

Missing themes of manhood and childhood: an analysis of Pakistani and American women writings

Nadia Bibi* | Ole Doering

College of Foreign Languages, Hunan Normal University, Changsha, China.

*Corresponding Authors Email: bibin8402@gmail.com

Abstract:

This article aims to discover the element of partiality and political representation in women's writings, focusing on authors from the United States and Pakistan. Its goal is the identification of recurring and negligent themes in a profound assessment covering four centuries of women's narratives and compelling anthologies. The woman literature revolves around women's challenges and their rights. It seems to be chauvinism to ignore other vital themes in literature. Though man is also abused sexually, morally and psychologically in a society being part of a marginalised member of the patriarchal society, women were felt to be inferior and unwise to men. Therefore, they have self-centred themselves in literature. This analysis aims to expand the circle of the themes outside feminism so that female literature might grow intellectually and universally and cover essential literary theories beyond discrimination. This quest will assist in finding out the neglected themes in literature by the women writers on each side. For the collection of data, qualitative research methodology has been adopted. This research helps women writers reflect all humans' emotions without showing women's literature as the theory of political representation. This article helps to draw expected creative conclusions about neglected themes by women writers.

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1. Introduction

The women's literature has often been defined by the literary scholars as a classification of writing done by women. What makes the history of women's writing interesting is that, in many ways, it is a new area of study. The tradition of women's writing has been much ignored due to the inferior position women have held in male-dominated societies. It is still not unheard of to see literature classes or anthologies in which women are greatly outnumbered by male writers or even absent. Men are also abused sexually, morally and psychologically in a society, however, being part of a marginalized member of the patriarchal society, the women were being felt to be an inferior human and unwise to men. Therefore, they have self-centred themselves in literature. The obligation of women's literature, then, is to categorize and create an area of study for a group of people marginalized by history and to explore through the writings, their lives, as they were, while occupying such a unique sociopolitical space within, the women themselves were often the only champions of themselves, their contemporaries, and their predecessors.

Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication on the Rights of Women* (1792) is a landmark treatise that paved the way for many women after her to not only publish their works but also to engage in the overall critical discourse surrounding the issue of literature. Rarely do some men speak out together with women. Few of the first recorded endeavours to note women's influences on literature were directories printed in the 18th century and were written by men. *Feminead* (1754) by John Duncombe and *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain Who Have Been Celebrated for their Writing or Skill in the Learned Languages, Arts, and Sciences* (1752) by George Ballard are two such Manus, the majority of people interested in reading and responding to works written by women were other women. One prime example of this is *The Female Advocate: A Poem Occasioned by Reading Mr. Buncombe's Feminead* (1774) by Mary Scott. The poem was Scott's first publication and is notable because it praises other women writers publishing at the time, including children's writer Sarah Fielding and Anna Laetitia Barbauld, a writer whose political opinions eventually led to her being blacklisted after she published an inflammatory poem on her disagreement with the British Empire's involvement in the Napoleonic wars. So, woman's writing has contributed to remarkable success in achieving their rights and self-respect in a male-dominated society. By expressing their demands, they have gained the confidence to raise their voice against discrimination towards their rights. It seems that women's literature becomes redundantly partial, specifically Pakistani women's literature. It can be supposed that this comparative study of women's writings would figure out the woman's psychology of perceiving matters. The term Comparative study is a prominent field nowadays, it can be defined as the method of two different groups, cultures, religions, literature, and education systems. World literature refers to this field as a single scholarly field of study (Enani, 2005).

The author writes in his book and says that Comparison is a mental action that consists of establishing a minimal intellectual parallel of analogy between two or more elements, whereby

both similarities and differences are investigated. A comparison is a logical-formal act, a dialectical relationship between a differentiating way of thinking induction and a totalizing attitude that looks for what is constant deduction. (Domingues, 2014). There is an extensive knowledge of comparative literature of genres of poetry, novels, and plays however, a focus on summative themes between Pakistan American and Pakistani literature is not scholarly analysed up till now. It will help to identify the commonalities and variations between these two types of writers. It will assist in highlighting the challenges of both female writers. It will enhance knowledge about the themes and topics chosen by culturally associated writers, and it will lead to evaluate the contribution of female literature in transforming society and achieving women's rights and their goals of composition. Because every piece of literature in every era contributed to promoting society, perhaps it also helps to identify global future challenges. Intellectually, it is unjust to decide that a woman is unwise. She has the same intellect as a male. She needs to think critically to address global and universal themes. It has made it possible to make progress and revolutionize the world. It has taught me to reflect on the past and predict the future to thrive in life. Literature is typically thought of as an expression of human life. Literature has been described as life's foundation and base by an essayist. It emphasizes a variety of subjects, including love and catastrophes, and it helps people see things from the perspectives of others.

Anderson, a researcher, has asserted in these words that it supports the reader to think about their own lives so they can make wise decisions (Anderson, 2022). Furthermore, according to another author, it teaches the individual by forcing them to consider issues and ideas they otherwise might not consider (Martino, 2011). A country with a strong language will produce quality literature and have a favourable influence on others. Literature can vary from generation to generation, from origin to origin. Different genres of literature depict various world cultures and historical periods. Every region in the world has its own unique culture and way of life. For instance, we can state that the American way of life cannot be applied to Pakistanis, and vice versa for the European way of life in Arab. This comparative study will help to highlight the distinctions and overlaps between female writers from Pakistan and the United States. American female writers will impact Pakistani women writers since they have an admirable mastery of crafting high-calibre literature as native English speakers.

This comparative investigation explores the parallels and contrasts between the literary creations of women writers from two distinct cultures—Eastern tradition and Western tradition—by comparing their works. A researcher has defined the comparative literature as, in its broadest definition, comparison refers to the mental process that enables us to recognize differences and parallels. Taste and principles cannot be separated without grasping how they are connected to and distinguished from other items (Brown, 2013). Moreover, another author has delineated in these words that Comparative literature uses at least two different study methods. Knowledge of multiple national languages and literature comes first, followed by knowledge of additional fields of study for literature. Second, it has a philosophy of including marginal or other literature in its many senses of originality, genre, and different text kinds.

The American and European literature were the main subjects of previous comparative studies (Steven, 1998). This research study includes a thematic analysis of both Pakistani and American writers' literary contributions to the English literature. According to a scholar, thematic analysis is a method of analysing qualitative methods to find common themes—topics, concepts, and patterns of meaning that recur—and the researcher carefully analyses the data and themes.

2. Literature review

2.1. Contribution of Pakistani female writers in English literature

Pakistan has been closely examined and analysed since it became an independent country on the map of the world on 14 August 1947. Women have played their part in the social and political fields; they have sacrificed their time and knowledge to protest the injustices. And it looks like a representation of political theory rather than universal literary theory. They have reflected the political turmoil of the country in the form of literature before and after the partition. The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the themes and the focus of their mooted point in the works of Pakistani women writers with Americans. English is an official language alongside Urdu, so it is crucial in several ways. Due to its widespread value, English literature is taught in educational institutions from primary schools through the university level to both male and female students. We specifically chose to compare American and Pakistani authors because it is essential to strengthen women's literature in Pakistan and America by identifying key states and territories for writing styles, linguistic growth, and the expansion of the themes. It is in the developmental stage of growth in terms of themes, language, and style compared to American women writers. It can help improve their quality of work because Americans are native speakers who better understand writing techniques and themes.

A group of university scholars have determined the elements of English literature and argued that, in comparison to Indian women's writing, Pakistani women's writing is naive and simple and rustic, hyperbolic, sad comedy, politically driven, and tedious (Malik et al., 2022). Pakistani literature is still developing and needs to raise its bar to spread aspirational writing throughout the nation and around the world. Pakistani female writers have made their efforts in the field of English literature on both a national and international level, just as they have in every other aspect of life. Even though, many critics have criticized writers who use repeating and similar themes. However, since Pakistan gained its independence in 1947, several women have written in English, beginning with Mumtaz Shah Nawaz. Women's prose and poetry in English continued to evolve slowly and gradually as the social and political climate of the nation changed. However, the women's writings had a rapid boom in the twenty-first century. Both domestically and internationally, the women authors of outstanding literature have received recognition and acclaim from all around the world. The western academia thus recognized Pakistani literature in English as a separate literary tradition (Chambers & Karmakar, 2021).

Pakistani women writers during this period found inspiration from home, societal, and political events. They emphasized the difficulties and hardships faced by women in patriarchal systems, in particular, as their major themes (Faridah et al., 2006). Pakistan is a patriarchal society where women are subjugated and marginalized by male family members. They are considered to be unwise, and the female authors have tried to reflect this situation in their novels and short stories. A researcher has added his comments about the situation and said that the degree of men's dignity depends on the ownership and management of wealth, women, and land in Pakistani society, which has a strong patriarchal structure that mediates women's status (Khalid, 2014). Major themes at the beginning of pioneer authors have been mentioned by the university researchers. They said that the early writers covered a wide range of topics, including the division of the subcontinent, worldwide issues like economic disparities and war exploitation, as well as race, caste, and gender issue in the context of Pakistani society and culture (Salahuddin, 2017). Moreover, another scholar further added about the themes of the female literature and elaborated that writing by women is an expression of feelings that are regarded to be distinct from those of males. They are regarded as being more emotional and sensitive, and most of their writings focus on the female issues in both public and private societal contexts (Malik, 2022).

It appears that almost every female writer has focused on the sufferings of the feminine gender from the early age of literature, and they searched for and confirmed this through their compositions. Assistant professors from the Institute of Abdur Rehman University of Science Technology in India said that by the end of the war, women writers had weakened the influence of men in a patriarchal society and maintained their former orthodoxy. There is no debate about feminism, according to some critics from Western society, but Bapsi Sidwa's portrayal of discrimination against women in Pakistani fiction has been instrumental in the growth of that nation's feminist literature. That eliminated the idea of Western critics (Ahmad, 2019). For some families, even the birth of a girl is a sign of hopelessness and despair, while the birth of a boy is celebrated as a sign of optimism. However, the same girl is exposed by men, becoming the victim of sexual assault and rape by 10 to 12 men all at once. A three-year-old baby girl in Pakistan is not safe from being raped. The reason for this victimization is a patriarchal society where the male is considered intellectual and free to decide what is wrong and right. Access to high-quality education is to a male in Pakistani society and only to elite-class females. Therefore, English women writers belong to the same class and have reflected their lives in rural areas and themes. They have utilized the names of Karachi and Lahore in plotting their novels. Their themes are dejection, disappointment, and hope for the best in their fiction and novels (Ahmad, 2009). In addition, Pakistani women's writing is autobiographical. Some university scholars have assessed Bapsi Sidwa's novel *The Bride* and Tehmina Durrani's *My Feudal Lord* as exceptional autobiographies those ever written (Chowdhary, 2017). This novel is her Memoir. She presents the suffering of an elite woman as her major theme. In novels, she has accepted cultural and religious responsibility and faced physical and mental punishment. A Study of Tehmina Durrani's Autobiography *My Feudal Lord* In this work she has discussed her suffering being a marginalized figure in a patriarchal society.

2.2. Trends of American Women Literature

Literature can serve many purposes; however, it can be used for another purpose, like identification of problems rather than amusement, by showing that literature can provide us with valuable insights about the *world* in which we live and our *relationships* to one another and ourselves. In this sense, literature may be considered a source for exploring and discovering our world and its cultural barriers and boundaries, which prove to be hindrances for some humans in which we live. It allows us to explore alternative realities, to view things from the perspective of someone completely different to us, biologically, socially, politically and physically, though not different from us emotionally and intellectually, and to reflect upon our own intellectual and emotional responses to the complex challenges of the everyday life. By studying the women's literature of different backgrounds, it is possible to develop an in-depth understanding of the ways that the women use in language and their feelings to make sense of the world.

For much of the 19th century, American literature was dominated by male authors. Women were largely excluded from the literary world and were often reduced to stereotypes or characterizations that limited their roles to those of subservient housewives. This limited view of women in American literature began to change with the dawn of a new century. Earlier in the 20th century, America was seen as a new era full of potential and opportunities. Women's literature began to emerge, often taking on roles and challenges that were not common in other parts of the world. These fictions celebrated the strength, resilience, and creativity of women who pursued to make a difference in their communities. Many of these stories featured women struggling against the odds to establish a better life for themselves and others. About women's writings, a scholar in his blog posts argues that feminine composition advanced to reveal a changing narrative of women's societal role. While they continued to write about the outdated roles allocated to them, there was also a growing trend of women writing about more complex topics such as social reform and gender equality. These women also encouraged others to challenge traditional notions of femininity and find the possibilities available to them (Shaheer, 2022). Due to its widespread value, English literature is taught in educational institutions from primary schools through the university level to both male and female students. We specifically chose to compare American and Pakistani authors because it is essential to strengthen women's literature in Pakistan and America by identifying key states and territories for writing styles, linguistic growth, and the expansion of the themes. Women have focused mainly on womanhood and the suffering of females in novels and fiction, and it has become the redundant theory of political representation not a literary theory of universality. Another scholar can further elaborate his idea about women's fiction and argues that as the twentieth century Advances, the voices of women become louder and more artistically innovative. Women of colour joined the chorus, making American tales more vigorous, complicated, and inventive in terms of their demands; women's writing expanded a course in which each generation of female characters progressed toward vital and independent lives, free from society's traditional limitations (Wendy and Sharon, 2017).

Another scholar further discovers that through his research projects and argues that the growing institutionalization of Afro-American literature in traditional English departments has been concomitant with the growth of Black women's literature. Afro-American studies and women's studies share a common terrain and a common discourse in the criticism of Black women's writing. As Huston Baker puts the matter, "the convergence of feminist and African American theoretical formulations offers the most challenging nexus for scholarship in the coming years. One aspect of that development will be the continued reshaping of the literary canon as forgotten, neglected, or suppressed texts are rediscovered. "According to research analysis, one of the foremost preoccupations of Black woman feminists has been to subvert the belittling image of Black women. Black women writers often perceive their characters from this angle and have struggled with the burden of the received image. The healing of the wounds inflicted by slavery and racism is attempted through undermining these images. This blending of symbolism with the imaginary is what makes Black women" writing both alien and real and has helped them achieve their self-hood (Prashant, 2014). A group of university scholars have determined the elements of English literature and argued that, in comparison to Indian women's writing, Pakistani women's writing is naive and simple and rustic, hyperbolic, sad comedy, politically driven, and tedious (Malik et al., 2022).

Pakistani literature is still developing and needs to raise its bar to spread aspirational writing throughout the nation and around the world. Pakistani female writers have made their efforts in the field of English literature on both a national and international level, just as they have in every other aspect of life. Even though, many critics have criticized writers who use repeating and similar themes. But since Pakistan gained its independence, several women have written in English, beginning with Mumtaz Shah Nawaz. Women's prose and poetry in English continued to evolve slowly and gradually as the social and political climate of the nation changed. However, women's writing had a rapid boom in the twenty-first century. Both domestically and internationally based women authors of outstanding literature have received recognition and acclaim from all around the world. Western academia thus recognized Pakistani literature in English as a separate literary tradition (Chambers & Karmakar, 2021). Pakistani women writers during this period found inspiration from home, societal, and political events. They emphasized the difficulties and hardships faced by women in patriarchal systems as their major themes (Faridah et al., 2017). Pakistan is a patriarchal society where women are subjugated and marginalized by male family members. They are unwise, and female authors have tried to reflect this situation in their novels and short stories.

Another researcher has added his comments about the situation and said the degree of men's dignity depends on the ownership and management of wealth, women, and land in Pakistani society, which has a strong patriarchal structure that mediates women's status (Khalid, 2014). Major themes at the beginning of pioneer authors have been mentioned by university researchers. They said that early writers covered a wide range of topics, including the division of the subcontinent, worldwide issues like economic disparities and war exploitation, as well as race, caste, and gender in the context of Pakistani society and culture (Salahuddin, 2017).

Moreover, a scholar further added about the themes of female literature and elaborated that writing by women is an expression of feelings that are regarded to be distinct from those of males. They are regarded as being more emotional and sensitive, and most of their writings focus on female issues in both public and private societal contexts (Malik et al., 2022). It appears that almost every female writer has focused on the sufferings of the feminine gender from the early age of literature, and they searched for and confirmed this through their compositions. Another scholar from the Institute of Abdur Rehman University of Science Technology in India said that by the end of the war, women writers had weakened the influence of men in a patriarchal society and maintained their former orthodoxy. There is no debate about feminism, according to some critics from the Western society, but Bapsi Sidwa's portrayal of discrimination against women in the Pakistani fiction has been instrumental in the growth of that nation's feminist literature. That work has eliminated the idea of the Western critics (Ahmad, 2009).

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3. Research methodology

The methodology of this research article is qualitative and is primarily based on obtaining in-depth contextualized, non-numerical data and its descriptive analysis. The data has been collected through an open-ended questionnaire developed for this research, such as the neglected themes in women's writing, to understand women's behaviour in their literature. It's all about describing and analysing subjective phenomena such as emotions or experiences and the psychology of American women's writing and Pakistani women's literature. For this research article, data has been collected from research papers, blogs, books, and journal articles. The major source is internet surfing.

4. Research variations and similitudes

There are many similarities and discrepancies between Pakistani literature and US literature. It is inferred from the above research reviews and analysis. Each piece of literature has addressed the issues of war, civil rights, and settlements of migrants from India to Pakistan after partition. The writers focused on these issues in initial English literature in 1947, when Pakistan got freedom from British colonization. Ladies of American novels, poems, plays, textbooks, and the journey memoirs written around 1790 and the Civil War defy conventional notions of women's literature, which emphasize the private, homebound, and emotional sphere of women. They were challenging the mental and intellectual barriers that separated the personal and public spheres (Baym, 2023). America has also gained independence from British and European colonization.

Secondly, they address the discrimination of women's rights by the powerful hands of men in their composition that led the women towards progress and enlightenment. According to Sitish and Faridah University professors from Malaysia said that Pakistani women's literature focuses on fiction short stories and novels, poetry, and an autobiography as vehicles of expression for Pakistani women that address enslavement, rejection, and estrangement. Likewise, American women have also identified the same issues and written in their work. According to university scholars, modern female writers reflect feminism and elaborate female identity in their works; of course, the movement of writers, their techniques, and thematic works can help the people of today to understand the women's issues and feminine concepts in various situations and stages of their lives.

Thirdly, it is important to note that Pakistani authors and playwrights have pointed out the class distinctions and the respective barriers of each middle and lower class being a poor and developing country. Africans were enslaved at the lowest level in America and treated brutally. African women writers have used this class distinction based on the racist theme of writing in their poetry and fiction and novels.

Fourthly, the American women writers have written about various themes of love, nature, domestic objects, and problems of old age of women because, in Western society, old parents are sent to old age homes. While contrary to Pakistan, in old age, parents are valued and especially honoured.

Fifthly, the Pakistani novels are autobiographical and personal, and they are written elite members of the society, and they have described their issues. They have access to English medium educational institutions.

National and international. Therefore, they are comfortable writing their feeling and emotions in English. On the other hand, American women writers are impersonal and mainly focus on a variety of themes. They are more concerned about their income regarding literary writing,

according to Alfred Bedxien Spofford, regarded as a literary genius and the most promising young writer of her subsequent ones, who went on to publish widely in nearly all the major materials. Economic constraints forced her to create and distribute too rapidly, but the components that followed demonstrated her struggle to push romanticism beyond its limitations. Her first novel, *Sir Rohan's Ghost*, relied heavily on vibrant, almost poetic descriptions (Bendixen 2018).

5. Challenges of the writers

Many scholars and critics believe that similar threads in women's writing are repeatedly reflected. The repetition of associated themes often leads to the fall of quality work, its future scope on an international level also can deviate the reader's attention. This has resulted in their writing recurring themes of politics and historical background. These themes can be found in Mumtaz Shah Nawaz's novel *Heart Divided*, Bapsi Sidwa's *Ice Candy Man*, Tehmina Durrani's *My Feudal Lord*, Sara Suher's *Meatless Days*, and Kamila Shamsi's *Salt and Saffron*. This may limit the depth of the future considering the themes of their literature are stereotyped and traditional. One well-known academic has stated that Pakistani women's work is meaningless, and that aristocracy focuses on the personal lives of writers (Shamsie, 2023). Hardships for American women Writers continue to be viewed as inferior to their male counterparts in this era. Women should write about needles and cooking, according to Emmanuel Greek novelists and critics. According to Kate Jhonson. they are remote from social and political concerns, just replicating issues in fiction and nonfiction, only imitating the masculine gender. The struggles of female authors from the past are still seen in male writers, who are more widely recognized for their work (Jhonson, 2019).

Moreover, females have another challenge in that their composition is not much viewed as a lofty and sublime idea because of male dominancy in society, their work is being subcategorized in the literary works as compared to males, and still, unethical remarks are being made about them. But they have to face these challenges wisely and by providing quality work and universal themes in their plays and novels. In addition, there is a challenge both for Pakistani women and American writers. Students are lacking interest in English literature in America as well as in Pakistan. According to William in American higher education, a well-publicized shift in what undergraduate students desire to study has occurred during the last four decades. The number of young men and women majoring in English has declined substantially, as has the number of students majoring in philosophy, foreign languages, art history, and related areas such as history (Chace, 2009). In Pakistan, the novel *Mr Chips* is removed from the syllabus by the Punjab Textbook board because students have difficulty with their English papers. According to Farah Adeed, there is a desire to have a moral effect on the students and more relevant and insightful stories to acquaint students with the contemporary world (Adeed, 2019). This is a challenge for the women writers to think about changing their perception of the writing to focus merely on feminism and domestic violence, how it happened and what could be done to reverse it.

6. Conclusion

Women's writing in American society has played a paramount role in establishing their identity as equivalent to males. They employed composing as an avenue to speak out opposed social and political discrimination. They got plenty of attention and could secure adequate rights. Both countries have systems of patriarchy in which women are deemed feeble and unwise to make decisions as individuals on domestic grounds, national, and international levels. They have presented themselves as self-sufficient, intelligent, powerful, and mentally and physically robust. Through gaining the ability to vote and becoming involved in politics with the spread of feminism, they recognized their gender roles as equal to males. The feminist movement pushed for political and social equality, while feminist literature exposed the impacts of a patriarchal society while also advocating for equality. Each writer has primarily focused on womanhood, while African Americans have primarily focused on the theme of racism because they were denied rights and thought to be inferior because of their skin colour over the white colour. They have succeeded in settling this issue to some extent, but they keep fighting. This expression of their biased emotions represents literature as political theory less than universal literary theory.

Finally, it is concluded from this study that women's writing in each society has played a huge and outstanding performance in the growth of women as well as the advancement of their nation. Today, women have shown their potential in every field of life through literature. They express themselves as an individual community. They are emotionally and biologically different from the man but intellectually equal to men. However, their repetitive demand for women's rights in literature appears to be biased and political, and historically, most of the literary works revolve around injustices of colonization and post-colonial impacts on the lives of colonized communities. Now, they have succeeded in achieving their rights and power of decision; however, they can assume other significant challenging themes, likely climate change, poverty, human rights, manhood, and childhood, tolerance, individual liberty, respect for the opposition, and peaceful coexistence of the humanity in their writing. This research article suggests that future writers consider novice ideologies in future women's literature because the level and situation of women's rights and the degree of discrimination towards women are not uniform in every society, culture, and among families. The women's empowerment, education, and security situation are different in developed and underdeveloped countries and cultures.

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ORCID iD

Nadia Bibi <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-1834-3354>

Ole Doering <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4773-0599>

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