

## **The Role of Social Structures and the Representation of Individual in the selected works of Contemporary Pakistani Women**

### **ABSTRACT**

By taking the selected literary works of contemporary Pakistani women writers, this thesis aims to examine the representation of female characters analyzing their response, struggle and retaliation as an 'individual' within the limitations and oppressions of their social, cultural and religious structures. It also highlights their suppression through the stagnant patriarchal psyche of men of their society. These limitations forcefully bind them within the pre-defined social, cultural and gender roles in a society. This thesis will focus on the conscious effort of contemporary Pakistani women writers to highlight the confinements and stereotypes of the patriarchal culture where the dominant and rigid social structures work as antagonist.

This thesis will provide a critical textual analysis of the selected literary works taking the short stories "A Pair of Jeans" by Qaisra Shehraz, "The Daughters of Aai" by Fahmida Riaz, "The Optimist" by Bina Shah, "Kucha Miran Shah" by Feryal Ali Gauhar and "Rubies for a Dog: A fable" by Shahrukh Husain as primary texts from the anthology *AND THE WORLD CHANGED: Contemporary Stories by Pakistani Women* edited by Muneeza Shamsie. This thesis will provide an insight into how the identity of a Pakistani woman is shaped and influenced by desperate socio-economic and cultural factors.

Taking the help of Feminism, this thesis will try to highlight the relevance of first, second and third wave of Feminism to the contemporary Pakistani society after all the years of struggle and awareness that the issues raised at that time are still residing in our society because its patriarchal mentality is not developed and it cannot get rid of its roots. This thesis will try to

explore the reasons and circumstances that are not letting women to have a self-acclaimed identity.

**Key Words:** Social Structures, Culture, Gender, Representation, Individual, Feminism, Social and Cultural roles, Self-Emancipation