



Understanding Manhood through Hegemonic Masculinity: A Critical Study of Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride*

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Article History: Received: September 07, 2025 Revised: October 12, 2025 Accepted: October 20, 2025 Available Online: November 02, 2025	<i>This article critically explores the performance of hegemonic masculinity in Bapsi Sidhwa's <i>The Pakistani Bride</i>, set in a rigid patriarchal tribal society where male worth depends on female honor. Using Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity, the study examines how male characters Qasim, Sakhi, and Farrukh assert power and identity through dominance, control, and violence. Qasim enforces authority by arranging Zaitoon's marriage without her consent, while Sakhi's brutality exemplifies physical aggression and the subordination of women as possessions. Farrukh's emotional rigidity, masked as love, manifests as possessiveness and suspicion, reflecting subtle yet potent psychological control. These varied forms of masculine behavior, from overt violence to covert manipulation, expose the deep-rooted social mechanisms that sustain patriarchy. The analysis highlights how such practices uphold male dominance while inflicting severe emotional and physical harm on women. Ultimately, the paper contends that Sidhwa's portrayal reveals the devastating consequences of a culture that equates masculinity with control, aggression, and the suppression of female autonomy.</i>
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Introduction

This research paper presents a critical study of hegemonic masculinity within the patriarchal society depicted in Bapsi Sidhwa's novel, *The Pakistani Bride*. The study focuses on the male characters' behaviors and actions by examining how they display specific traits and perform particular roles to achieve recognition, respect and social acceptance, thereby being labeled as authentically masculine men. The author, Bapsi Sidhwa, exposes the cruel, heartless and betraying nature of tribal men who are profoundly under the influence of patriarchy. She depicts a social

order within a Pakistani society where men are positioned and deemed as superior, authoritative, and intolerant, while women are systematically marginalized, perceived as inferior and treated as worthless creatures.

The practices of masculinities in the novel are examined through the theoretical framework of hegemonic masculinity, as propounded by Australian sociologist R.W. Connell (1995). Connell defines masculinities as the series or set of practices shaped by gender relation. It means that men's actions, roles and practices are performed and constructed in direct opposition to the practices that are associated with femininity. Connell (1995) contends that within masculinities there is an existence of hierarchy, which is identified by its most respected and premium version of masculinity, known as Hegemonic masculinity. This godly masculinity is worshipped by the inferior group of men or by those who do not conform to this model. This masculinity is sponsored by the patriarchal structures, as this system function as a catalyst in the subordination of women: this subordination grants men the advantage to easily showcase their manliness over women, children, the transgender community, and financially weak men.

Despite all these facts, men's masculinity is partial without the entity of women. As stated by Connell (1995) that "masculinity does not exist except in contrast with femininity" (p. 68). This perspective signifies the women's significant contribution to society and emphasizes their essential role in maintaining the stability of men's identity and family frameworks. Studying the novel from hegemonic masculinity perspective, therefore, can provide new understanding of the literary text and the social structures it reflects and critiques.

The Novelist

Bapsi Sidhwa (b.1938) is a Parsi woman and internationally renowned Pakistani novelist of Gujarati Parsi Zoroastrian descent. She often likes to identify herself as a "Punjabi Parsi" and is also a prominent women activist. Her childhood was marked by isolation, as she was an only child of her parents. She contracted polio which affected her right leg when she was only two years old. Sidhwa began her literary career in 1970s, the era when Pakistani women writers were hardly producing any fiction. While the renowned Indian writers in English were already gaining international acclaim and had set a milestone in the world of fiction through their works. During this period, Bapsi Sidhwa emerged as a pioneering figure in Pakistan. Through her visionary writings, she portrayed a Pakistani society which is severely constricted by a misogynistic mindset, gender segregation and a barbaric patriarchal autocracy. This has led critics to consider her as a foundational voice. As Sachdev (2020) notes, Sidhwa is "one of the pioneers of Pakistani fiction in English". (p.11)

She relocated to the United States of America with her husband, where she currently resides in Houston, Texas. Despite living afar away, her love and affection for her native country and birth place remains as strong as ever; this physical distance from Pakistan appears to have intensified her love and deep connection for her homeland. Specifically, her deep attachment for Lahore city and her Punjabi identity remain irreplaceable pillars for her own personality. Her dual citizenship has molded her understanding and enriched her perspective on both United States and Pakistan. It is this perspective that allows her to explore the societal and cultural issues, particularly those affecting women, which later become the core themes of her works.

Thematically, Sidhwa's novels mainly focus on female sufferings and powerlessness experienced by them within the societal structures. Migration is another frequent and favorite theme of her which is quite prominent throughout her body of works. Her four major novels in English reflects her personal experience, including the partition of Indian sub-continent, which she witnessed as a

nine year old in 1947, abuse against women, immigration to United States, and her membership in the Parsi/Zoroastrian community.

Bapsi Sidhwa's, debut novel *The Crow Eaters*, was published in 1979, a testament of pioneering role in the production of modern fiction writing in Pakistani English. This work received well deserved critical and popular recognition from critics and the readers. The novel praised for its humorous, satirical style and its nuanced reflection of Parsi community customs and traditional lifestyle. Her subsequent novels including *The Bride* (1983), *Ice-Candy Man* (1988), *An American Brat* (1993), and *Water* (2006), consistently portray Pakistani women, dealing with the issues of female sexuality, the denial of their agency and highlights their resistance towards societal restrictions. Sidhwa earned significant national and international fame for exposing women's issues, and projecting the predicament of Pakistani women, whom she depicts as confined to the role of mother, daughter and wife. She critiques a context where religion is often misused to impose those rules that rarely align with the true principles of Islam. Ultimately, Sidhwa depicts her female characters as strong and courageous individuals who find their own way to challenge and to get rid of biased, misogynistic, and violent system. This is the reason her works are predominantly loaded with feminist themes.

In this regard, Singh (2005) discusses Sidhwa's female characters, illuminating their strength by noting that "rebellion is not in their nature. They try to cope with parental, societal, and cultural pressures in their life as much as they can but when they find their very life and identity are in danger they throw off all shackles and fight with full force to foil the foul attempts of their adversary". (as cited in Sachdev, 2020, p. 11)

Jussawalla (1991) observes that while Sidhwa's novels are different from one another, they share a common passion for history and truth telling. He characterizes her works as narratives of beginning and awakening. He argues that the essential theme of connecting sub continental identity, revealing the landscape of India or Pakistani, and their land and religion, is what makes her stories feel authentic, real and deeply engaging for readers.

Bapsi Sidhwa's literary achievements have been recognized with numerous awards. Notably, in 1991, she was awarded with Sitara-i-Imtiaz (star of excellence) by the Government of Pakistan for her work *The Pakistani Bride*.

The Novel

Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *The Pakistani Bride* was published in 1983 and is based on a true story. While visiting the remotest regions of Karakoram Mountains with her husband, Sidhwa stayed at an army camp where a colonel in charge of that place and some engineers narrated the tragic story of a girl who belongs to the plains and she was taken by an old tribal man across the Indus River in an arranged marriage to his nephew. But she managed to escape from the house within a month of the wedding. She hid herself in the mountains for fourteen days as she was unaware of the routes. Her husband with the tribesmen chased her and caught her, after beating her brutally; they threw her down into the Indus River. This heartbreaking story deeply affected Sidhwa and inspired her to fictionalize it.

In the novel *The Pakistani Bride*, Sidhwa has shown three worlds to form the narrative. The novel explores the theme of marriage, honor, partition and women's suffering. Sidhwa presents the story of an orphan girl named Zaitoon whose parents were killed by the bloody communal riots during the partition of the sub-continent in 1947. A tribal man Qasim who was the witness of this whole incident rescues her and brings her to Pakistan, providing her with the new home and identity. The first part of the book depicts Zaitoon's upbringing in Lahore under the care of her foster father and

friendly neighbors'. The second part of the story deals with the aftermath of Qasim's decision to marry Zaitoon to his fellow tribal man's nephew named Sakhi, in his ancestral mountain region.

Qasim leaves his daughter Zaitoon among strangers in an inhospitable and new home even though she weeps and begs him to be taken away but her words sound meaningless to Qasim. Zaitoon is forced to accept this brutal reality. Her married life indeed proves utterly disappointing, her husband's every look and actions turn out to be a cruel assault, leaving no room for sentiments, romance and empathy. At last, she takes a drastic step of escaping her disastrous marriage as this was the only way of freeing herself from this domestic violence. Lost and directionless in the mountains, she is raped by two tribal men during her struggle. At the end, after an exhausting journey she is found in a half dead condition by Major Mushtaq.

In the novel, Sidhwa interpolates Zaitoon's story with that of Carol, a beautiful American woman who is unhappy with her married life as she is married to a Pakistani army officer. Carol is distressed by her husband's biased mentality, male power, possessiveness and abusive language. Through these two characters Sidhwa reveals parallel struggle and tragic fate of Zaitoon and Carol, showing how both are oppressed by men, particularly their husbands in their lives. Sidhwa (1984) states "Zaitoon unlocked a mystery, affording a telepathic peephole through which Carol had a glimpse of her condition and the fateful condition of the girls like her". (as cited in Srivastava and Singh, 2015, p. 58). Khan (1991) argues that Zaitoon's flight from her cruel marriage is a triumph against an anti-feminist society. Her escaping is an example of bravery and courageousness that represents a direct challenge to the system of patriarchy.

Literature Review

According to Haq et al., 2024; Khokhar et al., 2023; Soomro et al., 2023; Khokhar et al., 2024 literature review is a detailed summary and analysis of the existing research, theories, and ideas related to a particular topic or study. Its main purpose is to show what is already known, what gaps or problems exist, and how your own research will contribute to the field (Iqbal et al., 2024; Khokhar et al., 2024; Noonari et al., 2024).

Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Pakistani Bride* explores the different dimensions of Pakistani society, particularly concerning women rights, values, and their social position. The novel emphasizes how women are regarded as the additional part or marginalized within a deeply patriarchal society. This patriarchal setup has been extensively defined by different scholars and authors. For instance, Walby (1990) defines patriarchy as a "system of social structures and practices in which men dominant, oppress and exploit women". (p.214). In this strict system men are consider as master and women are slave in the society, men are free and have right to do anything, they can dominate society with their own vision and thus creates gender hierarchy.

Srivastava and Singh (2015) argue that "patriarchy is a social system in which society is organized around male authority figure". (p. 58). This suggests that society is organized around male authority figures where women's autonomy and voice are restricted. In this biased system, women are constrained to speak for their basic rights and they are confined to limited roles in the male chauvinistic society; their status is deemed as a burden in the eyes of men. Expanding on this, Eisenstein (1979) defines patriarchy as a sexual system of power wherein men have superior status and financial privileges. In the same vein, Johnson (1997) believes that "to live in a patriarchy is to breathe in misogynist images of women as objectified sexual property valued primarily for their usefulness to men". (p. 30)

From a psychosocial perspective, Mitchell (1974) argues that patriarchy is a “kinship system in which men exchange women”. (p.24). This concept is vividly portrayed in the novel through practices like selling and purchasing of bride. The pattern of women life and important decisions are made by men and women have to follow it willingly or unwillingly. Moreover Sultana (2010) asserts that patriarchy means a social system in which man acts as the main central authoritative figure of the social organization, asserting control over woman, imposing rights on children and holding authority over property. In short, patriarchy is a social structure which is constructed and organized in a manner that subjugates women. This narrow and inflexible system prevents women from granting them equal rights and abstain them for participating in social and familial relations.

The novel *The Pakistani Bride* has been explored through different perspective and critical lenses. The research work on the text has consistently focused on its feminist theme, while others have analyzed it from the post-colonial viewpoint. The analysis of the novel by scholar such as Bukhari, Khan and Riaz (2024) can be considered as the great example of a feminist study. She examines the novel’s female characters who were the victims of oppressive and domineering system. The study focuses on the incarceration of women, imposed by the traditional tribal law and the strict domestic rules, while highlighting their struggle and pursuit of freedom. This study effectively reveals women sufferings within the patriarchal zones; however, theoretically the study lacks an exposition of the masculinity that is the root cause of the tyrannical practices against women. Similarly, Rath and Mishra (2023) conduct a feminist study by analyzing the dilemmas in the lives of Zaitoon and Carol. They posit that while both characters experience restrictions differently, the single cause remains the patriarchal constructions. This research highlights the systemic oppression faced by women across culture, which aligns with the current study but is examined from a different angle.

Other studies have explored the novel through its socio and historical context. For example, Rudra (2022) analyzes Qasim’s internal conflict, who is stuck between the contemporary state law and conventional tribal law. Rudra’s study discloses that tribal system has the huge influence on men, as this system assists them in perpetuating male dominance within the society. On the other hand, Sahi (2022) unveils the trauma of the Partition of India and Pakistan in the novel. Their study examines Qasim’s identity crisis as a migrant from the mountains to the plains. He argues that his constant efforts to return to his milieu with Zaitoon demonstrate a fragile national and personal identity. This study posits that historical influences and forces shape the characters’ lives, causing them to act according to context. However, the study has not focused on gender dynamics as its main framework. Meanwhile, Geetanjali & Jayalakshmi (2021) examine the cultural impact on the lives of Zaitoon and Qasim in their study.

While these studies are valuable for understanding the novel’s criticism of patriarchal structures, they primarily focus on women’s experiences, who are treated as secondary sex or objects of barbarism. These studies view patriarchy as a monolithic force rather than investigating the underlying cause; that is the particular performances of masculinity that actively reinforce this oppressive and ruthless behavior towards women.

Based on the review of existing scholarship, it is evident that the novel has been analyzed through various contexts. However, no prior research has applied the framework of hegemonic masculinity to this specific literary work. Therefore, this research is important as it aims to fill this critical gap. This research paper shifts the focus to male characters by analyzing their performance of dominance, aggression, violence, and emotional rigidity as a way to secure their social power within the patriarchal framework. Consequently, this research constitutes the first study to apply the lens of hegemonic masculinity to *The Pakistani Bride*, a novel which is predominantly categorized within feminist tradition.

Research Question

- How do male characters perform the practices of masculinities in *The Pakistani Bride*?

Research Methodology

The current study adopts a qualitative research approach and employs a method of close reading to analyze Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *The Pakistani Bride*. As Smith 2016; Khokhar, M. I., Iqbal, M. M., & Khan, M. E. (2024) states that close reading consist of "a technically informed, fine grained analysis of some piece of writing, usually in connection with some broader question of interest". (p.58). this method is appropriate for this research as it allows the detailed examination of the novel's text to understand that how the male characters perform the practices of hegemonic masculinity. The analysis will focus on particular textual excerpts that represent the thoughts, ideologies of male characters and their attitude towards women. By scrutinizing these passages through the perspective of hegemonic masculinity, this study will demonstrate the mechanism of patriarchal control within the novel. The theoretical framework of hegemonic masculinity establishes an important component of this methodology and is, therefore, described in detail below.

Theoretical Framework

This study is conducted by employing R.W. Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity (1995), which is defined as a social setting in which society legitimizes men's domination over women and the authority of some men over others, including minority groups, and those perceived as feminine in a society. (Connell, 1995; Abro et al., 2024; Khokhar, M. I. (2021; Mahajan et al., 2020). This concept frames masculinity not as a genetic or inherent fact but rather it is viewed as a social construct. As Kerfoot and Knight (1999) argue that masculinity is the socially created concept of what it means to be a man, or to display actions and attitudes that deemed as 'manly' within a specific context. This framework is essential for understanding the power dynamics in *The Pakistani Bride* as this concept facilitates the analysis of practices that create and maintain favorable social condition for men's dominance over women. Significantly, these masculinities are not fixed or natural but are the products created by historical and social processes that evolve over time and vary across different spatial based on the situations. (Stimpson, 2010) A core function of this hegemonic ideal is to establish hierarchy.

According to Courtenay (2000), hegemonic masculinity is the socially constructed manifestation of gender dominance that subordinates femininities and other forms of masculinities. It represents a form of power and authority that shapes men's social relationship with both women and other men. Connell (1995) further observes that hegemony is constituted through the alignment or similarities between the cultural ideal and institutional power, a congruence that ensures and guarantees its success. Finally, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) refers hegemonic masculinity to the normative ideology that to be a man it is necessary to be in a dominant position and the subjugation of women is mandatory to perpetuate and sustain such power.

Building on Connell's framework, the novel is analyzed through three core features of hegemonic masculinity performed by the male characters in *The Pakistani Bride*: dominance, aggression and violence, and emotional rigidity.

1. **Dominance:** Wielding control and authority over women, expressed through decision making and the dictation of their lives.

2. **Aggression and Violence:** Utilizing verbal and physical force to intimidate subordinate opponents as a way to threaten and punish wrongdoing.
3. **Emotional Rigidity:** The suppression of weakness or vulnerability and the demonstration of complicated emotions into restrictive outlets such as jealousy, possessiveness, and suspicion.

Data Analysis

The practices of Hegemonic masculinity are evident from the very beginning of the novel and are illustrated by the male characters through particular patterns of manners, specifically dominance, aggression and violence, and emotional rigidity.

Dominance: Control and Subordination of Female agency

The most significant aspect of hegemonic masculinity in *The Pakistani Bride* is showcased through the exertion of dominance of men over women by neglecting their existence, controlling and subordinating their position to commodities.

This is illustrated when the central male character, Qasim, as a ten year old boy who is being handed a gun by his father and being told he is to be married to a girl of his fellow tribe. This arrangement is made because the girl's father has actually failed to repay his debt so he promises his daughter to Qasim's father instead. "*Resham khan has promised his daughter*". (Sidhwa, 1990, p. 7) This underscores that the custom of selling daughter under the guise marriage is a normalized trend in this patriarchal society. For these characters, marriage for them is just a transaction or deal of body, not a mutual understanding which reduces women existence to mere a commodity. The dominance of male and viewing women as an inferior being represents the key feature of Connell's hegemonic masculinity.

Dominance is also illustrated through the devaluing or dehumanizing female bodies and their worth, and this is visible in places outside the traditional household or familial construction. A conversation between Qasim and a prostitute reveals the ingrained mentality of men. The courtesan's statement that "*we automatically smile in the presence of man*". (P. 63) This shows that how women are instructed and socialized into performing their passive role and have accepted this dynamic as their destiny. And their submissiveness is possible because the prostitutes are compliant and are ostracized from the dignified male- leading society. Even though Qasim realizes that such behavior is forbidden by our society and religion, but Qasim's way of treating the women exposes his vision that women are nothing more than an item and are born for the pleasure of men. *Nachpagli!* (p.57) This gesture displays the hypocritical nature of the male-dominating system that how they are free from all the moral boundaries, without losing their name and status and treats women as a sexual object for their contempt. Qasim calls her a "*madwomen and jabbed her with a cane*" (p.63). This depicts that how the verbal abuse reinforces the dehumanization of women through this behavior, revealing the practice of masculinity that whether the activity is taboo or prohibited in the society, but for men it seems normal due to a permissive and favorable environment provided to them, and an ingrained superiority complex that positions them as the arbitrator of power and labels them as "Superior".

The practice of dominance is again repeated when Qasim arranges Zaitoon's marriage to his tribal fellow. Miriam is one of the few characters who possess an awareness of the oppressive tribal patriarchal culture. When she characterized the tribal people as brutal, cruel, ruthless and ignorant in an attempt to understand Qasim's motivation, then he reasserts his proprietorial hold over Zaitoon by stating that "*It is my word -the word of a kohistani*" (P.84). This line clearly shows the

male dominance and the authority that men exert to subjugate the women, as men are the sole decision makers and society follows and respects their vision.

The practice of hegemonic masculinity is represented through the commodity of woman which is central to Zaitoon's fate. Miriam confronts Qasim on the topic of Zaitoon's marriage by asking that *"Is it because that Pathan offered you five hundred rupees some measly maze and few goats. Is that why you are selling her like a greedy merchant?"* (p. 94). This dialogue shows that Qasim is repeating the historical pattern of selling a daughter in the name of marriage. The hypocrisy is reflecting from Qasim's psychology, on one hand, he arranges the marriage that is fundamentally a business deal and on the other hand he is portraying the role of caring father, highlighting that the selling and buying of women is a customary practice in tribal areas which exposes the male dominance in tribal system. Qasim's exertion of dominance is revealed when Zaitoon tries to express her choice of getting married to army jawan Ashiq. Qasim responds with fury by stating that *"A decent girl doesn't tell her father to whom he should marry her"* (p.133). This reaction unveils the patriarchal denial of women agency that they have no any right to express their desires. Their feelings, longings and emotions get ruthlessly sabotage by this male favoring system. For Qasim his words and honour holds the utmost importance: *"I have given my words, on it depends my honor. It is dearer to me than my life"*. (p. 143). Words are more valuable than the lives of the loved ones. Moreover, Qasim threatens her *"I will kill you with my bare hands."* (p.143). Qasim as a father didn't show any parental love, affection to her because of his perceived honor and his promise to a tribe and threatens her with serious consequences. If she besmirches it then he would kill her, so here the father and daughter relationship becomes fractured. He prefer to kill her but would not accept her opinion because his honor depends upon his words and if she opposes it his honor would be at risk. This attitude often results in honor killing, exposing that dominance is the paramount masculine value.

Aggression and Violence: Through brutal treatment

When men's dominance is threatened, they chose to exert violence as a way to enforce their control and masculinity.

Sakhi embodies this characteristic more openly. He immediately exposes his brutality on their wedding night: *"He tore the ghonghat from her head and holding her arms in a cruel grip.....she screamed and screamed Abba, save me...why didn't Qasim come or any of the others?"* (p.146). Zaitoon was not only a victim of force marriage but she was also treated as a pleasurable product for her husband's animal instinct. Sakhi's violence frightened her into submission as he is a beast in the shape of human. The heinous behavior of him gives a clue of extremism and exposes his brutal mentality. Sakhi had no love or any feelings for his wife but only acquires a dominating attitude and superiority complex.

Men's mindset in a patriarchal society is similar to a brutal ruler, who lacks love, respect and sympathy and considers women as useless object whether they encompass in the roles of mothers or wives. Sakhi's violent behavior is not limited to his wife, his anger is indiscriminate. At one point in the novel Sakhi loses his sanity on the ox by kicking and beating, which caused its flesh ruptured. His mother Hamida interfered to protect the oxen from his beating, he intensely pushed her aside. Hamida's second intervention between his son and beast infuriated Sakhi and he angrily yells at the old lady and tries to beat her in rage. This man fails to realize that beating a mother is a supreme sin. Finally he redirects his wildness towards his wife Zaitoon who comes to help Hamida. Sakhi thrashes her badly by saying *"You are my woman, I'll teach you to obey me.....Zaitoon stumbled and sprawled face down"* (p.172). He abused and degraded his wife. He exerted his domination on her. He did not regard his wife as an equal partner but treated her as a

servant or a domestic pet. The wife is supposed to be a symbol of honor by tribal men but the fact is that the caliber of their honor is pretty low, judging by their treatment of the women.

The marriage institution in male chauvinistic society becomes a vehicle for arrogance, cruelty, abuse, mistreatment and violence against women. Sakhi's violence is coupled with degradation and verbal abuse, specifically when he realizes a challenge to his possessiveness. There is a scene in the novel when Zaitoon waves at foreigner soldiers vehicle, then Sakhi drags her and unleashes his temper with very abusive language " *You dirty, black little witch waving at those pigs..... You wanted him to stop and fuck you, didn't you I will kill you lying slut.* " (p.186) This abusive tone exposes Sakhi's character and his deep-rooted misogyny and narrow mindedness. He asserts his power and masculinity over his wife as a traditional patriarchal husband. This fusion of physical and verbal abuse exemplifies a terrible form of subjugation of women within the tribal areas. Sakhi's heinous actions signify the low status and transactional value given to women within the tribal society portrayed by Sidhwa in the novel. The verbal abuse directed by men regarding the women is not a peculiarity but a normalized practice in strict patriarchal zones, representing a fanatical form of gender discrimination. Through Sakhi's character, the novel unveils a system where the use of power, violence, oppression, and subjugation are commonplace. Ultimately, the maltreatment of women, their selling and purchasing is disclosed as an approved or accepted practice in these tribal areas, severely displaying the harsh reality of hegemonic masculinity.

Emotional Rigidity: The Manifestation of Possessiveness and Suspicion

A more concealed but equally damaging aspect of hegemonic masculinity is emotional rigidity, where men are instructed to suppress vulnerability and turns their complex emotions into restrictive and destructive tempers like suspicion, possessiveness and rage.

This trait is clearly witnessed through the character of Farrukh, Carol's husband. Although from urban and modern background, his behavior is influenced by the same patriarchal logic that restricts them from showing flexibility in emotions. Carol, a young modern, educated American woman is frustrated with the biased custom and tradition imposed by the patriarchal society. Like Zaitoon she is also exploited by her husband. Farrukh possessiveness is obvious, when he states, " *I don't like to see you waiting on all kinds of men go out with anyone but himself...* " (p. 96). Farrukh shows possessiveness whenever Carol being friendly with other men. Although Farrukh is aware of the Carol's western culture norms, that being a western lady, it's common to have communication with men. On one hand, he shows a protective attitude towards his wife but on the other hand, his possessiveness, domineering and controlling behavior reflects the sign of superiority, emotional rigidity and an inability to express vulnerability which are embedded in him as his upbringing in a patriarchal system that grants men ultimate authority. After every social event, Farrukh's emotional rigidity explodes into accusatory rage, as noticeable in his words: " *You're lying. You enjoyed it, every bit of it. Most likely you encouraged him. You welcomed him. You devoured him.....* " (p. 110). Here Farrukh's continuous insult, jealousy and suspicions are turned into violent verbal assault, demonstrating that aggression and accusation are the only emotions he can showcase as a masculine man. This is a prime performance of hegemonic masculinity where men's reject softer and overt emotions to favor a strict, controlling, and negative emotional pattern.

The Overall Performance of Hegemonic Masculinity

The novel's ending reveals that these hegemonic performances are the part of overall, systemic ideology. Upon discovering Zaitoon's dead body: " *Misri khan's massive shoulders straightened. He thrust his chest forward and his head rose high. It was as if a breeze had cleared the poisonous*

air suffocating them...” (p.244). This scene took place after the tribe discovered the dead body of Zaitoon. Misri khan the father in law of Zaitoon promised to the clan that he will kill her daughter-in-law in the name of honor and re-establish the tarnished name of the tribe, but when they come to know about the death of Zaitoon, this brings the relaxation and smile on their faces because their honor and emotionally rigid code is restored. Their expression enlightens the ideological manner that after her death, the tribe and the whole family are delighted by throwing the intolerable burden from their shoulders. This final scene depicts that the hegemonic masculine ideals are satisfied only when women are controlled, subdued and eradicated in order to secure male power. In short, it establishes an idea that in tribal areas, male members are dissatisfied until they murder fleeing women to restore their reputation.

Findings

The findings of this study reveal that in *The Pakistani Bride* (1983), Bapsi Sidhwa powerfully portrays the lives of women within a highly patriarchal society and shows the challenges they are forced to endure under this culture. The novel depicts a world where women live without the notion of feminism and women’s empowerment, yet it serves as a testament to their resistance. Through their struggles, the female characters attempt to question masculine domination and reclaim control over their own bodies and sexuality. By depicting feminine sexuality, Sidhwa affirms a distinct identity for her characters, thereby creating a pathway through which they can withstand and resist patriarchal control.

In this novel *The Pakistani Bride*, the practices of hegemonic masculinity are displayed, promoted and implemented through the range of different oppressive acts. These include the commodification of women through forced marriages, the humiliation of social morals, intimidation, constant jealousy and possessiveness, continual insult and degradation, harsh treatment, domestic violence, sexual abuse, verbal aggression, gender discrimination and honor killing. Through these behaviors, the male characters disclose their strength, control and commit to performances that demonstrate their power and domination. The primary cause of these hegemonic masculine practices is identified as the patriarchal culture which provides the incentive and validation for men to exercise such domination in an attempt to maintain a leading position in society. These performances also functions as a strategic efforts to claim and hold onto the male power that is granted to them by the patriarchal system. Conclusion:

The analysis of the novel *The Pakistani Bride* concludes that the female characters tries to adapt to the tribal lifestyle are undermined by the oppressive acts of male power and hegemonic masculinity. Despite their efforts, the systemic patriarchal norms wasted their efforts and resulted in their failure, forcing them to spend marginalized and repressed lives under the supreme patriarchal authority. Zaitoon, in particular, becomes the victim of this hegemonic masculinity, first through the decision of her father, Qasim, and later through the brutality of her husband, Sakhi. This cycle of tyranny is perpetuated by the patriarchal culture that not only fosters but demands male dominance. Zaitoon’s endurance of this hegemony is reinforced by her total economic and social reliance on her husband, which is a common convention in tribal framework. For a tribal man it makes no difference whether a woman is their life partner, she is just a woman with no identity, an inferior being, and inherently subordinate. Ultimately, the novel expose a world where the female characters, stripped of confident and self-esteem by the relentless patriarchal order, thus they remain powerless. Their identities and autonomy are constrained and limited, and their spirits are broken by a system which is designed to negate their agency.

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