that males are destined to rule the females and also, the choice of the marriage must be taken by the guardians regardless of whether there is no match between a male and a female.

In this research paper, the occurrences that have been taken from the novel 'The Pakistani Bride' depicts that individuals go probably as a vehicle of Power, the segments of verbalization and an effect of power. Therefore, Foucault has rightly said that

the individual is an aftereffect of power and a transmitter of power.

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