

Thus sexuality allows human beings to enter into loving relationships. It drives human relationality. In this regard, sexuality is not about gender, genitalia or sexual organs, rather it propels human beings into relationship. Hillela through her sexuality makes eternal relations with Whaila Kgomani. According to Kelly Brown Douglas, "In essence, sexuality is the vehicle through which human beings are able to live out the meaning of being created in the image of God." (Sexuality and the Sacred, 2010, 384) Sexuality is not simply means of reproducing species, family not is it simply implied for carnal pleasure rather it is integral to power. Power is exerted over people through careful manipulation of their bodies. After all, we develop our sexualities only within institutions and systems, never independently of society or history. Therefore, we cannot grasp sexuality's purpose and meaning by biology alone. A historical, contextualized approach is needed to analyze sexuality within social and political power relations. Thus sexuality is not fixed, it always remains in a flux, it keeps changing, reshaped, reformed, redeveloped, reinvented, reassigned. That's why Hillela's liberal, untamed sexuality in the very beginning of the novel gets reshaped in the later part of the novel, leading to liberation of Azania. She connects her sexuality with politics and finally brings liberation in South Africa. Her sexuality is not privatized, for her 'the personal is public'. Thus if we see closely and deeply, Gordimer affirms that sexuality issues are inevitably political and the most deeply personal, at the same time, is connected with the political.

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'Songs of Desire and Throe' – A Voice from Pakistan: A Study of Poems of Parveen Shakir

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Abstract: Parveen Shakir (1952-1994) is one of the prominent women poets of the twentieth century Pakistan who introduced a female perspective in the Urdu *ghazal*. The women in the Islamic countries as opposed to the women of the West have always been constructed as submissive, oppressed and backward. In a thoroughly male dominated country like Pakistan, the creative genius of a woman remains subdued. In such a socio-cultural scenario, Parveen Shakir as a poet presented a fine understanding of both the 'feminine' and 'feminist' identity of a woman. Her poems aim at redefining the space of a woman and reinstating her experiences in a gendered society. She not only emerged as a well known poet in the sphere that was primarily reserved for the males alone but also sensitized the people about the condition of a woman in a patriarchal society.

Keywords: *Ghazal*, *Nazm*, Identity, Feminist, Patriarchy,

Due to rapid globalization and unprecedented advancement in communication technology, the focus is now shifting from the mainstream to the languages and culture that were earlier relegated to the margins. The literary and poetic richness of Urdu can compete with many ancient languages. The contribution of *ghazal* has been extremely crucial to the popularity of Urdu literature. Originally, the Urdu poetic canon articulated strong personal emotions of love, beauty, intimacy, pangs of separation etc but gradually it also became responsive to a wider range of complexities of human thoughts. It began to encompass mysticism, philosophy, principles governing life and socio- cultural reality too. With the pioneers like Mirza Ghalib and Faiz Ahmed Faiz, the Urdu literary tradition became primarily male-centric. In a patriarchal society the inner experiences of a woman have always been rendered invisible because they were considered frivolous and trivial. The male dominated society has smothered the individual identity of a woman by promoting marriage and motherhood as the most important roles of her life. A woman's self-exploration leads her to the discovery that she is the product of a culture in whose making she has had a negligible part. The Islamic society too has been strident and heavily gendered for the women. Till a very recent time the Muslim women in the countries like Pakistan had to grapple with the basic issues of freedom to education and appearing in public domains. In such a cultural milieu Parveen Shakir emerged as one of the most prominent poets of the twentieth century

Pakistan because she tried to deconstruct the myth of male autonomy in Urdu poetry.

One of the most dominant refrains in literature had been that a great art is always neutral and transcends the specifics of race and sex. However, it gradually became evident that place, time, gender etc are very meaningful aspects of literature. Since the dawn of civilization the literary tradition had been male oriented, for a woman to indulge in creative writing was regarded as a deviation or abnormality. However, the twentieth century Pakistan saw a significant number of women writing Urdu prose and poetry. The reason behind it was the changing socio-political scenario of Pakistan and an increase in the rate of literacy of women. Modern women poets of Pakistan like Ada jafri, Parveen Shakir, Kishwar Naheed, Fahmida Riaz not only fixed the urgencies of women's creative process but also took into account the issues of identity crisis of a woman in a patriarchal society.

Parveen Shakir's poetry predominantly deal with themes of love, interpersonal relationship and independence of a woman from a female perspective that was almost absent in Urdu poetry before her. Owing to the society Shakir lived, she found herself trapped between two extreme binaries. On the one hand was the external and regressive world that marginalized her as a woman as well as a poet and on the other hand the internal and dynamic world of knowledge and creativity struggling to transcend the limitations of being a woman. The *ghazals* of Shakir depict the hidden longings, anxieties and desires of a woman who is entangled in the patriarchal code of conduct. Her poems are not merely a mode of self-expression but self-assertion. In her *ghazals*, she portrays herself as an emancipated woman who wishes to explore all the avenues of growth and development but at the same time the authority that a man has is an inseparable part of her psyche. The simultaneous existence of feminine and feminist trait in her poetry reinstates the fact that a woman is conditioned to adhere to the dominant social norms of patriarchy. Therefore, despite the best effort of a woman the traces of male superiority continue to persist in her mind. A girl child grows under the strict supervision of the agents of patriarchy that work through domestic, social and cultural institutions and hence it is not easy for her to let go of the self-linked taboos. As Kate Millet pointed out in her canonical text, "Sexual Politics" (1969) that a woman continues to remain in an oppressed state because she is conditioned to be social and sexual slave to a man. In the *ghazal* titled, "*Vo toh Khushboo Hai*" Shakir says,

*Vo toh khushboo hai, hawaon mein bikhar jaega,
Masla phool ka hai, phool kidhar jaega.*

In this couplet, Shakir identifies the flower with a helpless beloved and the fragrance with an unfaithful lover. These lines expose the vulnerability of a woman in a male dominated society in which she is emotionally and socially more dependent on a man than he is on her.

Flower is a recurrent motif in the poetry of Shakir. Just as a flower is rich and vibrant in colour, similarly a woman is expected to cast herself in the mould of subtlety and demeanor by the society. According to Shakir like a flower, a woman is supposed to render herself attractive to a man whereas he is like the intangible fragrance which can be felt for a transient span of time, after which it vanishes. Shakir critiques the belief of a man that it is his right to possess a woman as a commodity and abandon her at his will.

In another *ghazal* titled, “*Sirf Ek Ladki*”, Shakir highlights the desperate predicament of a woman who is caught in the ideological structures of the society. She remarks

*Sangdil rivazo ke, aahni hisaaro mein,
umrakaid ki muljim, main sirf ek ladki hu.*

In an androcentric frame work masculinity is associated with strength, self-assertion and superiority while femininity includes traits like passivity and docility. The sheltered and subdued life that a woman has to live in a male-dominated society makes her feel imprisoned. The speaker says that since she is but a woman so she should primarily be a devoted daughter, chaste wife and self-negating mother. Thus the reason for the abundance of images of circumscription in women's poetry is not far to seek. In the *nazm*, “*Nick Name*” Shakir writes

*Tum mujhko gudiya kehte ho, theek hi kehte ho,
Khehne vaaley sabhi haathon ko, main gudia hi lagti hu.*

In the poem Shakir does not rebel very vocally but her strategic silence offers enough resistance to the male oppression. A doll is an inanimate piece of decoration just like a woman in a patriarchal society. The cultural assumption sees women's essential function as the nurturer of the house in which a thinking woman is an aberration. The society deceives a woman into submission by conferring upon her the titles of a doll, angel etc. To quote Virginia Woolf, “The whole game plan is devised so subtly that a woman is forced into believing that this is her natural role in the society.” The inherent sarcasm in the couplet confirms that a woman is forcibly reduced to an acquiescent and silent object in a phallocentric culture. One of the chief characteristics that set the poems of Shakir apart from the other writers is that instead of confronting her oppressor boisterously with frank assertions, she compels the readers to empathize with the subjects of her poems.

In the *nazm*, “*Kanyadan*”, Shakir offers a scathing satire on the institution of marriage. The poem captures the troubled emotions of a young girl who is going to get married. Shakir describes the feminine charms of the bride at a great extent. However, the poem does not end expectedly. The men look at the bride like a wolf looks at its prey. Shakir writes,

*Jiske chaaro taraf,
Tashna hoto, girsana nigaho, latakti zabaano,
Badnageer gurrhito ka ajab gol hai.*

The verbal construction of sexual desire through the metaphors of brute hunting and savage appetite Shakir formulates the man-woman relationship as a game in which the man is a predator and the woman is prey. The tragedy is heightened when the poet says that the mother of the girl has selected an appropriate groom for her daughter because he is a as Shakir writes '*Zara kam zarar bhediya*' i.e. a less harmful wolf. The persistence of patriarchal ideology throughout history has enabled men to assume that they have the right to keep a woman as an entity that can be used for the gratification of sexual and emotional senses. The poem is a reflection of the hopeless and restrictive environment in which a woman finds herself.

There are strong feminist overtones in another *nazm* entitled, "Working Woman" in which the poet takes pride in her labour and asserts that she has toiled hard to carve a niche for herself in the society. She says that no one can claim even a minor contribution in her achievements. She writes, '*Mere saarey patton ki shadaabi, Meri apni nek kamai hai*'. Feminism, as a theoretical perspective critiques the subordination of women and envisions the possibilities of individual growth. Shakir does exactly the same in the poem. Her confidence is articulated through the following couplet

*Main ab har mausam say sar ooncha kar key mil sakti hu,
Ek tanavar ped hu ab main.*

The metaphor of a sturdy tree is conventionally employed for a man connoting that he is strong and self sufficient. However, Shakir compares herself to a flourishing tree subverting the stereotypical metaphor. She exposes the value of emancipation to the confidence of a woman. She tries to assert that the route of liberation from the clutches of patriarchy lies in emotional and financial independence of a woman.

In the *nazm*, "Misfit", Shakir tries to locate the reason of some people disapproving of the words of a woman while the others disapproving of her mannerisms. She complains,

*Mujh mein logo ko khush rakhne ka malka,
Itna kam kyu hai,
Kuch lafzo se, kuch mere lehze se khafa hai.*

A female child is raised to assume the roles set for her by patriarchy while the males are made conscious of their distinctiveness from the early childhood itself. Shakir in this *nazm* points out that if a girl deviates from propriety and expected code of conduct she is regarded as a 'misfit' in the society. From the very beginning restrictions are imposed on a female in terms of appearance, roles and functions. The sad plight is that even if a woman adheres to the notion of an 'ideal woman' she is still unable to satisfy the soaring expectation of the patriarchal society.