



FEMALE BODY AND SELF-OWNERSHIP IN TEHMINA DURRANI'S *BLASPHEMY*

Najia Zaidi
Department of English Literature,
University of Balochistan, Quetta, Pakistan.

Abstract

This paper studies the situation of wives through the institution of marriage as reflected in Durrani's *Blasphemy*, a fictional narrative presenting the painful life of a girl caught up in a violent marriage in rural Pakistan. Suffering silently for several years, Heer, the protagonist of the narrative, decides to come out of the life of molestation and oppression by demonstrating the hidden agency of a woman to challenge the might of men and traditions. Through her powerful spoken words, she dismantles not only male supremacy by telling her story of manipulation and exploitation to the world but also lays bare the fraudulent and corrupt practices of the so-called spiritual guides and religious preceptors wielding power through landholdings of shrines. This pattern of development leads her to reflect on the constraints women face in rural Pakistan and explore strategies to counter the situation when objectified, alienated and confined within boundaries. The focus of this paper is to trace Heer's journey from a life of innocence and slavery to self-ownership of her body.

Keywords

South Asian fiction, women writers, Tehmina Durrani, unequal marriages, women's agency, resistance, female body