

THE POLITICS OF THE FEMALE BODY: A FEMINIST CRITIQUE OF SEXUALITY, SCIENCE AND SURVEILLANCE IN UZMA ASLAM'S "THE GEOMETRY OF GOD"

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Abstract

This paper attempts to explore the politics of the female body in the novel *The Geometry of God* (2008) by Uzma Aslam Khan in an effort to understand how sexuality, science, and surveillance converge to influence and dictate female subjectivity. Although feminist criticism has discussed the body as a source of power, discipline, and resistance (Bartky, 1990; Bordo, 1993; Butler, 1990), no body of critical work has yet explored how South Asian Anglophone fiction engages with these debates. Existing literature on Khan's novel has focused on issues of science, religion, and modernity, but the feminist aspect of body politics has been overlooked so far. Informed by feminist poststructuralism (Weedon, 1997) and using an interpretive qualitative approach, this study employs feminist critical discourse analysis (Lazar, 2005) to decipher how the text critiques patriarchal, theological, and institutional processes of control. The discussion shows how Khan uses the female body not just as something that is to be fought between the state of oppression and the act of resistance, but something that presents the resistance, expression of creativity, and alternative knowledge, as well. This study addresses a significant gap in this extant literature because it situates *The Geometry of God* in the broader feminist and postcolonial discourse. It demonstrates how writing by South Asian women challenges the hegemonic discourse and rewrites female subject agency, and how it challenges the politics of surveillance and sexuality.

1. Introduction

Contemporary feminist scholarship views the female body not as a fixed, ahistorical entity, but as a politically constructed one, in which knowledge, power, and cultural meanings are intertwined. Foucault (1978) believes that sexuality is an object of inquiry along with control, and regimes of argument determine the classification, discipline, and control of bodies, and in particular the bodies of women. Bordo (1993) believes that cultural discourses, including

medical science, media imagery, and others, are central to the creation and perpetuation of norms that govern the female body. Feminist theorists have been arguing that the body, as a cultural power instrument, can also act as a source of resistance, as the dominant ideologies can be challenged on this front. Likewise, according to Butler (1990), gendered subjectivity is enacted and not ascribed, constructed through social performances accomplished through the repetition of social practices and not biological

predetermination. In this performative response, attention has been moved beyond essentialist conceptions of sex to the social scripts that make gender norms. It also talks of how norms can be revealed and disrupted in literary texts. An integrated feminist/Foucauldian approach, therefore, allows an analysis of how science, religion, and surveillance simultaneously produce the so-called moral geographies of the female body. In her novel *The Geometry of God* Khan (2008) dramatizes these conflicting axes of anxiety on an intensely politicized landscape of Pakistan through the 1970s and into the 1980s, where struggles over authority and legitimacy, as well as the right to determine truth, erupt between religious literalism, popular scientism, and new secular modernities. As Khan (2019) remarks, the story makes the experiences of the women under regimes that exercise scientific rhetoric and moral policing to control bodies and behaviors. In a combination of scientific language (mathematics, evolutionary theory) and religious and administrative surveillance, the novel offers a female body that is argued, measured, observed, and politicized. The title of the novel, *The Geometry of God*, mirrors the major conflicts of the book. The word geometry suggests rational mapping, orderliness, and measurement, all of which are properties of scientific study, especially scientific exploration such as that led by Amal as a female paleontologist in cracking evolutionary facts. "God" (on the other hand) endorses religious authority, metaphysical realism, and moral governance. This juxtaposition puts the clash between empirical science and faith-based orthodoxy as a defining reality on the front stage. Considered through a feminist lens, this geometry may be read as the systematic codification and standardization of the bodies of women and the functions they can play- an ironic reminder that even the divine, as mediated through human institutions, itself, is subordinated to the grids of political, religious, and patriarchal governance.

This study propose a feminist critique around three intersecting registers, first, the discursive construction of sexuality and body (how scientific, medical and moral discourse define

and discipline women); second, technologies and practices of surveillance (institutional, communal and familial mechanisms of surveillance and sanction); and third, narrative strategies that make the operation of these processes legible or opaque. Using this triadic construct, an analysis of *The Geometry of God* will, as indicated by Bordo (1993) and Butler (1990), demonstrate how the female body becomes a point of oppression and possible agency, particularly in a socio-political environment characterized by authoritarianism, religious revivalism, and conflicting modernities.

1.1. Overview of the Novel

The Geometry of God (2008), by Uzma Aslam Khan, is envisioned in the political and cultural context of the transformation of Pakistan during the tenure of General Zia-ul-Haq (1977-1988), a leader who emphasized the strict adherence to Islamic policies in the country, suppression of civil liberties, and strengthening of patriarchal values. Scientific investigation, particularly topics like evolution or paleontology, developed in this atmosphere as being at variance with orthodox religion, thus developing intellectual suppression. The plot of the novel revolves around the main protagonist, Amal, a strong-willed young female paleontologist who is the successor of her grandfather Zahoor in the fossil research and faces both institutional resistance and moral policing. The novel's narratives, in parallel to that of Amal, are interwoven: Noman, a young man trying to cope with his religious indoctrination, and Mehwish, the blind sister of Amal, and her ability to see something different than the mainstream. Using these views, Khan analyzes how science, religion, politics, and gender have to come together to define individual lives. *The Geometry of God* introduces the personal struggles into a broader historical picture to show how the female body, intellectual endeavour, and individual life are subjected to regulation, surveillance, and ideological control. This is why the text became a good domain where the feminist-Foucauldian approach to sexuality, science, and power could be examined.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Although *The Geometry of God* by Uzma Aslam Khan has dense thematic richness, this novel has not yet been adequately explored through a critical framework that mediates sexuality, science and surveillance critically through a feminist Foucauldian perspective. The historic background of Islamization of Pakistan during the time of General Zia-ul-Haq (1977-1988) gave rise to the institutional and cultural machineries that profoundly controlled the female bodies, legal standing and freedom. As an example, the Hudood Ordinances erased the lines between rape and adultery, which in turn made it incredibly challenging to hold perpetrators accountable and also subjected the victims to scrutiny in the form of moral and legal examination (Burki, 2015). In addition, the Law of Evidence and associated policies weakened the testimonies of women legally, as well as strengthened the surveillance around gendered spheres in both the public and the private realms (Human Rights Watch, 1999). Against this tightly controlled sociopolitical landscape, *The Geometry of God* presents a female lead character that crashes up against the political orthodoxy of religion, scientific might, and monitoring of morals. The major gap, however, is that none of the current scholarship has explored how the scientific discourse and religious forms of surveillance in the novel merge to regulate the female body. This objectification of female body as a scientific and moral object on religious grounds and its consequences on epistemic influence is unexplored.

Therefore, this study deals with two interrelated issues:

Empirical-historical issue: Zia-era Pakistani women encountered a system of body and epistemic control, systematically grounded in the law and theology of piety, to an extraordinary degree which defined their subjectivity and freedom of movement.

Textual-theoretical issue: Literary criticism on *The Geometry of God* is not fully grounded in incorporating a feminist Foucauldian

understanding of the interplay between science in its role of control, the domain of religion in surveilling aspects of the novel, and the body as an epistemological site of struggle.

Dwelling on this unexamined intersection, the politics of the female body that is mediated both by scientific discourse and by religious surveillance, my study makes a unique contribution to feminist literary criticism, South Asian studies, and resistance under Islamic regimes.

1.3. Rationale of the Study

The Geometry of God by Uzma Aslam Khan explores various intersections of sexuality, science, religion, and socio-political surveillance, and how the female body becomes an important locus of ideological and religious forces. The current literature on Pakistani English fiction has focused much on nationalism, postcolonial identity, and religious extremism, but paid less attention to how female sexuality is regulated through intersecting systems of scientific and religious knowledge. This paper serves to fill this gap by placing the novel in the framework of the feminist theories of the body (Butler, 1993; Grosz, 1994) and Foucaultian notions of biopower and surveillance (Foucault, 1977). It claims that Khan criticizes the epistemic violence created by the intertwining of science and theology to discipline women's bodies and hence the disruption of the binary, which uses science as progressive and religion as regressive. The current paper is also inspired by the socio-political topicality of surveillance, state power, and religious domination in modern Pakistan, where these factors directly influence the lives of women. This paper provides a feminist poststructuralist reading and thus adds to the literature on embodiment, knowledge, and power in postcolonial Muslim settings.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The study is important because it tends to explore the role of science, religion, and surveillance in controlling the female body and their rights, contributing to feminist literary criticism from a Foucauldian perspective. In the

Pakistani context, it is important because it deals with a serious issue of women's bodily autonomy and state-religious control. Internally, it tries to place the Pakistan literature in wider socio-political debates on the issue of gender, politics, and resistance.

1.5. Research Objectives

To examine how Uzma Aslam Khan uses the intersections of science, religion, and surveillance in *The Geometry of God* to critique patriarchal politics of sexuality and the female body.

1.6. Research Questions

What are some of the ways through which *The Geometry of God* reveals how sexuality and science work together with surveillance to regulate the female body?

1.7. Data Selection

The primary source of data for this research is Khan's *"The Geometry of God"*. The novel has been selected due to its direct acknowledgement of the three themes discussed in this research: the politics of the female body, patriarchal surveillance, and the negotiation of female agency with the rationale of power and knowledge. Particular passages will be chosen based on their relation to these themes, such as paragraphs involving scientific inquiry, religious regulation, and acts of resistance. Moreover, secondary sources such as literary criticism, reviews, and the interviews of the author will help to contextualize and enrich the analysis.

1.8. Analysis Method of Data

Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) will be used to analyse the data. According to the definition of Lazar (2005), FCDA is an extension of the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), positioning feminist issues at the forefront of investigation. Where CDA has been concerned with investigating how discourse produces and distributes power, FCDA is concerned directly with how gendered power relations are reproduced, naturalised, and contested in discourse. This renders FCDA especially suitable when one wants to examine a text that both

questions the disciplining of female bodies and envisions feminist resistance.

The analytic process will consist of three steps. Firstly, a micro-level analysis will address the language, imagery, and narrative voice of the novel and how the discourses of surveillance and regulation are presented. Second, macro-level analysis will tie such aspects of textual features to larger socio-political and cultural discourses (i.e., religious orthodoxy, scientific authority, and patriarchal ideologies). Lastly, the analysis will include counter-discourses of resistance in the novel regarding how female characters disorganize and renegotiate structures that attempt to govern them. By using these steps, FCDA will allow us to explore the aspects of domination and resistance in the narrative in a holistic way.

1.9. Ethical Considerations

Since this analysis does not involve any human subjects but is made of literary works, there are few direct ethical risks involved. Academic integrity demands that not only are all secondary materials cited, but that interpretations be reasonably based on textual evidence. Cultural essentialism will also be avoided, and the critique should be sensitive to the richness of the South Asian contexts rather than making them into simple divisions.

2. Literature Review

Feminist literary interpretation has become part of an expanding body of work that has developed since feminist critics started to challenge the marginalization of female voices in literature and academia in the 1960s and 1970s. Early criticism, such as that of Elaine Showalter in *A Literature of Their Own* (1977), depended strongly on the reclamation of women writers and the need to recognize uniquely female experience over against literary traditions considered by critics to have been masculine. This basic period was essential in setting a critical lens through which women, their roles, bodies, and voices could be revisited in literary work. Toril Moi followed this up with her book, *Sexual/Textual Politics* (1985), which introduced French feminism to the field,

focusing on their interest in the convergence of psychoanalysis, gender, and textuality, and expanding feminist criticism beyond recovery into more rigorous discussions of power and ideology.

By the 1990s, feminist criticism was in an era of growth and diversity, addressing concerns of race, post-colonialism, and globalization. Western feminist criticism has been criticized as universalizing the experience of women, and some theorists, such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1991), have used a degree of cultural and temporal specificity as a priority issue. This was an important shift in South Asian female studies that began to concentrate on the importance of intertwining the phenomenon of patriarchy among the religious, cultural, and national realities. Examples of this transfer of focus into feminism as a construction of the postcolonial field include *The Rhetoric of English India* (1992) by Sara Suleri, who addresses how the politics of nationalism and history are intertwined with visions of the female body and sexuality. In parallel, the works of Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (1977) and *The History of Sexuality* (1978), proposed and popularized the concepts of surveillance, biopolitics, and regulation of sexuality that have been subsequently used in feminist and literary studies. Scholars like Sandra Lee Bartky (1990) and Susan Bordo (1993) used the ideas of Foucault to work out the female body and the process of internalization of norms, which are used to put control on female subjectivity that is propagated through institutions. This school or body of work has established the foundation to study a literary text as a place where female bodies and sexualities are being signified, disciplined, and transgressed. In Southern Asia, feminist literary critics during the late 1990s and early twenty-first century started pointing out how the study of literature could be used to subvert gendered oppression or the ways of life within a religious and cultural setup. *The Power to Choose* by Naila Kabeer (2000) drew on feminist theory of the negotiation of women with patriarchal authority in the social-economic contexts, and *The Scandal of the State* by

Rajeswari Sunder Rajan (2003) dwelt on the interplay of gender and state in postcolonial India. Such pieces of writing showed the urgency to contextualize feminist rhetoric within the political and cultural reality of given geographical and cultural places, which is also highly apparent in Pakistani Anglophone literature.

Uzma Aslam Khan draws on this intellectual context in her *Geometry of God* (2008), which is part of an increasingly large category of South Asian Anglophone literature that highlights the plight of women in the context of the patriarchal structure. The work of scholars like Anita Mannur (2010) has highlighted the mechanisms whereby the work of South Asian diaspora writing navigates across cultural boundaries in terms of identity, gender, and belonging, whereas more recent studies (e.g., Nayar, 2015) have discussed the theme of science, religion, and politics in postcolonial narratives. Still, despite growing prominence in terms of the study of South Asian women and their writing, there has been comparatively little research on the explicit engagement of the discourses of surveillance and scientific rationality with patriarchal and theological authority in literature, in the context of South Asia. The issue of surveillance, specifically, has been subject to a lot of research in Western society, specifically in the domains of digital and bio political reign (Lyon, 2018). However, its treatment in the South Asian Anglophone fiction is not very advanced. Equally, although studies of the female body in literature have a rich heritage, including work by Hélène Cixous (*The Laugh of the Medusa*, 1976) and more recently Butler (*Undoing Gender*, 2004), there is little on the use of the body as a point of resistance by the Pakistani women writers against both scientific and religious knowledge of power.

Therefore, the available literature focuses on three strands, namely the evolution of feminist literary criticism and the ways it intersects with discourse and power, the importance of postcolonial and South Asian feminist contributions, and the general exploration of surveillance and disciplinary control over bodies. What has not been explored is how these

trajectories can be brought together in the study of Pakistani Anglophone literature. In particular, few critical works have attempted to combine the fields of feminist theory, discourse analysis, and politics of surveillance to develop an understanding of how women writers in South Asia, like Uzma Aslam Khan, construct an alternative discourse of female agency.

This study attempts to address that gap by providing a feminist discourse analysis of *The Geometry of God*, focusing upon the politics of the female body deployed between sexuality, science, and surveillance. Although other authors have discussed feminism in South Asian writing or noted the civilization of surveillance in the West, little work has been done to illuminate how the Pakistani Anglophone fiction can be read in relation to feminist resistance to intersecting modes of epistemic and patriarchal authority. Using Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, this work will offer a new and contextualized interpretation, not only of feminist literary criticism but also of surveillance and epistemology within the context of South Asian feminist writing.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

Feminist post-structuralism serves as a theoretical framework of the study, which focuses on critically analyzing the relationship among power, discourse, and gender. Developing at the border of poststructuralist philosophy and feminist thinking, the paradigm criticizes the possibility of universal truths and instead prioritizes the presupposition that knowledge, subjectivity, and identity are socially constructed. According to Weedon (1997), the notion of feminist post-structuralism implies that language forms the major emphasis of meaning-making, such that discourse is seen not as reflective of reality but imperatively constitutive of it. The approach allows examining how the discourses of religion, science, and sexuality work to regulate the bodies of women and, at the same time, open opportunities to resist and offer different subjectivities.

Central to feminist post-structuralism has been the impact of the work of Michel Foucault, which

contributed to the study of discourse and power as well as surveillance. According to Foucault (1977), the concepts of discipline and bio-power prove that institutions like science and religions create the so-called truths regulating individuals and the population. Although Foucault himself never gave particular attention to the subject of gender, his ideas have been adapted and applied to the female body by feminist thinkers like Sandra Bartky and Susan Bordo, who have demonstrated how women are subjected to forms of the disciplinary power that are particular to them, and how they shape women in specific ways and create specific female subjectivities. Further contribution to this approach was made by Judith Butler through her theory of gender performativity: gender is not an essence but a repeated action which can strengthen existing norms as well as undermine them (Butler, 1990; 1993). Creating a powerful combination of these points of view, feminist post-structuralism can help reveal the reflection of the female body as a space of control and resistance found in *The Geometry of God*.

Feminist post-structuralism is the most appropriate framework used in the study due to its aptness in supporting the research objectives of examining sexuality, science, and surveillance of the novel by Khan. The current framework will influence the study in two magnificent ways. It will first focus on how the female body is constructed in the novel, and how religious orthodoxy and scientific rationality become regimes of truth, aiming to regulate the identity of women. Second, it will help to identify counter-discourses, i.e., those instances when female characters challenge and disrupt dominant discourse. Feminist post-structuralism does not just expose the means of control, but it also helps to identify potential areas of feminist agency and re-imagination in the text.

The contribution of the current research to the existing literature is a contextually grounded yet theoretically far-reaching approach to South Asian Anglophone fiction. Although the literature has discussed feminist aspects of South Asian literature, little has been done regarding a feminist poststructuralist approach in order to

analyze how science, religion, and surveillance interacted simultaneously in the Pakistan Anglophone writings. Through this framework, the study creates new literary variables of feminist literary criticism and projects it beyond the Euro-American worlds, showing how feminist poststructuralist theory can be efficiently used to examine the Pakistani texts on gender and power. This is valuable to feminist theory and literary criticism as it places *The Geometry of God* in the context of Bourdieu-inspired debates about the politics of the female body, on the one hand, and to South Asian cultural and political contexts on the other. My view is that feminist post-structuralism is not just a theoretical approach but also a methodological approach that is harmonized with an individual call to challenge hegemonic discourse and bring out the voices of the voiceless. This lens allows a critical interpretation of the text that is analytical as well as ethical, ensuring that the study is sensitive to the lived experiences of women in their struggle against the control of the discourse, as well as bringing to the fore the methods of resistance they employ.

3. Discussion and Analysis

This part contains a feminist critical discourse analysis of chosen excerpts of *The Geometry of God* by Uzma Aslam Khan to discuss how the novel challenges the patriarchal ownership of female sexuality and the female body. The discussion is informed by the feminist post-structuralist theory and uses Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis of Lazar to address the intersections of science, religion, surveillance, and embodied knowledge. The close textual analysis of the chapter shows how language creates, governs, and opposes gendered power relations, the means through which discourses of patriarchy attempt to control the bodies of women, and how other, embodied knowledge practices disrupt dominant discourses.

"He is dissecting me. Not with a scalpel but with his eyes. He is listing my parts: hair, eyes, nose, lips, neck, breasts, waist, hips, legs. He is a scientist and I am his specimen. I want to cover myself with the bed sheet but

I know that will only make him look harder." (Chapter 7, p. 117)

This text is an example of how patriarchal surveillance objectifies the female body as an object of gaze and links scientific examination with sexualised domination. The analysis is based on textual features, discursive practices, and social practices that construct and challenge patriarchal power over female sexuality and embodiment, using Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis developed by Lazar, which is founded on feminist post-structuralism.

- **Text (Description)**

At the level of the text, the language creates an objectified and fragmented body. The listed parts of the body, "hair, eyes, nose, lips, neck, breast, waist, hips, legs," etc., dehumanise the narrator and make him a fragment of a whole person. The dissecting can be seen as a metaphorical way of saying that the male gaze is similar to scientific research, and the woman is a passive object in the research. Such a use of lexicon is indicative of an objectification discourse: the body is a specimen to be observed and not an agentic subject. The gaze in this case is used as a means of control; the narrator wants to "cover" herself, however, it is instantly denied-I know that will only make him "look harder". This shows self-surveillance in which the internalised patriarchal gaze constrains opposition and heightens scrutiny.

- **(Interpretation)- Discursive Practice**

On the discursive practice level, the passage illustrates an example of how patriarchal power is practiced using the gaze. According to a feminist theorist, Laura Mulvey, the female body is often framed in patriarchal cultures in such a way that it is framed as a subject of patriarchal seeing: women are simultaneously being looked at and displayed, coded as a subject of strong visual and erotic effect so that they can be said to connote to be looked atness (Mulvey, 1975, as cited in Wikipedia). Such conceptualization finds its echo in the following: the body of the narrator is physically catalogued, as Mulvey says that women are placed as inactive objects of the masculine

gaze. This is enhanced by the scientific metaphor; science is another surveillance tool. Medical or scientific frames are likely to justify an examination of female bodies, in patriarchal discourse, making them objects of knowledge and control. The expression that he is a scientist and I am his specimen is therefore a demonstration of the interplay of patriarchal science and visual control.

- **Social Practice (Explanation)**

On the level of social practice, the text is a criticism of more generalized gendered standards that objectify and subjugate the woman's body. Feminist post structuralisms believe that this representation is shaped by such discourses; this applies to subjectivity too. To take a particular example, Suzannah Weiss notes that objectification is a situation where one views the body as an object that others can look at and judge, which results in the creation of inner surveillance and limited agency (Weiss, as cited in Wikipedia). This internalization is reflected in the fact that, as the narrator realizes that she will be more heavily objectified when she covers herself, she preempts and accepts the scrutiny instead of avoiding it. The text questions the idea of science being neutral or objective by constructing the gaze as being scientific. Rather, it reveals the way science can covertly reinforce patriarchal authority, such as religious and cultural standards, in order to justify a tight examination and scrutiny of female bodies. This reflects the research goal as it depicts the intertwining of scientific, cultural and social systems of power that make and manage female sexuality and bodily in patriarchal settings.

This excerpt discloses the functioning of the gaze as a discursive practice of patriarchal power, combining scientific surveillance and sexualized objectification to control the agency of the female body and impose the need to exercise power over the female body. Using the feminist theorization of gaze and objectification, the analysis reveals that Uzma Aslam Khan critiques the politics of looking because she portrays how such surveillance subjugates women into passive subjects in a patriarchal system.

"They watch everything, but they see nothing. I, who cannot watch, see the geometry of God in the vibration of a bee's wings, in the heat of a stone. My sister draws it for me, lines on paper, but she is translating a language she cannot fully hear." (Chapter 11, p. 188)

This text is a comparison between the inactive, surface viewing and the more active, embodied viewing. Using the Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis by Lazar, we observe how the intersection of patriarchal surveillance, visibility and embodied knowledge is used to criticize the gendered power relations.

- **Text (Description)**

On the textual level, the juxtaposition between "They watch everything, and they see nothing" and I, I see "the geometry of God," indicates opposing ways of perception. The term "watch" in this context means unemotional watching -an outside looking with no understanding or empathy. Conversely, the personified understanding of the "vibration of bee wings" and "heat of a stone" that the narrator embodies imposes a close and physical connection with the world. The manner in which the sister "translates a language" that she "cannot hear" suggests that even the efforts to transform this embodied knowledge into recognisable symbolic terms (lines on paper) are inadequate to comprehend its richness.

- **(Interpretation) Discursive Practice.**

On the discursive practice level, the text criticizes supremacy systems of looking that correspond to patriarchal and scientific surveillance systems. According to feminist criticism, the male gaze objectifies women, who become subjects of "observation and desire by men" (Mulvey). This gaze gives the privilege of detached spectatorship to lived experience, where the subjects are reduced to visible surfaces and not complex beings in the sense-making. This dynamic is reversed by the claim of the narrator, who cannot watch or see. Her sense perception turns into an object of epistemic power that opposes the prevailing gaze. Scientific and religious observation is generally constructed as objective and neutral under patriarchal discourse, but in

this instance, both are suggested as constrained: they watch, but they see nothing. The embodied insight by the narrator, therefore, serves as counter discourse, that is, opposing hegemonic modes of comprehending and appreciating bodies and knowledge.

- **Social Practice (Explanation)**

The passage at the social practice level is an example of larger patriarchal organisations that govern visibility, value, and power. According to Feminist objectification theory, women are usually taught to view themselves as being viewed, objectify their bodies to external scrutiny (Bartky; Beauvoir). According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, in the patriarchal arena, gazing without seeing is highly ideological: that is, it strengthens standards of looking at the external rather than at the internal, of looking at abstract categories rather than at the subtleties of a situation. Through her assertion of another type of gaze, the narrator rejects objectification and surveillance. Her understanding of the concept of geometry, which symbolically denotes a system of rationality and scientific authority, and her embodied senses undermine the dichotomy between scientific rationality and embodied femininity. The fact that the sister cannot hear or translate fully implies that the systems of patriarchal languages cannot capture other bodies of knowledge that come in the form of embodiment. This is in line with the feminist post-structuralism critique that hegemonic epistemologies relegate female subjectivities and sensorial knowledge.

In this text, with the FCDA of Lazar, we learn how The Geometry of God applies visual metaphors to criticize patriarchal forms of surveillance and scientific rationality that objectify and flatten the experience of the female. The embodied perception of the narrator also provides a different epistemic position, a challenge to the domination of external surveillance, and a feminist re-visioning of seeing and knowing. This discussion facilitates the research goal by demonstrating how this text disturbs patriarchal politics of sexuality and the

feminine body in its descriptions of vision, knowledge and embodiment.

"The whale in the rock was a mother. This is what I knew as I touched the curve where her hip would have been. The mullahs and the generals want a history that is solid, like a weapon. But history is curved, like this hip. It is the body of a mother waiting for her child." (Chapter 15, p. 243)

This text presents the maternal body as an object of knowledge and resistance in opposition to patriarchal historical and power ideas. The analysis is conducted with the help of Lazar FCDA to reveal how the language, discourse, and social practice articulate and criticize the patriarchal control over the female bodies and memory.

- **Text (Description)**

At the textual level, the passage makes use of embodied imagery in order to connect the maternal body to history. Metaphors such as *"the whale in the rock"* and *"the curve where her hip"* would have been focus on physicality as well as continuity, and make the female body organic, flexible and alive. The word mother is then repeated, which puts care, creation and memory at the centre of understanding. The juxtaposition of patriarchal actors (*the mullahs and the generals*) who want history to be solid as metal, like a *weapon*, with the flowing, curvy structure of the maternal body creates a confrontation between the hard authority and the embodied, relational wisdom of women.

- **Discursive Practice (Interpretation)**

At the discursive level, the passage is a criticism of patriarchal epistemologies which assume that history is fixed, linear and utilitarian. Feminist theorists emphasize that the narratives of males tend to marginalize female experience, making the knowledge of women to be either non-existent or mythical (Lorde, 1984: *the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house*). The fact that the narrator touches her *curve where her hip would have been* puts the female embodiment in the position of an alternative epistemology, a way of knowing history and the world in terms of

relationship and body, as opposed to the objectified, abstract forms. The contrast between the image of a mother and the political power also depicts how patriarchal power is trying to suppress or weaponize the knowledge that comes through the female bodies. When Khan terms history as curved, as this hip, he performs a counter-discourse, which disrupts the hard and patriarchal discourse and praises those generative and tenacious subjects of female subjectivity.

• Social Practice (Explanation)

On the social practice level, the text demonstrates a feminist post-structuralist approach to societal and institutional oppression of women and memory. According to scholars, the female body has traditionally been the place of political and cultural control, and the bodies of maternity were symbolically taken or disrupted in order to exert the power of patriarchy (Bartky, 1990). According to the text by Khan, the maternal body is a force of resistance: it holds relational knowledge, disrupts the histories that are affirmed by the state, and denies the ability to be weaponized. This is in line with my research goal, which demonstrates how the feminine body is discussed in relation to science, religion, and political authority to reveal and challenge patriarchal surveillance and regulation.

Using the FCDA of Lazar, this text shows that Khan constructs the maternal body as a space of understanding, opposition, and relational memory to oppose the patriarchal efforts to establish and dominate narratives. The text is a criticism of the objectification and disciplining of female bodies in male-dominated institutions and the glorification of embodied generative modes of knowing. This supports the research objective by demonstrating that *The Geometry of God* relies on the intersections of body, science, and political authority to challenge the patriarchal power of sexuality and female subjectivity.

4. Conclusion

The paper has discussed the ways in which *The Geometry of God* by Uzma Aslam Khan critiques the patriarchal politics of sexuality and the feminine body within the overlapping cultural

discourses of science, religion, and surveillance. The study is based on the feminist post-structuralist theory and the Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis provided by Lazar, which proves that the patriarchal power in the novel functions not only through blatant dominance but also through normalized means of seeing, knowing, and telling female bodies.

It is found that the scientific rationality, religious authority, and state power are discursively compatible to objectify, regulate, and discipline the women's bodies, and introduce surveillance as knowledge and control as legitimacy. Meanwhile, the embodied, sensory, and maternal forms of knowing represented in the novel oppose these discourses of superiority. Women's subjectivity is depicted as fractured and bound with patriarchal language, but never completely lost; on the contrary, it is manifested through other forms of epistemologies that oppose possessive and linear history, which is weaponized.

Through the implementation of FCDA, this research paper outlines how gendered power relations are constructed in the text, interaction, and social levels through discourse, and thus, feminist discourse analysis is a helpful tool in literary study. The study also makes a contribution to feminist literary criticism as it previews the body as a place of knowledge and resistance, as well as demonstrates how *The Geometry of God* reformulates history, science, and belief as practiced by feminist approaches. Finally, the research confirms the novel by Khan as an effective intervention in modern gender, power, and representation politics.

5. REFERENCES

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