

SYMBOLISM AND THEMATIC CONCERNS IN “THEIR LANGUAGE OF LOVE” BY BAPSI SIDHWA

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ABSTRACT: *Thematic progression and the method of thematic development are applied in thematic analysis. The aim of current study is to study the distinct patterns of thematic distribution and choice which is revealed to the two types of structure, distribution and choice. It contributes towards the understanding and explicit description of these texts. Moreover, the approach taken in this study shows potential for further research and pedagogic applications. This research is pure qualitative elaborates the dimension of thematic apprehension. This research is very important for studying different themes discussed by Bapsi Sidwa. She is a great writer, authorized many themes related to the feminist fiction. Her short stories highlight the emotions with some calmness. It employs different techniques with a variety of themes. This study found that the female characters in ‘Their Language of Love’ Sidhwa has succeeded in conveying a portrait of real women which is both realistic and balanced. Moreover, this study also that the representation of these women is an ‘imitation’ of real women.*

KEY WORDS: symbolism, thematic analysis, reader response theory, women representation

INTRODUCTION

Bapsi Sidhwa started writing during the 1980’s, a time when women were not only supposed to be confined to the private background of homes but a time when there were almost no female postcolonial writers. Datta (2006) notes, “partition pushed women into fashion new survival strategies and opened up new avenues of education, training and employment for them...” (Datta, 2006). Her writing gave a voice to females of the subcontinent and Sidhwa continued to write as an advocate for the female population of Pakistan. She is a prominent female activist and has even represented Pakistan at the Asian Women’s Congress in 1975. Bapsi has not had much of a critical reception, although what has been written about her is favourable on the newspaper, reviews and interviews front, though Bapsi has been written about extensively and her work has been reviewed in the Times Literary Supplement, The London Review of Books and

New York Times and so on. Sidhwa's works are timeless and tell of the culture conflict in the movement and migrations of people.

Female characters in Sidhwa's work

Sidhwa's novels revolve around women and their circumstances. However, her collection of short stories entitled *Their Language of Love* is centered on women of another caliber. These women are neither defined by the male characters nor are they subjugated or oppressed by the male characters. The female characters are active movers of the stories. Bapsi Sidhwa successfully represented females who could remain within their houses while also having their individual voice. She represented a new type of female who created their own voice while not striving to overturn societal norms. This is exactly the type of female that Sidhwa has depicted in her collection of short stories, *Their Language of Love* where "Each story intricately places the protagonists in a cusp of several cultural worlds where they must negotiate differences of language, class and creed" (Goodyear xiii).

Each of the stories in this collection is about a woman, some of the stories are written in first person while others are written in the third person. The title story of this collection, *Their Language of Love* is about Roshni who is a newly married bride and who arrives in USA after her marriage. The story is about Roshni's physical as well as psychological journey. After her arrival in USA she gains a confidence that she did not possess before as Sidhwa writes, "Roshni could scarcely believe that she, the ugly duckling of her family in Balsa. She's show off all this splendor to her relatives when they visited. She yearned to see the expression of wonderment on their faces" (171). In "A Gentlemanly War" protagonist, Zareen is depicted as a distressed female during the 1965 war between Pakistan and India. However, at the end she comes to a realization about the underlying significance of the unfulfilled war that the male figures of the story do not acknowledge much less understand as she thinks "Going against the cynical logic of war, flying in the face of its brutal ethos, I believe that the underpinnings of strange miscalculation was an unacknowledged compassion" (28). "The Trouble Easers" and "Sehra-bai" is about mother-daughter relationships. "Defend Yourself Against Me" revolves around the story of female rape and how the female must be the forgiving entity at the end.

Representing female character in east and west

The most important aspect of all these short stories is Sidhwa's depiction of her female characters. They belong to all classes of life but they have one thing in common, their strength of character which can be seen in myriad ways whether it comes about it a perspicacious realization or moral courage. An important feature of *Their Language of Love* is the inclusion of two short stories, namely "Ruth and the Hijackers" and "Ruth and the Afghan" which is about a white American woman living in Pakistan. It is significant that Sidhwa has included these two stories because with their inclusion it seems as if Sidhwa is highlighting the fact that moral courage and strength of character is not limited to only the Eastern female rather it is something inherent in all females regardless of their nationality or their geographical location.

An important feature of Sidhwa's short stories is the way that she has represented her female characters. They are molded along the lines of feminism since they have been depicted as not only being equal to their counterparts, but they are invariably able to gain an advantage over them. However, Bapsi Sidhwa's representation of her female characters appears to be realistic. Therefore, simultaneously her representation is both realistic but female oriented. Sidhwa has been able to create a balance between both feministic portrayal and reality. She cannot be accused of exploiting the East to depict the downtrodden female figure; rather her female figure is one which is realistic.

Psychoanalysis as a narrative art

In Greek and roman culture, psyche, the soul was invariably a female figure. Grammatically her name in Greek was a noun of feminine gender. After the late nineteenth century when Freud gave the word "psychoanalysis", his narratives ratified an unhappy custom. (Elizabeth Abel)

Psychoanalysis is primarily a narrative art, concerned with the recovery of memory and desire. In Bapsi Sidhwa's collection "their language of love" "likes the characters of Virginia Woolf "each character cherishes different history and different fictions connect the pasts to the present by rendering the past primarily through memory." By requiring the readers to fabricate the links among the scenes, Virginia Woolf adapts a modernist strategy she projects retrospectively on a female precursor. (Elizabeth Abel)

Technique used by Sidhwa

Same technique was used by Sidhwa. Her female characters narrate their desires, emotions and memories themselves. So the females of all the short stories act as narrators and highlighted all the important events to the reader. They are the active movers of the stories. Bapsi Sidhwa presents an 'imitation' (as all art is essentially imitation) of women which is quintessentially well rounded and compelling. The female characters in Sidhwa's stories not only range from elitist to middle class but they also are varied in the roles that they occupy ontologically as daughters, grandmothers, wives and girlfriends. The combining factor is their strength and fortitude.

Realistic portrayal of female characters

Sidhwa's portrayal of female characters is realistic because she presents real females and subtly advocates their strength but does not use feministic posturing. These women are realistic not only in their characteristics but also in their actions and thinking. It is also important to note that Sidhwa's portrayal of the East is not one of exoticism or sensationalism. She attempts to present the East and the females of this region as they are without sensationalizing their plight. As a narrator, Sidhwa is adept at narrating sans unnecessary embellishment. The women in *Their Language of Love* are not presented as being either too romantic or flowery nor are they extremely rigid.

The reality presented by Sidhwa in *Their Language of Love* covered all the dimensions of the society. The female characters are presented against the backdrop of the social, cultural, moral and ethnic nuances of Lahore. The backdrop of Lahore is presented in terms of religion ("The Trouble Easers"), war ("A Gentlemanly War") and even from

the perspective of a foreigner (“Ruth and the Hijackers”, “Ruth and the Afghan”). This serves to support the realistic mimetic presentation of the female characters. Just as the presentation of the female characters is balanced and holistic, similarly the presentation of Lahore city is varied while at the same time being balanced. The backdrop of Lahore thus supports the mimetic representation of the female characters in *Their Language of Love*.

Objective of the study

The objective of this study is to analyze the female characters in *Their Language of Love* and to discuss how the representation of these women is an ‘imitation’ of real women. Therefore, Sidhwa has succeeded in conveying a portrait of real women which is both realistic and balanced. The ideas that objects are not copies of any reality that is presumed to exist independently of mind” Nothing at all we say about any object describes the object as it is in itself. We are not capable of attaining pure knowledge of objects in isolation from human modes of perception: we always perceive an object in terms of some one of its aspects (Gebauer&Wulf1995).

Any given objects can be made “similar” to each other or as Putnam expresses it, “in fact everything is similar to everything else in infinitely many respects”. For this reason it is not possible to find a theory of truth on the quality of similarity. In attempting, albeit on the basis of untenable theory opened the way to a future solution to the problems. What they are concerned with is an objective relationship between ideas and external objects (Gebauer&Wulf , 1995; 158).

Thematic concerns

It is through her female characters that Sidhwa touches upon several important thematic concerns as well ranging from religion to societal norms etc. Sidhwa is able to use the female characters as sounding boards for other problematic areas which are related to females in the Eastern background. Their representation is also the representation of various thematic concerns which are both socially and culturally significant.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Feminism in conjunction with representation becomes subjective, something which seems to be removed from reality as it can become a means of blatantly subverting the primordial male supremacy. Nevertheless, Sidhwa does not convey female characters who strive to change the order of the patriarchal society. This is different from the presentation of female characters of previous writers whose female characters were oppressed into silence and passiveness.

Androcentric societies serve to instigate women, the subaltern, not only to speak out but to bring about “Empowerment, on the other hand, is written as an appropriation of the spatial: creating new spaces, occupying existing spaces, or revalorizing negatively labeled spaces” (Christ, 1997). The empowerment of the female characters in *Their Language of Love* is not one which is limited to creating new spaces but it also expands to reaffirming and redefining certain spaces which have come to occupy not only social constructs but also the mental paradigms of the Eastern society. Feminism in the

developing or third world country then becomes a means of speaking out, it is no longer as Spivak(1999) says “ “For the true subaltern group, whose identity is its difference, there is no unrepresentative subaltern subject that can know and speak itself; the intellectual’s solution is not to abstain from representation. The problem is apparent that the subject’s itinerary has not been traced so far as to offer an object of seduction to the representing intellectual” (285). However, with the advent of various female writers who are writing for and about females in the third world, the previously colonized countries, there are now ‘objects of seduction’ which can be properly represented and allow for the subaltern’s voice to be heard. As Dom Moraes commented in her interview:

Their themes are really feminine. But times are changing. Though women writers have managed a spectacular absorption of these domestic writings to ignite their literary fire, their writings these days go beyond ‘hearth and home’ many modern-day women authors are now expressing themselves freely and boldly and on a variety of themes. Though there may still be cases of the occasional male envy, these new writers are not holding back in expressing the point of view from a feminist eye without adopting feminist postures.

Representation of female character

It also needs to be kept in mind that it is not just the female characters themselves but their representation which is of significance. Representation which is as Spivak (1999) puts it, “representation as ‘speaking for’, as in politics, and representation as “re-representation” in art or philosophy” (285). There presentation’ of female characters in Bapsi Sidhwa’s short stories justifies the moral image, as it entails a reconfiguring of the parameters of female characters in a patriarchal framework. Even though it is not exactly feministic in the sense that it does not overturn the patriarchal order but it does as Mary Wollstencraft points out “to persuade women to endeavor to acquire strength, both of mind and body, and to convince them that the soft phrases, susceptibility of heart, delicacy of sentiment, and refinement of taste, are almost synonymous [*sic*] with epithets of weakness” (Alexander, 1989: 3). However, it is not the eradication of feminine traits as Mary Wollstencraft advocates rather a combination of the feminine traits with strength of ‘mind and body’ which Sidhwa portrays in her short stories.

It is not only as Spivak(1999) points out ‘re-presentation’ but also a responsibility as (ibid) writes in her preface to Mahsweta Devi’s book *Imaginary Maps*, “When the subaltern “speaks” in order to be heard and gets into the structure of responsible (responding and being responded to) resistance, he or she is on the way of becoming an organic intellectual” (xxvi). This ‘organic intellectual’ must be as close to the original as possible while at the same time being an independently discursive source. The way of this representation brings out the politics of a gendered community such as Pakistan where the males are dominant. Consequently, it is rather a gender ideology which renders this representation to be hued. Gender ideology in the sense that can be defined as Danieli (2006) quotes Gramsci “Gender ideology is hegemonic in that it often does not appear as domination at all, appearing instead as largely consensual and acceptable to most in community. The winning of consent and the perpetuation of the otherwise tenuous relation of dominance” (Danieli, 2006).

Feminist literature

Writing in such a scenario where female writers have finally achieved some recognition becomes doubly important as not only are they writing but they are writing about subjects (i.e. females) which were either hitherto overlooked or they were only supposed to be passively presented. The female fiction written from a feminist perspective attempts to capture and debate the multiple aspects of female identity and thereby remains an important site of investigation as Felski (2003) writes: the deep rooted alienation of the female psyche in turn leaves its marks in women writing, which provides a key to the truth of female experience. Older writers such as Ahmed Ali who wrote *Twilight in Delhi*, only presented women as being objects to which things happened rather than the actual precursors of action. Sidhwa and other modern female writers have however shown how despite not being overtly feministic they are able to convey feministic leanings about women who are strong as Randir Pratab Singh writes in his book *Bapsi Sidhwa* “Sidhwa is a feminist. The western feminist literature has influenced her greatly but she does not see herself as a writer writing for women...Sidhwa is never anti-male” (viii). Speaking in the context of Arab Muslim women, Cooke (2001) explains how the conservative religious authorities in Arab world are publishing tomes about women’s importance to the virtuous Muslim community, they are also dictating constricting rules for their behavior (Cooke, 2001). This highlights a new kind of feminist, one who does not need to denigrate the male in order to justify oneself as Sunil Patil writes, “She is angry with the attitude of men and the age-old rigid convictions of the existing religions in the society, but she is not anti-religious or anti-male” (2).

Her representation is not one which entails a negation of the ‘other’ in this instance the male rather it is based and relies on the inclusion of the male. Sidhwa herself expressed a similar sentiment in an interview with GuaravSood, “I cannot talk for all South Asian women writers, but I imagine that as women, consciously or unconsciously, we bring out the problems and discrimination women face and project our aspirations. I myself don’t like to preach about feminism but the way the stories unfold illustrate their position in the family and in society”. For Sidhwa, the aspect to emphasize is not feminism itself but the topics which are inherent to feminism, namely woman’s position and how she can live on an equal footing in Pakistani society. The discrimination faced by women is something that she can rise above without being discriminatory herself. Therefore, Sidhwa subtly conveys a feministic strain but one which is composed of the commonly polemical nature of feminism, it does not disturb the communal ethos rather it serves to highlight it, she has a

Natural inclination to see humor even in tragedies”-which critics generally agree is the mark of a brilliant storyteller. At another place, she is quoted as saying that being a member of a minority community in Pakistan, she could see things more objectively than others in the ultimate analysis though, it is her subjectivity, her sensitivity to the subject she has chosen to write on, together for her love of being precise yet subtle in her description of certain situations that she has written about, that makes the internationally acclaimed mix. It is true of her, and true of all writers of ‘merit’. The precision comes after a writer works at

her or his craft, and should usually include a course on how to write on a subject without necessarily stirring a public controversy. (n.pag.)

Feminism in Sidhwa's work

Sidhwa does not only focus on Third World feminism which emphasizes the fact that women face different circumstances. Third World Feminism entails that it is too simplistic to group all women and their problems together under the blanket term of feminism. It is not only the "homogenous notion of the oppression of women... from Asia, Africa and South America into a single, coherent category" as compared to the singleness of the experience of the westernized, white woman. The feminization of the East Asian writing is both a realization of the importance of the male entity while at the same time the female entity trying to concretize her own importance. Cristine (2010) puts Georg Wilhelm Fredrick Hegel's master-slave dialectic theory in the following words

Human consciousness is an inherently social process, and one cannot be fully certain of their consciousness unless that consciousness is "mediated" through another entity. Basically, a person must receive acknowledgment of their consciousness from another person in order for that consciousness to exist. The result is that when two self-conscious beings (aka people) meet, both entities are completely fixated on receiving acknowledgment from the other, but neither is willing to give acknowledgment.

Feminism and Recent fiction

Feminism in literature refers to a mode that approaches a text with foremost concern for the nature of female experience in it. (Pandey, 2003). Sidhwa's female characters do realize that their consciousness and 'being' exist because they exist in comparison to the male characters so much so that they do acknowledge their male counterparts and are able to not only give acknowledgement but also are able to survive without receiving acknowledgment from the male characters. It is not as Sushila Singh mentioned in her book *Feminism and Recent Fiction* that, "Human experience for centuries has been synonymous with the masculine experience with the result that the collective image of humanity has been one-sided and incomplete. Woman has not been defined as a subject in her own right but merely has an entity that concerns man either in his real life or his fantasy life" (Preface 7). However, Sidhwa's portrayal of male and female characters is balanced, it is not one sided. Not only are her women characters 'subjects in their own right' but they also convey a truly 'collective image' of Pakistani society which is both balanced and complete. In fact, Sidhwa said in one of her interviews with Francesco Mannoni, "Women, their strength and vulnerabilities, and how they cope with what happens to them, are paramount in my stores. But my male characters are also victims of tradition and are as strongly portrayed". The male characters are also victimized and the female characters realizing this fact do not force any acknowledgment from the male characters. It is not Hegel's 'fight to the death' rather it is a new kind of double colonization. One which as Angel Rama puts it is

Women writers are involved in this process of themselves creating and recreating a history within their communities. They address specific issues pertaining to their own social situation, such as gender politics. In their writing, woman as subject is a focal point, but it is dealt with in conjunction with other problems of national interest. It is a truism that African men and women alike are subjected to imperialism, but women are subjected to male dominance on top of this. (21)

Katrak (2006) describe this double colonization as one which entails colonization by two powers: one being the actual colonizer and the other being the inherent patriarchal paradigms of a community (quoted in Tickell: 37). It is “which comes first, the fight for female equality or the fight against Western cultural imperialism? African and black women carry a double yoke (23). They are confronted with the implications of their need to liberate themselves from societal structures and of societies grappling with imperialism; which leads to an ambivalent position (Peterson and Rutherford , 1988).

Ambivalent position

The ambivalent position mentioned by Peterson and Rutherford could both be used as a means of justifying the stance of the colonized women, the one who is fighting back against the colonized powers or as a means of positioning oneself as women in a gendered society. Sidhwadoes not mean gynocentric at the expense of eradicating androcentric rather it is an amalgamation of both the andocentric and the gyno-centric. It is as Simon de Beauvoir writes in her book *The Second Sex* “To emancipate woman is to refuse to confine her to the relations she bears to man, not to deny them to her; let her have her independent existence and she will continue none the less to exist to him also; mutually recognizing each other as subject, each will yet remain for the other an ‘other’” (Fullbrook&Fullbrook, 1998, 54). The ‘otherness’ of the male and female characters is not divisive; the ‘otherness’ is a realization that the other cannot be male rather than a basis for argumentation and confrontation.

Reader response theory

This theory came into prominence in the late 1960s and the main focus of this theory was on the reader or audience reaction towards a particular text. Reader response theory emphasizes on the role of reader actively constructing texts rather than passively consuming them. Moreover, Reader- response theory stresses the interaction between reader and text, the intentions of the writer are irrelevant since a text can have multiple meaning that shift over time, in this theory, reading is a transaction, or in which reader construct meaning as they progress through a text because readers bring their own experiences and ideologies to the text. Their ideologies differ, the reader infuses personal meaning into verbal symbols on a page and the text channel meaning through its structure. To create meaning in this framework reader must be active, constantly building and synthesizing meaning, paying attention not only to the words on the page but also to the image and emotion he or she is experiencing.

The text does not embody meaning but rather guides the active creation of meaning but it’s important to keep in mind that reader-response is not the same as personal response.

Rather, the individual responses are situated in larger community of reader through active discussion.

Researcher analyzed the text of selected short stories from ‘their language of Love’ by keeping in mind the reader response theory. According to reader response theory, the gaps in the text are filled by the reader by its own and the reader remains very much controlled by the author since these gaps are part of the strategy of the text. According to some critics, readers’ knowledge of convention allows him or her to make sense of literary text.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This article has been written on the basis of interpretive analysis in a qualitative framework. The qualitative method was chosen because it is considered the most feasible way to explore apparent and inherent meanings and context of the text. The data was collected and analyzed qualitatively to support the researcher’s hypothesized claims. The primary text was taken from Bapsi Sidhwa’s collection of short stories, ‘*Their Language of Love*’. The study adopted mixed purposeful sampling technique to determine the sample of the study. All 08 stories present in the book were part of the sample; however the text of the stories was categorized in the feminist perspectives of the symbols and themes. For the exhaustive analysis and logical interpretation, Reader response theory was applied onto the text of the primary data. The rationale behind using this model is the reason that this theory sufficiently describes any phenomenon of interest which is substantial according to the readers’ thoughts, perceptions and understanding. The text was introduced to the post graduate level students and their recognition, opinions, perceptions and reflections were recorded about the phenomenon under discussion.

Framework of Analysis

Theory	Categories
Reader Response Criticism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Giving opinion ● Theme Recognition ● Symbol Recognition ● Spot the setting ● Character description ● Archetype alert ● Feminist criticism ● Gender & Queer theory

The framework of analysis (FoA) was established after reading the text and dividing it in subsequent categories by applying technique of codification. The data was analyzed and discussed while considering the sub categories of themes, symbols, archetypes and further elements as described in gender and queer theory.

Analysis

Bapsi Sidhwa’s collection of short stories *Their Language of Love* contains eight stories which are related to love with feministic undertones. A common element within all

these short stories is the centrality of the female protagonists. The stories' presence is brought about by the central figure of the females. The female protagonists in Sidhwa's short stories belong to myriad walks of life, which help to emphasize the fact that these women are representative of all women in the sense that they symbolize not only one strata of society but all strata of societies.

One very important thematic concern which runs throughout almost all the short stories is (realization) which not only results in adolescence to adulthood, rather provides reflections psychologically. Protagonists come to a realization of deep inner truths that the other characters, whether female or male are unable to see. Where bildungsroman (coming of age) literature focuses on a literal journey from adolescence to adulthood, Sidhwa successfully presents her female protagonists as going through a psychological and mental journey, one which allows them to reach a realization of some sort of universal truth, unseen by the other characters. For instance, in the very first short story, "A Gentlemanly War", Zareen thinks,

Going against the cynical logic of war, flying in the face of its brutal ethos, I believe in the underpinnings of the strange miscalculation was an unacknowledged compassion. The ties between the two countries-between the two halves of the divided Punjab-of friendship, shared languages, neighborhoods and customs, were palpable in the stories that filtered through, in the miracles that abounded. (27-28)

Zareen becomes the one person who realizes a truth that the others are unaware of; the two countries never having fought because of compassion rather than miscalculation. She has come to a realization of a universal feeling of compassion. Where the males thrive on "the menacing atmosphere was electric with excitement for the men" (8), Zareen realizes that underneath they share a common social construct which prevents them from really engaging in a war. Zareen's realization is of a communal aspect whereas Roshni's realization in "Their Language of Love" is more of a personal nature. Roshni's realization is reminiscent of a subtle kind of feminism, one which is confident enough in being female without being worried about the repercussions of allowing the male to have the overlying authority. Fatton writes, "Not surprisingly, women have been victimized by the hegemony of the male vision of the world. It is a vision that has led women to accept many of the patterns and processes of their own subordination" (53). Nevertheless, where Fatton points out to a mere acceptance of patriarchal standards which become detrimental to the female being, Bapsi Sidhwa succeeds in turning the anachronistic into a more modern interpretation; "Roshni smiled. She knew him well enough by now to decode his speech; this was their language of love" (172). Rather than being 'victimized' by the male vision, Sidhwa presents a character who not only allows her to be led by the male vision but who sagely realizes that this is the male way of conveying an acceptance and love of the 'other' female. This is supported by Sidhwa's depiction of the male figure, in this instance Nav, who rather than the archetypal male figure who seems dominating and imposing is presented on a more mundane basis, "In the harsh light pouring in from the sky Nav's battered skin displayed all the colors of the rainbow" (172). The female's subtle realization is supported by the fact that the male figure is not bigger than life rather he is on a level equal to that of the

female. It is important to note that this realization is not an epiphany but a realization that becomes manifest gradually. Where an epiphany connotes sudden realization, the women in these short stories gradually come to their realization. Their realization and perspicacity is more stable and symbolizes the female understanding. It is not associated with shock as an epiphany is but with the subtlety of understanding and compassion.

Compassion is also an important thematic concern in Sidhwa's short stories. It appears, through her stories, to be specific to females. Females are capable to compassion and there is an underlying bond between the females which allows and even facilitates them to be compassionate observers and relaters of other cultures and contexts. Compassion is presented by these various women in different forms, from compassion for a mutilated little boy, (*Defend Yourself Against Me*), to compassion for other religions and cultures as shown in "Ruth and the Afghan". Compassion for other women is also present in the short stories as shown in "Sehra-bai".

Not only is the female figure presented as being one which is perspicacious but it is also one whose values are not mocked or rendered less important than those of males. Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own* writes:

It is very obvious that the values of women differ very often from the values which have been made by the other sex; naturally, this is so. Yet, it is the masculine values that prevail. Speaking crudely, football and sports are "Important"; the world of fashion, the buying of clothes 'trivial'. And these values are inevitably transferred from life to fiction. This is an important book, the critic assumes, because it deals with war. This is an insignificant book because it deals with the feelings of women in a drawing room. A scene in a battlefield is more important than a scene in a shop-everywhere and much more subtly the difference of value persists.

Of course, Virginia Woolf is talking about the empire (in other words white writers) and the female writers (Charlotte Bronte, Jane Austen etc.) who belonged to a different era. Bapsi Sidhwa, by presenting female characters more advanced in not only social equality but the backdrop of the novel has succeeded in showing how females have moved away from not only the labels of 'important' and 'trivial' but that have also become more confident in their pursuits.

The varied backdrops that Sidhwa provides are not only drawing rooms but ones which are both realistic and serious. She sets her stories against shopping sprees ("Breaking it Up"), domestic scenes ("A Gentlemanly War", foreign countries, ("Their Language of Love" and "Defend Yourself Against Me" but these backdrops do not become trivial rather they are elevated to terrains of realistic concerns and attitudes. Just as Sidhwa presents female characters who are realistic and down to earth, they are supported by their realistic settings. As Sara Suleri puts it, Sidhwa's settings "deal with dingy urban spaces such as airports, train stations, and buses" (xiii). These mundane settings, however, are not ones which denigrate Sidhwa's stories rather they bring them to a more believable level. Additionally, the females are shown as having feelings which are related to drawing rooms rather than actual battlefields, they are scenes behind the

curtain so to speak but through these stories Sidhwa portrays how even drawing rooms can give rise to concerns which are not 'trivial'. Another important element of Sidhwa's writing is that she has been successful in creating an atmosphere for the modern woman where she can thrive not on anonymity but individuality and her inner thoughts and feelings are allowed to flourish. Where Virginia Woolf comments on the white imperialistic woman, Sidhwa establishes an atmosphere for a woman who is not only modern but as a part of the postcolonial environment is also liberated, both from men and from imperialistic notions. Therefore, it can be said that Sidhwa subverts 'double' colonization and renders her female characters to be free of not only colonial forces but also the male hegemonic dominance. At the same time, Sidhwa ensures that her female characters are modern women who are confident in their own spheres without having to rely on their male counterparts.

Bapsi Sidhwa presents a heterogeneous mix of women belonging to a variety of backgrounds, socio-economic circumstances which serves to give a plurality of female voices. This plurality seems to highlight the fact that women belonging to any socio-economic milieu can be strong but that does not necessarily mean that they have to be assertive to the point that they completely ignore or combat their male counterparts. In 1981, Gardiner in her detailed essay on the female asserts that: the author exercise magical control over her character, creating her from representations of herself and her ideals.

The females in her stories also exhibit a certain type of body language which ties in with her thematic concerns and the portrayal of her strong female characters. These female characters exhibit "alarming dignity" (65), are shown in "long-limbed glory" (131), and "audaciously unfurls the radiant spectrum of her vanished beauty" (174). *Their Language of Love* is not just a written text rather it is a language of subtly nuanced and codified human gestures which strengthen the female characters' standing. The silent yet subtle presence of this language is one which is compatible with the main themes of the collection. The women are unobtrusively strong yet harmonious who can establish a truce with the male members while at the same time not sacrificing her own being and independence. She can keep her identity but also knows how to tone down her needs at the behest of keeping equilibrium. Even in a romantic encounter or the conjugal relationship is presented as one of equality and harmony.

Romance is of course an integral thematic concern of *Their Language of Love* but it is not a romance which runs along the lines of the archetypal romance concerned with the ruggedly handsome hero who saves the damsel in distress. Sidhwa's female characters are not the damsels in distress nor do they suffer from the Cinderella complex. They indulge in their love, on an equal basis as the men. The romantic stories presented by Sidhwa are layered in order to present a picture of a balanced romance designed along the lines of equality. The first layer that Sidhwa introduces is that of establishing the male figure not as the ruggedly handsome but one whose mediocrity is prevalent as Sidhwa writes of Nav, Roshni's husband, "He looked so attractively at ease and debonair in his jeans and striped T-shirt...Nav raised his skinny buttocks to awkwardly dig into his jeans pockets...bony chest" (154,156). Nav is initially introduced as the typically debonair hero but this idealistic portrait is replaced by a more realistic one as

Nav's shortcomings are introduced. The second layer of the romance is that of portraying the female as not only a character in her own right but also one which becomes rounded due to gaining confidence and strength. Roshni is initially introduced as the following words, "She buried her wet, reproachful face in his bony chest and her travel-exhausted body gradually grew languid and trusting in his arms" (156) but gradually she gains enough confidence to "push Nav away with a strength and vehemence that surprised him, and shouted, 'I want to see your face. Not your damn cock!'" (170). While both characters are initially on an equal footing with Nav being introduced along with his shortcomings and Roshni gradually gaining confidence, Nav is rather than being the quintessential hero portrayed as a young man with foibles. For instance, "He tripped over a stone and his legs flying out from under him, fell on his scant buttocks. Roshni shuffled reflexively to help her husband,..." (162). This extract shows how the romance where the damsel in distress is saved by prince charming is subverted to become an ordinary romance with both the hero and heroine on equal footing. The final layering of the romance includes the establishment of equality in the romantic relationship. Nav needs his wife to help him and Roshni needs her husband to instruct her in the socio-cultural nuances of America. It is not a heterogeneous relationship rather it is a symbiotic one, founded on mutual cooperation and love. The love stories are also ones which are not bound by typical boundaries which the females are not allowed to transgress, the females are allowed to express their affections as freely as the men can.

I know who's getting too fresh for his own good,' says Azra and swiftly snatching the ladle from Khushwant, springs to her feet. Caught unawares Khushwant falls back on his elbows. Azra whacks him with the ladle and his white kurta is stained yellow with turmeric. Khushwant scrambles quickly to his feet, and Azra chases him over the sand into the shallows. (237)

The holistic nature of the romance is reflected by the female characters in Sidhwa's novels. Sidhwa presents independent women belonging to different societal classes ranging from the middle class to the elite. "A Gentlemanly War", "Sehra-bai", "Ruthe and the Hijackers", "Ruth and the Afghan" and "Breaking It Up" all depict female characters who belong to the elite class replete with posh surroundings. On the other hand, "The Trouble'Easers" and "Defend Yourself Against Me" have characters who are part of the lower class which has climbed the social ladder upto the middle class. Despite the differences in class, all the female characters exhibit an innate strength which in some cases is moral while at others it is spiritual. The female characters are not only strong but they have independence which is typically considered to be synonymous with rebellion and combat. They exhibit strength and independence which rather than being mutinous allows them to integrate and in fact weld together the different sections of society specially the male and the female.

Sidhwa's imbues her female characters with the ability to question the mores of society. This questioning ranges from questioning of religious constrictions such as Feroza who decides that if she wants to marry a non Parsi the next time around she will do so and her mother realizes that "Her daughter was resilient-courageous in a way that she could

never understand...She would bounce back, just like she always did” and religious archetypes such as the narrator in “Trouble-Easers” who thinks “How did a Muslim woodcutter, who went for Hajj to Mecca, get tangled up with Zoroastrian angels and Zoroastrian prayers?” (149). Other than questioning of religious mores, Sidhwa also incorporates philosophical questioning “Isn’t that what children want? No matter what their age? Their mother’s praise and approval?” (207) and Ammi-ji’s very simplistic but deep question of “My sons, I forgave your fathers long ago...How else could I have lived?” (248). All of these questions serve to concretize the position of the female as the central figure, the one with the ability and intellect to question while at the same accepting those societal concerns which should be questioned and transmuted but not eradicated. Questioning runs throughout the short stories and these questions serve as a means of capturing the very essence of the females’ character. They are confident in their skin while not being overtly rebellious or seditious. They are also able to live within reality while bringing about a restructuring of the already established paradigms.

The reality of these women that Bapsi Sidhwa emphasizes contain very important element that of female bonding. In other novels where Sidhwa has shown the female as competing against the female such as in *Water* here Sidhwa shows the female as supporting the female and the communal as well as subjective aspect of female bonding in a variety of forms ranging from mother daughter bonding, grandmother bonding and even the coincidental bonding between two female strangers. This bonding is where the female figures get their strength and fortitude from. Zareen and Feroza both may seem at odds with each other but it is through this collision that Zareen comes to realize Feroza’s strength of character. Similarly, Perin is allowed to cross the parameters that her grandmother Sehra-bai has created, she “frequently skirts the periphery, and tests the limits of her grandparent’s tolerance. This mixture of devotion, teasing, obedience and indulgence has forged an inextricable bond between them” (177). Where Sidhwa creates bonds between women to allow them to fashion a reliability upon and separate from one another she also succeeds in creating a female who is an individual in her own right. The mother daughter relationship has been portrayed by many writers such as Amy Tan, Toni Morrison etc.; however it is always presented as a turbulent relationship where the mother and daughter are constantly at strife with each other and even if they do gather strength from one another it is in a manner which is full of obstacles. Sidhwa, on the other hand, in her short stories shows mother daughter relationships which are not only less complicated but also more congenial. “Breaking it up” is the only short story in which the mother daughter relationship does not seem to be synergized since Feroza seems to Zareena to be disobedient and bent upon challenging the societal mores. However, even there both women show a respect and constraint for each other and their conciliation does come about at the end of the novel *The American Brat*. Similarly, in “Sehra-bai”, Ruby feels that she has been alienated from her mother’s world as a child, but she comes to realize that her mother was actually shielding her from unsavory and unbelievable incidents. Frank comments, “Instead, women must spurn patriarchy in all its guises and create a safe, sane, supportive world of women: a world of mothers and daughters; sisters and friends” (15). An important thematic concern in Sidhwa’s writing is the support of perpetuated through female camaraderie but unlike what Frank contends, her female characters do not spurn patriarchy rather they use the patriarchs as the backdrop for their bonding. Her encompassing of the

female world is one which provides support but at the same time it is not one in which patriarchy is spurned. The female characters support each other but do not overturn the norms of society. The matriarch does not contest the patriarch but she is the authority figure as conveyed by the fact that in “The Trouble-Easers” the mother is called ‘Mother’ (with a capital M) rather than any other name. This emphasizes her role as the focal point of the short story but also her significance in the short story. It also shows that the mother figure is the one with the linguistic and semiotic power. The daughter does question her mother’s bridging of the two religions but the final verdict is that given by the maternal figure.

The placement of the female as the religious figure is quite significant in another respect as well, that of the goddess. The mother in “The Trouble-Easers” as pointed out earlier is called only by the name, ‘Mother’. This emphasizes the role of the mother in the religious milieu. In the west, there has been a great movement towards the goddess; the East already has goddesses (such as in Hindu religion) but the West has still to realize the depth that a female god can impart to religion. As Carol P. Christ writes, “We find in the Goddess a compelling image of female power, a vision of the deep connection of all beings in the web of life, and a call to create peace on earth. The return of the Goddess inspires us to hope that we can heal the rifts between women and men, between “man” and nature, and between “God” and the world, that have shaped our western view of reality too long” (xiii). As can be seen in “The Trouble-Easers”, the female is the one who gives the male a degree of power but who also holds the power of the narrative and controls the reconciliatory aspects of religion through metaphoric narrative. Her narrative is the one which creates a connection between ‘all beings in the web of life’; the mother in the story recounts a story in which there is a woodcutter, a crow and a monarch among other characters. The peace advocated by the goddess, in this instance the mother, brings about a commingling of religions while at the same time reinforcing the bond between men and women as well as men and nature. The god, literally in this case is a god, namely Mushkail Asaan but his narrative is conveyed through the female. Although the Mother in “The Trouble Easers” is not exactly a goddess but she not only controls the narrative but she also is the one who bridges gaps between religions, people and nature.

Sidhwa, like Amy Tan, focuses on female characters. Spivak writes, “Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject constitution and object formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the ‘Third World Woman’ caught between tradition and modernization” (306). Nevertheless, Bapsi Sidhwa succeeds in juggling both tradition and modernization, which in itself is a repudiation of the typical Eastern tradition of narrative and she also ensures that her female figures do not ‘disappear’ into ‘pristine nothingness’. In order to ensure this, Sidhwa places the limelight on her female characters. In fact, two of her short stories are named after the female protagonist, “Ruth and the Hijackers” and “Ruth and the Afghan”. This is significant because of two reasons, the first is that as already mentioned, it highlights the female protagonist. At the same time, it is interesting to note that Ruth is the only Western female protagonist in the short story collection. However, this is not because the ‘subaltern’ is silent, in fact it could be due to the fact that the subaltern is much more comfortable in her

capacity as a part of the Eastern narrative and does not require a separation of identity from her placement. Ruth, as a Western woman, needs to be segregated from the other female protagonists who are not uprooted rather they are where they belong. At the same time, “Breaking it Up”, does present Feroza who migrates from Pakistan to America but the short story is not named after Feroza nor is her name mentioned in the title of the short story. The difference between Ruth’s name’s placement in the title of the two short stories and Feroza’s name’s absence in the short story’s title is that Ruth has yet to understand the society to which she has migrated, she has yet to understand it as Billo, her maid, remarks, “Memsahib, you so little understand our ways!” (66). Whereas, Feroza is completely at ease in her new environment accepting lesbians and having a non-Parsi boyfriend. She has imbibed her surroundings in a way that Ruth never has.

Sidhwa’s stories are focused around women from a variety of backgrounds and social classes but all of them present the same strength of character. She has portrayed women from the elite class, “Sehra-bai”, “Ruth and the Hijackers”, “Ruth and the Afghans”, and “Breaking it up” and women from a slightly lower class such as in “Their Language of Love” and “A Gentlemanly War” and even women who are ambiguously placed in the social order such as in “The Trouble-Easers” and “Defend Yourself Against Me”. The important point to note is that these myriad social placements converge to one common feature, the strength of the female characters. Even women who are usually given no importance are divested with a dignity such as Billo, Ruth’s maid who has “an alarming dignity” (65) about her and she is able to stand up to many people, including men and even the face of authority as represented by the Police Inspector. Strength of the females is not only depicted in terms of courage but also in terms of moral courage. The variety of women from different social strata and backgrounds reinforces the notion of the courage inherent in females. The inclusion of Ruth, a foreigner, in this collection highlights the moral courage even in Western female. Ruth thinks about her aborted affair and “A sense of relief seeped through her...Behaviour that might be condoned back home would be unforgivable in this culture; frowned upon even by her closest friends” (99,100). The courage shown by the female protagonists further concretizes their strength of character.

Just as the social positioning of the characters is varied in order to match the thematic concerns and place emphasis on the collective female fortitude, similarly the locale of these short stories is varied in order to portray how irrespective of location, women have the ability to be courageous and strong in a nuanced environment. The backdrop of these stories is multidimensional. Even if set in Pakistan, the variegated presentation of Lahore is not only limited to one aspect of life. Religion, particularly the Zoroastrian religion is presented not only as a religion but from the perspective of how a female interprets religion and the bridge that a women’s perspective creates between different religions, such as Zoroastrianism and Islam as the mother in “The Trouble Easers says, “ ‘But that is what happens when one lives cheek by jowl with people of other faiths-saints jump boundaries and the barriers of animosity fall’ “ (149). Religion as well as the mundane features of Lahore such as domestic issues and details like the “congested glue of scooter-rickshaws, cyclicsts, bullock-carts, tongas and trucks” (85), “mosquito repellent” (105), the “lamb kebabs and grilling chicken tikkas” (124), “Indian sweets

and curried chicken” (187), “cheap corrugated tin-sheet gates” (199) which serve to create an atmosphere which is particular to Lahore. Alongside the mundane is the glamorous and specific as well such as the “sarappa scarf” (96), “smuggled Scotch or vodka” (107), “diamond and emerald necklaces and earrings, the gold and ruby choker set, the delicately painted gold meena-work sets, the cloth pouches so heavy with gold guineas...the heavy, hand-wrought twenty-two carat gold chains, belts, bracelets and dangling earrings” (183). All of these details help to present the true essence of Lahore as Bapsi Sidhwa writes, “I’ve tried to cover as many aspects of Lahore as possible, from the historical perspective to aspects of the modern city...Despite the globalisation, the McDonalds and so on, the place hasn’t changed in its essence” (xiv-v). This eclectic perspective of Lahore that Sidhwa presents in her short stories serves as a multipurpose backdrop for the different women belonging to various classes. Lahore becomes a religious safe haven, a socialite backdrop and at some points even a rendezvous for an affair (although the affair is not actually consummated).

Nevertheless, Lahore is not the only locale featured in the short stories; there are a variety of settings from America to Lahore each with their intricate nuances. As Sara Suleri Goodyear remarks, “The lyricism and charm of this collection combines Sidhwa’s ironic sense of humour with her darkened view of contemporary culture and its necessary displacements” (xv). However, this displacement is not necessarily negative. The displaced women presented in the short stories gain a confidence that they might not have had in their initial locations. Feroza becomes more confident in America as does Roshni who no longer has to worry about fitting in with her cousins, and who “could scarcely believe that she, the ugly duckling of her family in Bulsar, ...How gladly she’d show off all this splendor to her relatives when they visited” (171) or even Ruth who attempts to become acculturated in Pakistan. This acculturation points towards another aspect of Sidhwa’s novels both physical and psychological.

When Feroza and Roshni move to America and when Ruth stays in Pakistan, they experience not only as Suleri would put it a displacement but also a rethinking. Feroza is given an opportunity to rethink herself and the strictures placed on her by society. Roshni gets the chance to rethink her image as ‘the dark haired girl’ and to restructure herself as the support that Nav desperately needs. Displacement for these women becomes a moving away from while at the same time moving towards. They do move away from their country but they move towards a reshaping of identity. This emphasizes the underlying strength of these characters, they are malleable but at the same time do not give into the allure of giving up one’s identity in order to appropriate another. They keep the integrity of their heritage alive while imbibing the influences of their surroundings.

Heritage is linked to memory and history which is an important element in the short stories. They are replete with historical places as well as individual memories which are emblematic of the collective consciousness of certain socio-cultural groups. Even Ruth, a foreigner, is exposed to this heritage and the memory of various generations. She is told “guru Arjan Singh jumped into the Ravi river on 30 May 1606 and forever disappeared into the void” (9) and the “dutiful wives” who “flung themselves on his funeral pyre” (9). This points towards a female consciousness, one which has been

shaped by centuries of old superstitions and values. The very fact that Ruth is being told these facts highlights the juxtaposition of the 'dutiful wives' who willingly sacrifice their lives for husbands and Ruth who embodies the modern woman who is independent but at the same time cognizant of her duties as a wife. The western woman is compared to the Eastern woman in the past and the Pakistani woman of the current age then serves as the bridge between both cultures. The memory of past Eastern women has been modernized but not to the extent of being seditious.

The setting of Sidhwa's short stories is as important as the symbols. There are some recurrent symbols in Sidhwa's short stories which tie in with the thematic concerns and serve to portray the feminine aspect of Sidhwa's writing. An important symbol in almost all of the short stories is that of clothes, it is through attire that Sidhwa not only marks these stories as female narratives but it also serves to show the socio-cultural conditions of the women. The dignity and physical beauty of the women is conveyed through their attire. In the first short story, "A Gentlemanly War", Sarahbai is described as "Her stylishly cropped hair, partially covered by her sari, is naturally dark, her skin velvety...cautiously switching from fetching-lovely to modest matriarch...She wears translucent, anaemic-pink nail polish instead of the brighter colours she wore before her transformation" (230). Sehra-bai's tribulations because of her philandering husband are embodied through the fact that "she acquired an American bra through an American friend" (202). Even the grieved Ammi-ji in "Defend Yourself Against Me", who has been raped during the partition has been described in such terms as to foreground her ability to forgive and forget. Her quiet dignity is symbolized through her "blue nylon chaddar" (240) which is both simple but at the same time it is symbolic of peace and quietness and also a birth (as in blue for water which is an emblem of the amniotic sac). When "Ammi-ji wipes her face in her chaddar" (248) she shows that she has been able to come back to a life in which she overcame her past memories as she says, "My sons, I forgave your fathers long ago...How else could I have lived?" (248). She is able to be vitalize herself through forgiveness. Clothes are also symbolic on another level, namely that of a bridging between cultures, as Ruth dresses in a "simple, beige, raw-cotton shalwar and kameez..." (83), later she dresses in a "long navy skirt" and "fitted top" (105). Therefore, she is comfortable in both western and eastern attire and this amalgamation of both cultures is depicted in the sari that is turned "into a formal skirt and top"... "The rich pallu end of the hand-woven sari would make a gorgeous stole" (75). The inclusion about detailed clothing ensures that these women are depicted as the central figures of the narratives. It also conveys the regality of certain female characters and emphasizes their importance. The clothing also ties in with the individual themes of the short stories and serves to describe cultural nuances while also creating bridges between cultures. Bridges between cultures are also conveyed through symbolism of religious icons such as buildings, etc.

Religious buildings are included in the short stories especially shrines. It is interesting to note that in "A Gentlemanly War", Sidhwa has written about Data Sahib's shrine which is visited by people from all over Pakistan. As Sidhwa writes, "People of all faiths flocked to the eleventh-century Sufi saint's shrine from all over Pakistan, and before Partition they came from all over northern India" (9). These religious buildings symbolize a synergy of cultures. The Parsi women such as Zareen visit shrines of

Muslim saints such as Data Darbar. Even Ruth, who as an American, is a foreigner, visits the “Gudwara Dera Sahib” (93) and “the ...granthi in the sanctum where the Granth Sahib rested”. These visits to the shrines symbolize a commingling of religions and ideologies as well as an acceptance of other religions. It is also emblematic of Sidhwa’s amalgamation of cultures in the context of Lahore. This acceptance of other religions, again, comes about through the female figures of Sidhwa’s narratives. It is the women who are able to not only accept but also imbibe other religions. As Bapsi Sidhwa said to Ahmed Hussain in an interview: “Religion is so subjective: I think we each mould it to suit our needs. I think religion appeals to what is noblest in humans. It has nourished and brought peace to us through the ages” (“Conversation with Sidhwa”). It is through the female agent that Bapsi Sidhwa has been able to show the peace which is enhanced through integration of religions. The nourishment that Sidhwa conveys through religion in her short stories is that of a patriotic nature. The females in her short stories turn to religion not only in times of personal anxiety and the need for spirituality but also when there is anxiety of the state as in “A Gentlemanly War”, the female protagonist turns to Data Durbar at a time when “the air was charged with the fear of the war” (11). The religious commingling is emblematic of the religious reconciliation that comes about through the female agents in Sidhwa’s narratives.

Religion, according to Sidhwa, is subjective but the way in which it is presented by her shows an objectivity and impartiality to any particular religion. Her narrative technique belies this as the tone in which she mentions religion and religious practices is neither condescending nor judgmental. In fact, the tone throughout her collection is objective rather than being judgmental. She writes from the third person perspective. This may imply a limitation because of the third person limited but Sidhwa’s use of the third person emphasizes her objectivity. She relates the female protagonists in their respective spheres without attempting to pass judgment. She emphasizes the feelings and thoughts of the female protagonists but moves away from the third person limited because the thoughts/feelings of the female protagonists are related in connection to the other characters. Therein lies Sidhwa’s beauty of narration, she uses the third person perspective and although it may seem to be the third person limited, Sidhwa employs this technique but moves away from the paradigms of only relating the thoughts and feelings of the female protagonist. The female protagonists’ feelings and thoughts are emphasized in relation to those of other characters. At times, the first person narrative voice is used (as in “A Gentlemanly War”) which further places emphasis on the female persona but not only for itself but in relation to the other characters.

CONCLUSION

Bapsi Sidhwa employs various techniques in her short story collection, *Their Language of Love*, to concretize the women in her stories as the focal point. The female protagonists in her short stories exude courage, both moral and psychological, but this courage does not render them to be rebellious. In fact, living within the distinct paradigms dictated by society, religion etc. they are able to form their own characters. The women also undergo various journeys, which, even if initially daunting, result in further concretization of their strength of character. The thematic concerns of her short stories, whether related to religion, romance or even displacement help to establish and

concretize the female narrative without rendering it melodramatic. The women are the bridging element between cultures, religions, locales etc. and help to bring about a reconciliation and acceptance while also staying true to their own respective cultures and religions. The thematic concerns and symbols of the collection serve to support the centrality of the female figures in the collection.

The short stories also highlight the emotions which run through the female protagonists' mind and emphasize their feelings. The female protagonists exhibit a range of emotions varying from uncertainty, apprehension to a calm, peacefulness and pride. These emotions help to concretize the women's presence and render the female protagonists more of a flesh and blood nature rather than being merely characters. The emotions are also used to highlight the issues related to the Partition of Pakistan, journey and also religion. Emotions also become something which is specific to the women and their lives. However, the emotions do not render the female figures to be weak and helpless. Rather these emotions add another dimension to the women's characters. The emotions provide a depth that is not present in the male figures. Even when the female figures display sadness or vulnerability they are able to tide the waves and return to a balance. For instance, Zareen in "A Gentlemanly War" at first, "let(s) go of the control I have exercised to keep the children and servants calm, and begin to sob" (14) but this loss of control is replaced by "conviction" as she holds on to her beliefs. As Zareen says, 'I believe the stories...I believe them...' (15).

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