

Subjugated Women in Baldwin's *What the Body Remembers*: A Postcolonial Feminist Reading

Najiba Hasan Ahmed ¹, Saman Salah Hassan²

¹Soran University, ²Salahaddin University

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Abstract

Shauna Singh Baldwin in What the Body Remembers (1999) closely studies the Indian social structure and examines the marginal position of women within it. She surpasses the patriarchal framework as the only system that marginalizes women and addresses issues related to caste, class, and religious boundaries that further aggravate the female position. Although her protagonist is of Sikh descent, the novelist conceptualizes the heterogeneous experiences of Indian women, and in support of this notion, she crafts her female characters from various social levels. Through adopting a postcolonial feminist perspective, the present work explores the intricate mechanisms by which various social constructs subjugate women differently. Despite being oppressed in one way or another by social ranking, some of her female characters still maintain caste and religious systems to exclude and subjugate women from the less privileged social strata.

Keyword: caste, gender, postcolonial feminist theory, religious diversity, and socialization.

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Najiba Hasan Ahmed
Soran University
nha880h@ena.soran.edu.iq

Asst Prof Dr Saman Salah Hassan
Salahaddin University
saman.hassan@su.edu.krd

Introduction

Indian women are not only considered subordinate to men, but they are also not granted equal opportunities, rights, and privileges among themselves within a complex social structure. The extent and nature of the subjugation encountered by a woman are determined by the multiple identities imposed on her. Baldwin demonstrates the unique experiences of each female character to depict the diverse levels of oppression that a single woman may encounter, distinct from those faced by other women. She produces a thorough account of the gender, class, caste, and religious realities of Indian women. According to Baldwin, the initial manifestation of female oppression lies in the inequality between genders, which commences with a female infant's birth. She criticizes the process of socialization, which endeavors to silence women to varying degrees.

For Indian women, the stratification of society into multiple lines is as rigid as gender discrimination. In theory, Sikhism calls for equality among all individuals and rejects the idea of superiority or inferiority rooted in birth. When it comes to practice, caste, class, and religious diversity are spotlighted. The caste or religious identity, inherited at birth, is used to include or exclude certain groups. Dominant groups are privileged by exploiting the labor force of people of lower social rank. Therefore, the maintenance of the social stratum is upheld

by the dominant castes. Social boundaries serve as the yardstick for the inclusion or exclusion of distinct collectives. They create unequal relationships among women and derogate those at the bottom of the social ladder.

The diverse levels of women's oppression within the heterogeneous Indian society have necessitated the writing of this research. The aim of this study is to uncover the status of women and the various manifestations of subjugation they encounter within the social stratification of India. Baldwin portrays women as conforming to structures that put them at a significant disadvantage in some way. Confronting social boundaries and resisting the prevailing expectations of being wives, daughters, and sisters are formidable challenges that women face. Baldwin questions social hierarchies, which define women on the basis of religious and social affiliations.

This study embraces numerous inquiries that will be addressed through a postcolonial feminist lens. The main research questions are: What are the different forms of subjugation a woman faces? How does socialization contribute to the transmission of diverse social stratifications from one generation to another? How do women collaborate with an oppressive structure despite being themselves subordinated within it?

1. Gender: Initial Domain of Female Marginalization

Gender-based discrimination commences at the very moment of birth. It is even fostered and communally deeply ingrained as time passes by. There are numerous instances in the novel where the female gender is discriminated against and looked down on. As a case in point, although Roop's mother's health deteriorates, the emphasis is on the infant's gender. Roop's mother gives birth to a boy, and Khanma declares, "It's a boy!", She announces it triumphantly (Baldwin, 1999, p. 33). The midwife experiences a sense of joy and achievement

after attending to a woman who gives birth to a son. Social attitudes towards the gender of newborns remain constant across generations. El Saadawi analyzes the status of female offspring and writes, “a daughter does not bring with her the advantages of a son” (2015, p. 101). The entire family celebrates when Roop delivers a son, but does not welcome her first infant, a daughter. After more than four decades since her previous birth, Satya, in her rebirth, notices rejection from her new family because of society’s unchanged patriarchal attitude towards females.

Baldwin portrays the consistent state of women’s circumstances throughout generations and the sorrow felt by their families at their birth. El Saadawi writes:

The first aggression experienced by the female child in society is the feeling that people do not welcome her into the world. In some families, and especially in rural areas, this 'coldness' may go even further, and become an atmosphere of depression and sadness, or even lead to the punishment of the mother with insults or blows or even divorce (2015, pp. 26–27).

Baldwin illustrates women’s mistreatment for delivering the wrong sex through Lajo Bhua’s verbal abuse by her husband after decades of their marriage; he says, “useless woman, I have paid two dowries for marrying you, no sons you brought me” (1999, p. 77). Although Lajo delivered two daughters, they are unrecognized as the family heirs. Thus, the sole aim of marriage is to produce a male offspring.

The phenomenon of gender disparity is carried out through the process of socialization. Baldwin represents young girls as inherently endowed with self-reliance. Roop exhibits courage and nonconformity by pursuing unconventional activities. She engages in horseback riding, swimming, boxing, and playing with her brother and with her Muslim friend. Her unconventional behaviours threaten her extended family. Her family tries to civilize and nurture her according to Sikh

cultural standards. Girls are taught to conform to their inferior position as the weaker gender. Mishra et al. state that “the socialization process instills in the minds of the girls that they are inferior and subordinate” (2012, p.45). The socialization process shapes a child's self-perception and perception of others. Roop does not adhere to instructions unquestioningly. She objects to being excluded from her mother's cremation ritual and says, "Why can Roop not be with Mama to hold her hand and say farewell?" (Baldwin, 1999, p. 36). She questions the patriarchal mindset and criticizes gender discrimination in religious practices, which manifests through her mother's immolation ritual.

According to Baldwin, the primary goal of socialization is to dehumanize women. The older generation of both genders—males and females—within the household engages in robbing girls of their voices and transforming them into mere puppets. Before marriage, Roop and Madani are socialized by several individuals, including Papaji, Gujri, the family servant, Nani (grandmother), Lajo Bhua, and Revati Bhua, a distant relative from the extended family. In order to attend school, Roop and Madani take up temporary residence with Lajo Bhua, who is a remote relative of Papaji. Lajo Bhua undertakes the responsibility of socialization through the implementation of a consistent devolution strategy. She imparts three principles to be followed by them: not to say ‘no’, avoid anger, and use a soft tone in conversation.

Girls face more restricted social expectations than boys. Although Roop desires physical training, she is dissuaded from physical exercise since it is considered a male domain. Verghese and Pagnis state, “girls also grow up with clear-cut social expectations” (1994, p. 149). Jeevan, Roop's brother, is encouraged to build muscles to join the army and defend his land. Men are seen as protectors and providers, so they must be physically strong, while women are limited to domestic duties like hygiene and taking care of others. Roop's

nonconformity is punished from a patriarchal perspective. Hence, early on, the division between the domestic space and the public realm is distinctly defined for males and females. Gujri, despite being the family's servant, is in a position to confront and criticize Roop for her male attributes. She prolongs male dominance and hinders female empowerment by limiting Roop's body's complete development. Baldwin notes that some behaviours admired in males are deemed inappropriate for females: "boy's things happening in a girl's body" and "everyone will say let-her-be-alone" (1999, p. 229). Verghese and Pagnis claim that "gender role socialization is sometimes described as the making of cages that restrict the full development of human beings" (1994, p. 149). Thus, Roop is expected to accept her vulnerability and defer to established social standards.

Baldwin perceives women's definition as physical beings as a primary obstacle to their development. From a young age, Roop and Madani are taught to prioritize their physical appearance over cognitive advancement. The prospective husband's well-being is taken into account to preserve the woman's physical charm. Sudha argues that "still women are socialized with marriage as an ultimate goal" (2000, p. 188). When exposed to sunlight, Gujri reminds Roop to protect her skin from tanning: "You will get dark, no one will marry you if you lie in the sun" (Baldwin, 1999, p. 57). Madani acknowledges the significance placed on women's bodies when choosing a spouse. She is now enslaved by her appearance, intending to hide her bodily imperfections from her future in-laws. She asks Roop, "If I don't smile, do you think they will notice my teeth?" (Baldwin, 1999, p. 84). Thus, a woman does everything to appear physically attractive and neglects her intellectual aspect, a feature undervalued by the traditional community.

Men are typically considered protectors, while women are perceived as requiring male protection. The older generation of women also accepts their

vulnerabilities and submits to the concept of male protection. On her deathbed, Nani, Papaji's mother-in-law, who temporarily lives with the family, pleads with Papaji to promise to take care of Gujri. She is a widow who works as a family's servant and, therefore, is a woman without any family support or protection. Women are always defined as the weaker gender and require male protection, as illustrated via Gujri, who is depicted as powerless and dependent on Papaji for safeguarding and support. On the contrary, she spends most of her time in the kitchen, cleaning and serving other family members, but her labour is unrecognized.

Baldwin shows how the Sikh community restricts a girl's diet based on superstitions. Gujri links Roop's 'quarrelsomeness' with specific food and denies her chicken: "eggs and meat for a girl? No, don't waste them" (Baldwin, 1999, p. 20). Moreover, nutritious food for females is believed to be a waste due to their imposed inferior position compared to males. Gender inequality in food distribution among siblings is carried on across generations. During the partition, the family faces a shortage of food on their way to India. Roop's daughter, Pavan, receives a cucumber sandwich while her son is served chicken.

Sons are preferred because they carry the family's lineage and ensure its continuity. Mishra et al. write "the desire for a male child to continue the family lineage" (2012, p. 51). Although highly educated, Sardarji prefers sons to daughters and seeks a second wife to have a male heir. Lerner says, "In marriage, the wife was expected to produce offspring, namely, sons" (1986, p. 170). Sardarji wants a son to continue his legacy to achieve immortality; he says, "because without sons to remind the world of its doer, a man's work dies at the same instant as a man's body" (Baldwin, 1999, p. 134). Sardarji believes that daughters are less valuable and intends to continue attempting to have a son. Roop's stress reaches a degree when she shares the unfortunate news of Pavan's birth with her natal

family; "she writes the sad news in a telegram to Papaji" (Baldwin, 1999, p. 171). She feels guilty for giving birth to a female and for failing to fulfill her husband's wish for a son.

Mothers of male children need not be distressed about their future in old age, as their sons are expected to attend to them. Baldwin writes, "a woman who has sons will never be alone in her old age" (1999, p. 101). Daughters have a lower status in society, so their parents do not reside with them. Additionally, males are seen as the providers, and in-laws believe it is inappropriate to rely on their daughters' husbands. Roop's grandmother, Nani, finds it a humiliation to eat and lodge with her son-in-law; "and take from a daughter's family? What, you think I am so shameless?" (Baldwin, 1999, p. 63). On her deathbed, Nani gives Papaji a golden necklace as compensation for temporarily staying at his house. This norm has not altered at all across two generations. After decades, Roop's father refuses to rely on his daughter and son-in-law. Migrating to Delhi, Papaji chooses to live alone instead of depending on his son-in-law and his daughter's family.

In Sikh tradition, women are not given inheritance rights. The son inherits his father's possessions after his death. Baldwin disapproves of this custom. Satya, who is from the Rajput caste, is deprived of her inheritance, and her brother receives it. Upon Papaji's death, only Jeevan is entitled to land inheritance, while his daughters are excluded from any share. This discriminatory practice is applied to all women, regardless of their religious, caste, or class status.

2. Females' Status Within Caste/Class Stratification

Baldwin touches upon the heterogeneity of female experiences. To demonstrate this, she chooses her female characters from different social settings. Women from different classes and caste backgrounds follow various ethical

principles. Middle-class women, as represented by Roop's family, are limited to domestic duties and taught appropriate customs for their status. Women from lower social classes and castes, as conceptualized through Gujri, Mani Mai, Revati Bhua, and Jorimon, serve as helpmates in upper-class households, while women from higher classes fulfil their obligation as objects of male gratification and are excused from household responsibilities. Sangari says, "women of all varnas could not be clubbed together under the same set of patriarchal norms" (1995, p. 3381). Mani Mai tells Roop, "Don't worry. Cooking is not what women like you are for" (Baldwin, 1999, p. 154). Thus, Roop is exempted from cooking and falls into the category of a pleasure-giving object after marriage.

The control of female sexuality through the framework of marriage is utilized as a mechanism to maintain power dynamics. Marital unions are organized within specific religious, socioeconomic, and caste affiliations with the objective of fortifying societal demarcations and hindering the inclusion of marginalized groups. In the novel, the future of the younger generation's marriages, including both daughters and sons, is determined by elder family members, primarily fathers. The primary objective of marriage is not to establish a family unit, which is a married person's entity; it is profoundly influenced by societal elements such as class and caste affiliation. Chakravarti affirms that "caste cannot be reproduced without endogamy" (2018, p. 26). Although the caste system has its roots in Hinduism, followers of Sikhism also adhere to its principles. Thus, Papaji upholds the caste system for marriage despite believing in egalitarianism and the equal purity of all castes, including untouchables. He does not follow inter-caste marriage, and as the privileged caste, he strives to uphold social standards. Chakravarti states, "since marriages must conform to the rule of endogamy in a caste society, there is a crucial relationship between caste and gender in the perpetuation of the caste system" (2018, p. 27). Finding a

suitable groom for Roop is challenging due to the limited number of Sikh families in Pari Darvaza. Sikh families in Pari Darvaza belong to the lower caste system known as ‘untouchables’, unlike Papaji’s elevated status. Baldwin elucidates, “there are no Sikhs in Pari Darvaza whose sons are equal to Deputy Bachan Singh in birth, and no offers have come for her from caste-Sikh families in villages around” (1999, p. 101). Jayawardena elaborates that “later developments, however, restricted this practice and made the choice of husband subject to caste and parental control (2016, p. 124).

Women from underprivileged backgrounds seek social status through marriage. In marriage, a man's prosperity matters, and some women attempt to acquire a lavish lifestyle through their spouses' wealth. One of the factors contributing to Roop's approval of the proposition put forth by a landlord who is already married is his substantial financial resources. She dreams of wearing elegant attire and valuable accessories. Her restrained involvement in public life leads her to rely on marriage for financial fulfilment. Roop is an ambitious woman who aims to expand her horizons by marrying a wealthy man and exploring the world beyond her village's confines. She lacks self-confidence due to societal obstacles for women in a patriarchal society that denies their contribution to the public sphere and thus advances financially. However, Roop exhibits great drive for a life that surpasses her mother’s experiences.

Roop embodies a resolute stance towards her personal circumstances and societal expectations as a rural girl by refusing to succumb to them. Roop has a good kismet, which is constricted to the notion of marrying a wealthy man to enhance her social standing. Her unwillingness to help in the kitchen shows her rejection of the traditional female role of being a servile caretaker. Her husband takes advantage of her longing for costly, lavish apparel and employs it as a means to deceive her by offering gifts in order to compel her to comply with his

wishes. It can be argued that the very system employed by women to climb the social ladder emerges as a source of their exploitation. Men do not offer without expectations in return.

Some adherents of Sikhism, similar to Hindus, observe the principle of contamination rooted in casteism. In Papaji's household, Gujri holds the position of a servant and occupies the lowest rank within the family. Despite her disenfranchised position as a female and a servant, she still perceives casteless Sikhs as impure and refrains from any physical contact with them. She is responsible for feeding the harvesters, who are both casteless Sikhs and Muslims. To prevent any contamination from reaching Papaji's family, she breaks the very clay jar in which she offers them lemonade. Thus, the notion of caste purity has reached the deepest roots of society, wherein a woman of humble social standing perpetuates the very societal structure that has subjected her to marginalization in varying degrees.

Higher-caste women face more mobility restrictions in comparison to those from lower social settings. Chakravarti (1993) stresses that the practice of women's seclusion has been utilized to maintain caste integrity. To prevent social disgrace, Roop must constantly be escorted by an older female when pacing into public spaces, even during visits to nearby residences. Upper-caste women are often accompanied by a male relative or servant when entering public areas for the purpose of protecting the family's and religious group's honour. The husband of a high-caste young lady forbids her from traveling alone if he cannot chaperone her to visit her natal family. After three years of marriage, Roop is returning to her biological family with her husband's permission. She travels with a male servant and a female domestic helper to avoid being alone with a male servant.

Similar to Muslim women, Sikh women practice purdah, which entails the wearing of a chunni, prescribed for women of high caste. The imposition of

purdah relies on caste/class within the Sikh community. Women of higher classes adhere to purdah, while those of lower castes do not. Baldwin indicates, "Lajo Bhua is a slight woman of about forty-five who was never rich enough to be in purdah like Mama" (1999, pp. 75–6). Roop's mother adheres to purdah, whereas Lajo Bhua's poverty exempts her from this obligation. Females are expected to follow modest norms in their attire, conduct, vocal tone, and eye contact.

If fathers fail to monitor their daughters, older females may step in. Nani criticizes Papaji for Madani's uncovered hair. At times, elderly women tend to conform to societal and caste norms more than men do. Lerner states, "women have for millennia participated in the process of their own subordination because they have been psychologically shaped so as to internalize the idea of their own inferiority" (1986, p. 218). The male heads of families enforce patriarchal norms in determining female attire, which vary depending on the family's social position. Men with Western education regulate women's dress codes, distinct from other men. Sardarji, a Sikh man educated at Oxford, instructs Roop to wear a sari instead of Punjabi attire when they move to Lahore, as it is expected of civil servants. Purdah sometimes emerges as a protection measure. Huma, a Muslim woman, feels liberated by wearing a burqa to attend events in the public space without being identified.

Individuals of lower birth origin are exploited by the upper-caste people who carry on the structure. Lower-caste women are marginalized through their degrading, imposed roles. Khanma, a Muslim woman from an untouchable caste setting, exemplifies a female individual who faces disadvantages due to her gender, caste, class, and religious identity. She serves Papaji's family and is given menial jobs like looking after the family's animals and cleaning dung. Midwifery is regarded as a menial task involving the handling of bodily fluids and remnants. Khanma, who is not a midwife by profession, is assigned the role, despite her

lack of professional expertise in this field. Her responsibility entails tending to Roop's mother during the process of childbirth. The other family members are not given the task on the basis of their caste since women from higher castes are prohibited from touching dirt.

Despite her inferior position as a female, Satya misuses her privileged status in the caste structure to subordinate her inferiors. Power dynamics are at play, and those in positions of authority suppress the vulnerable. Spivak stresses female heterogeneity by "looking at subject-constitution-distinguishing between and among women" (1990, p. 13). Satya belittles Roop's education by labeling it 'village Punjabi', displaying a bias towards urban accents and underestimating rural accents. Roop is looked down upon by Satya, who considers her an unfit spouse for Sardarji, owing to her inferior caste. She judges Roop's competence on the basis of her village accent, educational background, and social rank rather than her personal talents. Satya instructs her servants to speak only Punjabi, disregarding the fact that Hindi and Urdu are their mother tongues. In the same manner, Satya faces discrimination and is othered by English ladies at parties due to her inability to speak English, the colonizer's language. Satya stereotypes Bengalis as lazy, "you Bengalis. So lazy!" (Baldwin, 1999, p. 289). The techniques used by colonizers to classify Indians as 'others' to legitimize their domination are adopted by Satya too.

3. Religious Diversity Adds to Female Subjugation

India is a society known for its heterogeneity, where religion plays a dominant role in determining the inclusion or exclusion of individuals. Spivak claims that "no Indian, expatriate or otherwise, could bypass the issues of violence in the subcontinent in the name of religious identity" (1989, p. 109). Religious boundaries are so profound that they encompass the elemental resources, including water, which emanates from the same land but is again

divided by men as Hindu or Muslim wells. In their visit to Lahore, Papaji's family chooses to drink water from the Hindu spout as there are no Sikh spouts. Sikhs and Hindus decline to provide water to Muslims or drink water from a Muslim well. This phenomenon demonstrates a tendency to marginalize Muslims on the basis of religious diversity and prolong their mistreatment by emphasizing their defilement.

From a tender age, a child is nurtured with biased principles in order to perpetuate religious diversity. While Sikhs are a minority group in India, they align themselves with Hindus rather than Muslims. In their visit to Lahore, the social dissection based on religion is reinforced in the public arena. Baldwin writes:

So now they are all in Lahore, though it did seem Roop, Revati Bhua, and Madani waited a very long time in the ladies' waiting room in Gujarkhan's train station listening to the cries from tea stalls: "Hindu chai!" "Muslim chai!" as Papaji counted out his precious silver rupees at the ticket counter (1999, p. 69).

Religious discrimination spreads throughout the country, both in rural and urban areas.

Huma, Abu Ibrahim's daughter, is in the same age group as Roop. They often play and spend time together either in the presence of their fathers outside their residence, who are also friends, or in one of the family's abodes. Baldwin manifests the situation of Muslim exclusion by both Hindus and Sikhs through the character of Huma. No matter what the class or social standing of a Muslim is, a mere touch is considered defiling. Although Gujri lies at the bottom of the social strata, she does not accept Muslims as her equals. When Huma enters Gujri's kitchen, she shouts at her, "Don't you ever come to my rasoi.¹ Again", it

¹ Rasoi is a Punjabi word for kitchen.

is Gujri, rushing forward with a hand raised to slap Huma. "Chi! Dirty girl. Don't you let your shadow come near it! Huh!" (Baldwin, 1999, p. 59). Although Roop and Huma are friends, this particular occurrence instills religious discrimination in their perception.

The enforcement of the principle of defilement, particularly against Muslim women, represents an additional arena of women's subjugation. Gujri, a Sikh, and Revati Bhua, a Hindu, plan to organize a purification ceremony because 'Huma', a Muslim girl, 'contaminates' the kitchen. Followers of Hinduism, and sometimes Sikhism, consider the mere shadow of a Muslim to be polluting. Gujri's instillation of Muslim contamination in Roop's mindset reflects her stance towards Muslims in her later stages of life. Roop refuses to consume water obtained from a Muslim well.² At the partition, when water is not easy to obtain. Chakravarti stresses that "pollution is the most visible and potent form by which exclusion is achieved (2018, p. 14). Muslims are considered unclean; thus, they are excluded by both Hindus and Sikhs. Huma faces exclusion due to her faith as a Muslim and her gender as a woman.

Papaji's opposition to his daughters' education on the principles of Islam and Hinduism is another instance of religious bigotry. Sangari insists that "religion as bearers of patriarchal ideologies do structure patriarchal arrangements at the level of prescription and practice" (1995, p. 3385). Papaji, as the head of a patriarchal family, raises his daughters on the principles of Sikhism. Baldwin articulates, "Madani and Roop will attend a boarding school for Sikh girls, Bhai Takht Singh's school, a place with walls twelve feet high" (1999, p.

² In India, religious bias is so entrenched that Muslims have their own well. Hindus and Sikhs use the same well, but Muslims are prohibited from drinking water from it, and they do not use the Muslim well either. Muslims are regarded as defiled by followers of both faiths. Both faiths consider Muslims impure. Although Guru Nanak (the founder of Sikhism) preached equality, Sikhs still adhere to the Hindu belief in social hierarchy.

79). Papaji allows Roop to read novels only written in ‘Gurmukhi’³ Alphabets; this illustrates that men control the arena of females' self-teaching. Thus, the intellectual development of a woman is strictly suppressed by her male kin.

In matters of religious selection and conversion, the patriarch decides the family's religious affiliation. Papaji enforces Sikhism on all family members without discussion: “from this day forward no one in this family will go any more to the Hindu temple” (Baldwin, 1999, p. 39). He even prohibits reading Hindu texts and cutting hair⁴. He imposes the recitation of Guru Sahib's Granth's hymns. Revati Bhua, a cousin who lives with them, despite being a Hindu follower, cannot defy Papaji's decision due to his position as head of the family. Her inferior position as a female leaves her powerless to disobey Papaji's decree.

Papaji's father selects Sikhism for his son due to 'son preference'. Baldwin adds, "and so my Papaji gave his words in the presence of the Guru, that if he was blessed with a son, he would make me a Sikh and call me a bachan⁵" (1999, p. 42). The Indian community is segregated by man-made divisions, with religion being the most rigid boundary. This is particularly true among the dominant Hindu group. A Hindu man defends his faith and chooses death over religious conversion. Longing for a male infant, Papaji's father presents an unexpected shift in religious perspective. He traverses his religious doctrine and sacrifices his son's faith for the sake of having a male successor.

Women and children comply with the decision of male heads on whether to relocate or stay in the newly established states of India and Pakistan. Baldwin writes, "everywhere, men are choosing to stay or choosing to leave. And where

³ Gurmukhi is an alphabetical system created by the Sikh religious group for their literature.

⁴ As per the principles of Sikhism, the act of removing or cutting hair from any part of the body is strictly forbidden.

⁵ Bachan is a Punjabi word that means “promise” in English.

the men go, women and children must go" (1999, p.389). Moreover, making the choice to remain in Pakistan or relocate to India is a matter of one's identification; Sardarji and Papaji hold the authority to resolve the national identity for their entire families based on religion. They resist converting to Islam and choose to leave everything they possess behind in sacrifice for their religion. The dictates of male heads concerning when and where to travel after the partition are strictly followed by women.

Baldwin tends to illustrate the maltreatment of Muslims based on their religious diversity, yet she does not make any effort to eradicate this suppressive practice. She presents Muslim girls as the most susceptible group, subject to religious bias in comparison to grown-ups within the societal framework. Despite facilitating solidarity among females from both religious affiliations, she does not endeavor to restore religious connections in order to cultivate a lasting and harmonious coexistence for both the Sikh and Muslim communities, taking into account their fluctuating historical background.

Conclusion

Indian women encounter marginalization on multiple levels based on their assigned identities. Gender-based subjugation is the first site of female oppression that lasts a lifetime. Roop encounters gender disparity, which is manifested in food habits, physical training, dress code, and mobilization. Baldwin illustrates socialization as a mechanism through which gender bias is passed on from one generation to the next. The patriarchal framework devalues women as mere physical entities, overlooking their position as independent individuals with distinct intellects, emotions, and characteristics. Women play a primary role in upholding patriarchal ideology and handing it down. Gurji and Nani, two women from different familial statuses and age groups, constantly observe Roop and

Madani's conduct. They are more patriarchal and eager to uphold norms than the male members of the extended family.

The second domain in which women encounter discriminatory practices is social categorization rooted in caste or class principles. The socialization process perpetuates caste and class hierarchy in society. Caste disparity is passed down through imposing caste-related norms, controlling female sexuality in endogamous marriages, and the choice of spouse. The caste and class systems exacerbate the position of women. While caste and class systems may grant a certain group of women some degree of privilege by relieving them of domestic chores, they ultimately marginalize them through segregation and exploit their sexuality to carry on inequality within society. Satya, a woman who comes from a privileged caste background, is disadvantaged by the gender system and racial prejudice, but she still manipulates her social standing to exert control over Roop and her servants.

The concept of purity, linked with both caste and religious affiliations, acts as a powerful mechanism for excluding women from the most vulnerable segments of society. Gurji, a servant, is located at the bottom of the social strata and is more marginalized and oppressed than other female family members. Despite being the victim of social ranking, she maintains the same strategy and considers Muslims and outcasts as impure; thus, she is incorporated into a structure that disadvantaged her the most. Gurji does not recognize Huma as her equal and excludes her, utilizing the purity notion. Gurji's unequal treatment of Huma serves as an indirect process of socialization that affects Roop's perspective on Muslims in later stages of her life. Baldwin discloses the intersections of gender, caste, class, and religious oppression against women. Khanma experiences marginalization across multiple dimensions. She is

subjugated as a female, Muslim, lower caste, and lower class; therefore, she occupies the lowest position within the social ladder.

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ژنی بندهست له رۆمانی بالدوین "ئەوێ که جەستە بیری دیتەوێ" خۆیندنهوهیهکی پۆستکۆلۆنیال فیمینیزم

نجیبه حسن احمد

پ.ی.د. سامان صلاح حسن

پوخته

شاونا سینغ بالدوین له رۆمانی ئەوێ که جەستە بیری دیتەوێ ١٩٩٩ بەوردی دیراسەیی پێکەتەمی کۆمەڵگەیی هیندی دەکات. دەروانیته پێگەیی پەرەزێ خراوی ژن له کۆمەڵگا . بالدوین چوار چێوێ پیاوسالاری وەک تاکە سیستەمی پەرەزێ خراوی ژن تێدەپەرێت. دەست دەبات بۆ پرسی کاست و پلەبەندی کۆمەڵگەیی و ئایین که پێگەیی ژن خراپتر دەکات. سەرەرای ئەوێ پالەوانەکی بالدوین سەر بە ئایینی سیغە رۆمانوسەکه دەروانیته ئەزموونە جیاوازیەکانی ژنانی هیند. بە پالێشتی ئەو بۆچوونە بالدوین کارمەکتەرە ئافەرمەکانی له ناستی کۆمەڵگەیی جیاوازی هەڵدەبژێرێ. بەبەکارهێنانی تیۆری پۆستکۆلۆنیال فیمینیزم ئەو تێکستە بەدوادەچوون بۆ میکانیزمی تێکەڵکردنێراو دەکات که پێکەتەمی جیاوازی کۆمەڵگەیی بە شێوازی هەمەجۆر ژن دەچەوسێتەوێ. سەرەرای چەوساندنەوێ ژن بە شێوێهێک له شێوەکانی بەپێی ریزبەندی کۆمەڵگەیی هەندێ له کارمەکتەری ئافەرم هێشتا پابەندن بە سیستەمی کاست و ئایین که رۆلی هەیه له زیاتر پەرەزێ خراوی و چەوساندنەوێ ئەو ژنانە که کەمترین ئیمتیازیان هەیه.

ووشە کلێهەکان: کاست، جێندەر، تیۆری پۆستکۆلۆنیال فیمینیزم، جیاوازی ئایینی، بەکۆمەڵگەییکردنی ئافەرم

النساء الخاضعة في الرواية بالدوين "ما يتذكره الجسد" : الدراسة النسوية ما بعد الاستعمار

نجیبه حسن احمد

ا.م.د. سامان صلاح حسن

ملخص

تدرس شونا سينغ بالدوين في روايتها "ما يتذكره الجسد" (١٩٩٩) البنية الاجتماعية الهندية عن كُتب، وتدرس المكانة الهامشي للمرأة فيها. إنها تتجاوز الإطار الأبوي باعتباره النظام الوحيد الذي يهش المرأة، وتتناول قضايا تتعلق بالنظام الكاست والطبقات الاجتماعية والحدود الدينية التي تزيد من تفاقم وضع المرأة. على الرغم من أن بطلنة روايتها من أصل سيخي، إلا أن الروائية تصوّر التجارب غير المتجانسة للمرأة الهندي، ودعماً لهذا المفهوم، فإنها تجسد شخصياتها النسائية من مستويات اجتماعية مختلفة. بواسطة تبني النظرية النسوية ما بعد الاستعمارية، يستكشف هذه الرواية الآليات المعقدة التي تخضع بها مختلف البنى الاجتماعية للنساء بشكل مختلف. مع أنّ تعرضهن للقمع بطريقة أو بأخرى بسبب الهيكل الاجتماعي، لا تزال بعض شخصياتها النسائية تحافظ على أنظمة طبقية ودينية لاستبعاد النساء وإخضاعهن من الطبقات الاجتماعية الأقل امتيازاً.

الكلمات الدالة: كاست، جندر، التقسيم الديني، التنشئة الاجتماعي، بوستكولونيال فيمينيزم