

Controlling Images and Survival Strategies for Muslim Women in Pakistan

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Abstract : Controlling images develop misinformed behaviors about impoverished Muslim Pakistani women that add to the oppression these Pakistani women endure their whole lives. Meanwhile, patriarchal and stereotypical societies provide an ideological justification for gender, class, and racial oppression, especially for women. Cojoining the concepts of controlling images by Patricia Hill Collins (1990) and binary thinking by Barbara Christian (1987), this paper discusses the ways in which various controlling images of urban and rural women are being presented in Pakistani dramas. These images reinforce an interlocking system of oppression for women in Pakistan. This paper further explores how these controlling images of intersecting components like class, gender, religion, ethnicity, physical appearance, color, and caste normalize hegemonic gendered oppression in society and how men have the same attitude towards women of their family whether they belong to the rural or urban class since they are the product of the same society. It further sheds light on how these matrixes of domination are an inevitable part of Pakistani women's everyday lives and how these women reinforce survival strategies for coping with all these forms of oppression. By employing the feminist interactional framework, this paper elucidates the role of masculinity, femininity, feminist activism, and traditional knowledge against a monolithic image of Pakistani women. By highlighting these, this paper complicates the role of descriptive and visual images, religion, women's rights, and the stereotypical role of women in Pakistani dramas.

Keywords : controlling images, oppression, women, Pakistan

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