



FROM 'WHORE' TO 'SON OF THE SOIL': THE SOCIO- COGNITIVE REPRESENTATION OF 'POWERFUL' WOMEN ON PAKISTANI SOCIAL MEDIA

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Abstract

Discourse and gender research have often centered on sexist and gendered representations, most of which emphasize the conceptualization of women as 'sex objects'. The socio-cognitive representation of 'powerful' women using derogatory stereotypes in a Pakistani context are not being adequately dealt with. In its contribution to discourse on gender and media, this study looks at how (presumed) powerful Pakistani women are represented in sexual stereotypes in Pakistani social media. Using a Feminist Critical Discourse Analytical Approach, five hundred comments across various discussion forums of Pakistani social media are examined. Through the analyses of various linguistic forms, the results show that manliness is equated with sexual aggression and womanliness with passivity and silence. These are reproductions of traditional male sexual power and female powerlessness stereotypes: that is, men need to overpower 'promiscuous' women with sexual assault or rape. Furthermore, this study also shows that Pakistani hetero-patriarchy lacks an adequate system of signification for the representation of 'respectable' women and relies on masculine signifiers if a need arises.

Keywords

Discourse, Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, socio-cognitive representations