

**THE PORTRAYAL OF ZARRI BANO'S MORAL DILEMMA IN QAISRA
SHAHRAZ'S *THE HOLY WOMAN***

A Graduating Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for Gaining the Bachelor
Degree in English Literature



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THE PORTRAYAL OF ZARRI BANO'S MORAL DILEMMA IN QAISRA SHAHRAZ'S *THE HOLY WOMAN*

By. Fitria Nur Barokah

ABSTRACT

This research aims to find a dilemma in the novel *The Holy Woman* by Qaisra Shahraz, which depicts a feminist activist named Zarri Banno. In the story, Zarri Bano, the landlord's daughter, lives in luxury, gets the highest education access, and adores many people because of her beauty. Unfortunately, after her family loses the only inheritance, she must struggle to protect herself from the patriarchal tyranny in her family. Zarri Bano must surrender to her marriage and devotes her life being *Shahzadi Ibadat*. The moral dilemma happens to Zarri Bano since Habib forces her to be a Holy Woman, so she doesn't have a choice to choose her desires. The researcher tries to analyze Zarri Bano's struggles using care-focused feminism by Carol Gilligan. Care-focused feminism focuses on the moral development that happens to women, especially since this theory has three stages: pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional. Each step of Gilligan's approach tries to depict Zarri Bano's dilemma of choosing between her love or obedience to the tradition. This research uses qualitative methods that focus on description and interpretation. The result shows that Zarri Bano's dilemma brings her to find her new identity as a woman; she also realizes that a woman is supposed to fight injustice.

Keywords: The Holy Woman, Moral Dilemma, Care-Focused Feminism

POTRET DILEMA MORAL ZARRI BANO DALAM NOVEL *THE HOLY WOMAN* KARYA QAISRA SHAHRAZ

Oleh: Fitria Nur Barokah

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan dilema dalam novel *The Holy Woman* oleh Qaisra Shahraz yang menampilkan seorang aktifis feminis bernama Zarri Bano. Dalam cerita tersebut, Zarri Bano, sebagai seorang anak dari pemilik tuan tanah, hidup dalam kemewahan, mendapat akses pendidikan yang tinggi, dan di puja oleh banyak orang karena kecantikannya. Namun, setelah keluarganya kehilangan ahli waris, dia harus berjuang untuk melindungi dirinya dari sistem patriarki. Zarri Bano harus menyerah atas pernikahannya dan mengabdikan hidupnya menjadi seorang perempuan suci. Dilema moral yang dialami Zarri Bano terjadi sejak Habib memaksa dia untuk menjadi perempuan suci jadi dia tidak memiliki pilihan untuk memilih keinginannya. Peneliti mencoba untuk menganalisis perjuangan Zarri Bano menggunakan *A Care Focused Feminism* oleh Carol Gilligan. *A Care Focused Feminism* fokus pada perkembangan moral seorang perempuan, terutama teori ini memiliki tiga tahapan yaitu *pre-conventional*, *conventional*, dan *post-conventional*, setiap tahapan dari teori Gilligan mencoba untuk menggambarkan dilema Zarri Bano saat memilih antara cinta atau tunduk terhadap tradisi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif yang fokus pada deskripsi dan penafsiran. Hasil dari penelitian ini menampulkan bahwa dilema yang dialami Zarri Bano membawanya menemukan identitas diri yang baru sebagai perempuan, dan bahwa serorang perempuan harus berjuang melawan ketidakadilan.

Kata Kunci: Perempuan Suci, Dilema Moral, *Care-Focused Feminism*

MOTTO

Do something today that your future self will thank you for

- Unknown

DEDICATION

My family

For their eternal love and sincerity

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I hope this paper would be helpful for the next researcher.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Patriarchy is a system where men treat women as property. According to Abeda Sultana, patriarchy is the kind of male dominance we keep seeing around women. In this ideology, men are superior to women. Women are part of men's property, so women should be controlled by men, leading to women's subordination (2011, p. 8). Pakistan has ranked four worst nations for women in the global gender gap; the report states that women do not have equal access to justice based on 2021 Arab news Pakistan. One form of the many crimes against women is subordination which makes women lower than men. The compliance of women's position is embedded in Pakistani society and patriarchal values. Furthermore, a subordination position causes several negative results for women, such as male domination, sexual abuse, domestic violence, and forced marriages. Those impacts are then portrayed in literature, such as the middle eastern novel *The Holy Woman*.

The Holy Woman is one of the interesting novels written by Qaisra Shahraz. Qaisra's work is mainly focused on gender, culture, and women. *The Holy Woman* was published in 2001 and won the Golden Jubilee Award. The novel tells about a patriarchal system rooted in Pakistan's culture. Shahraz portrays Zarri Bano as a well-educated woman, wealthy, beautiful, and independent. Zarri Bano was born as a daughter of a landlord owner in Pakistan; moreover, she studied at University in

Karachi. At her twenty-seven age, a tragedy came after she accepted a marriage proposal from Sikander. Bano's young brother, Jafar, died in a horse-riding accident, and she was forced to become a holy woman and devoted her life to Islam.

Sikander is a young, wealthy tycoon and a good-looking man from Karachi in the early thirties. The story begins when Zarri Bano attends an annual fair in the province of Sindh, where she meets Sikander for the first time. Moreover, Zarri Bano and Sikander get to know each other after his parents visit Bano's house to offer an engagement. Unfortunately, Habib Khan did not like the idea of Zarri Bano wanting to marry Sikander because he assumed no one man in Pakistan compared to his precious daughter.

Later, without Habib's permission, Zarri Bano went to Karachi and lived with Sikander's family for a few days; the two families, except Habib, wanted Zarri Bano to know about the Sikander family. On the third day, after returning from a visit to Sikander's office, she accepts terrible news and decides to go home earlier; Jafar, his younger brother, died in a horse-riding accident. After Jafar's death, his father and grandfather plan to make Zarri Bano the heiress of the landowner by forcing her to become a holy woman.

Forcing a woman to become *Shahzadi Ibadat* is a crime because Zarri Bano forbids marrying a man. Habib's decision gains disagreement from her wife and her younger daughter, Ruby. Furthermore, Zarri Bano can not imagine if she must wear a burqa and long black dress for the rest of her life; moreover, how about her engagement with Sikander.

Zarri Bano through the moral dilemma between following *Shahzadi Ibadat* tradition or must confront her plans for marriage with Sikander. As stated by Fatmawati, the character of Zarri Bano is oppressed and becomes the object under the man's supremacy; besides, she is trapped in a tradition that determines all her life (2019, p. 2).

The researcher is interested in the way Zarri Bano accepts fate with her own decision. Still, at the same time, she stands for her own opinion against male dominance. Zarri Bano's decision toward her father's command for became *Shahzadi Ibadat* is a part of denial because, on the other side, she accepted the roles but avoided everybody, including her family. Furthermore, when tragedy happens to Ruby and Zarri Bano asks to marry Sikander, she stands on her principle rather than being obedient to her family because a woman is not an object.

In this research, the researcher uses a care-focused feminism theory developed by Carol Gilligan. These stages of Carol Gilligan discover how Bano's character portrays feminism through her action when she struggling to maintains her belief as a woman and depicts her moral dilemma as she undergo her new roles as a *Shahzadi Ibadat*. Carol Gilligan is a professor at New York University; she is also known as a feminist psychologist that contributes her thought on feminism. According to Carol Gilligan, "care-focused feminism divides into three stages: pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional" (1985, p. 73). Furthermore, this shift in perspective toward increasingly differentiated, comprehensive, and reflective forms of thought appears in women's responses to actual and hypothetical dilemmas (1985, p. 73). The dilemma is reflected in Zarri Bano when she is against

male dominance and her acceptance of the roles of *Shahzadi Ibadat* under her decision.

Shahzadi Ibadat include a patriarchal system that puts a woman under man's supremacy. According to Abrams, patriarchy is male-centred and controlled, organized and run in such a way that women are subordinate to men in all cultural spheres: family, religion, politics, economics, society, law and art (1999, p. 89). In Pakistan, *Shahzadi Ibadat* is a tradition when a family does not have male children to inherit, so they forced women to marry with the Holy Quran. *Shahzadi Ibadat* also means she can not marry a man and has less contact with them.

Based on the explanation, the researcher is interested in analyzing Zarry Bano's character when she goes through a moral dilemma. The moral dilemma is when she faces the confusion between her father's desires or fights for her freedom to marry Sikander.. According to Gilligan, the three levels of ethics are the language of selfishness and responsibility, defining ethical issues as one of duty of care and avoidance of harm (1993, p. 73). selfishness and responsibility are also reflected in Zarri Bano's moral dilemma when choosing between love and tradition. This research aims to prove the effort of Zarri Bano's character in *The Holy Woman* through these stages that can be considered a movement by plotting the character's action.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the background of the study, this research aims to answer the problems below:

How does Zarri Bano's moral dilemma phase fit into Carol Gilligan's stages of care-focused feminism?

1.3 Objective of Study

Based on the problem statement above, this research aims to determine whether Zarri Bano's moral dilemma periods fit into care-focused feminism stages or not. This research aims to examine the pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional stages in Zarri Bano's struggles and to know which one fits the most.

1.4 Significance of Study

The first significant study of this research is to develop an understanding of women's struggles reflected through Zarri Banno's character in *The Holy Woman*. Second, the significance of this research is to enrich a piece of knowledge about feminism theory. The researcher finds that care-focused feminism theory is related to literature and psychology.

1.5 Literature Review

The researcher finds some research and studies about Qaisra Shahraz, and care focused feminism study below :

The first research is titled "*The Portrayal of Woman Struggle in Qaisra Shahraz's Zemindar's Wife*" it was written by Wilda Khoiriyah (2019) from Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University. This research seeks to discover the struggles of women in Zemindar wife's short stories. Zemindar's Wife is a short story about a landlord and his wife Noor. In the story, as the landlady, Noor has all the needs of beauty, wealth, and elegance. Still, behind it all, she has limited access to the public, which prevents her from participating in public affairs or socializing with the villagers. The researchers sought to analyze Noor's struggles in the story using Amina Wadud's theory of Islamic feminism. Islamic feminism theory focuses on equality between men and women in the Islamic religion. The Islamic feminism attempts to correct misunderstandings about the status of women in Islam by rereading the Quran and Hadith from a female point of view. This study used a descriptive qualitative method. Analyzing the questions, researchers determined that Noor's struggle was due to she felt unfair about her position as a woman and wife, which later helped the villagers get equity.

The second research is titled "*Zarri Bano's Oppression in Qaisra Shahraz's The Holy Woman,*" written by Vivi Fatmawati (2019) from Surabaya State University. This research analyzes the oppression of Zarri Bano in Qaisra Shahraz's novel *The Holy Woman* and how the protagonist survives the oppression of men. This research aims to show women's repression in this novel and how Zari Barno survived the repression. In collecting the data, this study used qualitative methods and critical interpretation to analyze data. This literature study applies concepts of oppression and radical feminist theory. Sylvia Walby's radical feminism is

combined with Iris Marion Young and Ann E. Cudd's images of oppression as an additional concept on types of oppression for the analysis of Zarri Bano's oppression and how she survived it. Theories and ideas are well applied to present the presentation of the problem. Based on the study, this research shows that: Zari Barno incidents the oppression of exploitation, exclusion, and powerlessness.

The third research is titled "*The Struggle of Zarri Bano Against Patriarchy in Qaisra Shahraz's 'The Holly Woman'*" it was written by Tajul Mafakhir (2016) from Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University. This research analyzes how Zarri Bano struggles; as the title suggests, the work focuses on heroine Zari Barno and her struggle with male characters' oppression of women in a patriarchal culture. The methods used in this analysis are library search, annotation document techniques, and description methods. The theory used in this analysis is Kate Millet's radical feminist theory with concepts of patriarchy. Nonetheless, the authors have used other resources to address the issues discussed in this article. This study shows that women's fictional poetry experiences fundamental differences between the character Zarri Bano and her character, who becomes a saint in Pakistani culture. She can't marry a man, and in the novel, Zarri Bano has just accepted her beloved husband's proposal, playing the role of a saint to keep the family legacy.

Fourth research is titled "*Citra Perempuan Dalam Novel The Holy Woman: Satu Kajian Feminis*", it was written by R. Myrna Nur Sakinah (2014) from Padjajaran University. This study aims to explain the female figures in Qaisra Shahraz's *The Holy Woman*. It deals with women's issues in a patriarchal way,

which sees women as victims. The study applied Marian Ferguson's feminist theory. She believes that women's feminism stems from submissive wives (deified women) and sexual objects (women as sexual objects). The study concluded that: a submissive wife—whether as a wife or a daughter—can bring happiness and tranquility to her family, and sexual objects indicate that both political and patriarchal power is involved.

The fifth research, titled "*Challenging Gender Stereotypes: A Text Analysis of Qaisra Shahraz's Novel the Holy Woman*," written by Shamaila Haleem (2014) from National University of Modern Languages Islamabad. This research explained gender stereotypes and highlighted the emancipation of women by using the milieu of the feminist and gender theories. Gender stereotypes are ways of thinking that society has practiced for many years. Men and women assign gender roles according to these established patterns. By practicing these gender stereotypes, women are placed in a weaker position than men. This article seeks to challenge gender stereotypes and highlight female liberation in the context of perspectives raised by feminists and gender theorists. The qualitative research mode is adopted using text analysis as the research method. The text of Qaisra Shahraz's novel *The Holy Woman* is in Feminism and Gender Theory. Research shows that in this novel, both male and female characters have gender stereotypes and gender biases. Still, these gender stereotypes are challenged, leading to changes in gender roles and the liberation of female roles.

The sixth research is titled "*The Portrayal of Firdaus Dilemma in Nawal El Sadawi Woman at Point Zero: A Care Focused Feminism Analysis*," written by

Rike Dwi Santari (2020) from Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University. This research examines Firdaus's struggles through Carol Gilligan's care feminism. Caring-centered feminism in three parts stages, pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional. Care-focused feminism analytical model reveals the missing link to the thought of being a feminist, which Firdaus has experienced in her life struggles. The study also aimed to organize variant forms of analysis of feminism in *The Woman at Zero*. The researchers used previous research on the zero-point woman as a supportive point of view, and contrast strengthened analysis. The result of a study that relates caring feminism to Firdaus's character is that when she puts the traditional stage of caring feminism, she goes through a phase of a dilemma. This creates a self-crisis that influences their struggle against patriarchy.

All the research above discusses women's struggles under men's supremacy and patriarchal system. The difference between all the research above and this research is that the researcher not only focuses on the woman's struggle but also wants to analyze the moral dilemma that happens to the main character, Zarri Bano. This research uses care-focused feminism by Carol Gilligan, which has three stages: pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional.

1.6 Theoretical Approach

In analyzing Zarri Bano's character in *The Holy Woman*, the researcher uses care-focused feminism theory by Carol Gilligan. In care-focused feminism theory, boys and girls grow into men and women with gendered values and virtues that empower men and disempower women in a patriarchal society (Tong, 2014, p.

151). The theory divides into three stages: pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional.

Here is more explanation that will be explained according to Carol Gilligan's thoughts:

Pre- conventional

Pre-conventional is the first stage of care-focused feminism. Pre-conventional judgments are egocentric and derive moral constructions from personal needs (1993, p. 73).

In the pre-conventional stage, women focus on themselves and the needs of survival. A woman realizes that she has a responsibility to others. Then, when there is conflict between her own needs and the needs of others, women choose their own needs.

Conventional

Conventional is the second stage in care-focused feminism. Conventional judgments are based on common norms and values that sustain relationships, groups, communities, and societies (1993, p. 73)

In this stage, moral judgment focuses on caring for others. Women begin to see themselves as part of a society that claims to be good citizens based on helping and protecting others. This concern for others overwhelms their concern for themselves and leads to a morality centered on self-sacrifice. A woman begins to realize that she needs to find a better balance between her own needs and the needs of others.

Post Conventional

Post conventional is the last stage of care-focused feminism. A third perspective focuses on the dynamics of relationships, addressing the tension between selfishness and responsibility through a new understanding of the interaction between others and the self (1993, p. 74).

At this stage, women are in control of their lives between selfishness and responsibility for their own choices; in other words, their own needs are as important as the needs of others. In other words, this stage contains the woman's decision after she through the moral dilemma in the previous stage.

1.7 Research Methodology

1.7.1 Type of Research

In this research, the researcher uses a qualitative method. According to Hancock et al. (2009, p. 6), qualitative research develops explanations of social phenomena that focuses on description and interpretation. This research explains the problem by analyzing the data which is shown in the novel *The Holy Woman*.

1.7.2 Data Sources

The research consists of primary and supporting data. First, the primary data of this research is the novel *The Holy Woman* by Qaisra Shahraz that published on 2001. The analysis focuses on the main character named Zarri Bano by identifying pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional stages using care-focused feminism theory. The researcher

examines the direct and indirect speech that portrays Zarri Bano's confusion. The supporting data of this research are from journals, books, thesis, articles, websites, and the other sources that related to these objects and theories.

1.7.3 Data Collection Technique

The researcher collects the data by reading *The Holy Woman* to understand the intrinsic elements contained in the novel, such as theme, character and characterization, setting, and plot. After reading, the researcher takes notes to get detailed information, such as collecting all the sentences and paragraphs about the novel related to answering the research question. Last, the researcher collects all the data with three different categories of care-focused feminism.

1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique

The researcher uses several steps to analyze the data. Firstly, the researcher classifies the data based on sentences and paragraphs relating to pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional stages. Then, the researcher analyzed the data based on the care-focused feminism stages that happened to Zarri Bano: the woman's discoveries, the woman's dilemma, and the woman's decision. Last, the researcher concludes whether the struggles of Zarri Banno fit into categorized of care-focused feminism or not.

1.8 Paper Organization

The paper consists of four chapters. The first chapter consists of the background of the study, research question, objective of the study, significance of studies, literature review, theoretical approach, methods of study, and paper organization. The second chapter consists of the intrinsic and extrinsic elements in the novel. The third chapter consists of the analysis of *The Holy Woman* about the conception of care-focused feminism theory. The last chapter is the conclusion and suggestions related to the research theme.

CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

By analyzing the data from *The Holy Woman*, the researcher finds a lot of information and a detailed explanation of the moral dilemma in the Zarri Bano cases. This chapter consists of the conclusion and suggestions. First, the conclusions contain about researcher's findings about the moral dilemma of the main character. Second, the suggestions contain researcher suggestions for the next research related to this topic:

4.1 Conclusion

The researcher uses the theory of care-focused feminism from Carol Gilligan. The approach divides into three categories; they are pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional. As a result, the moral dilemma experiences by Zarri Bano are found in the conventional stage that is divided into moral conflict as a *Shahzadi Ibadat*, moral conflict under male domination, and moral conflict towards her purity as a woman.

Zarri Bano discovers her struggle as a woman since Habib forced her to be a *Shahzadi Ibadat*. Hence, she realizes that all her privileges as a landlord's daughter, beauty, and education cannot end the patriarchy. Besides Habib, her male clan family, like Siraj Din as a grandfather, also forced her to be the inheritance. The impact of oppression from Habib and Siraj Din affects Zarri Bano psychologists. She changes her charming attitude and becomes a cold-hearted person.

Sikander's ex-fiance, Zarri Bano, feels pain when a man she loves marry with her younger sister. In the story, one year after Zarri Bano becomes *Shahzadi Ibadat* and continues her study of Islam in Misr, she must face the fact that her sister marries Sikander Din. The experiences bring her into moral conflict towards her purity as a woman. She might be looking to accept her fate. However, Zarri Bano has a tragic history with Sikander. Zarri Bano cannot marry him due to tradition, not because she does not love him.

In *The Holy Woman*, Zarri Bano finally ends up married to Sikander after some dilemmatic experiences. After the wedding, Zarri Bano tries to continue her life as a *Shahzadi Ibadat*. One day, her father releases Zarri Bano from the oath that she can marry anyone because Habib feels guilty for seeing her daughter living alone. Zarri Bano also finds her new identity as a woman. She will always be a *Shahzadi Ibadat*. Besides, she is also an ordinary woman, a wife, and a mother to her future children.

4.2 Suggestions

The Holy Woman tells about patriarchal tyranny and feminism story. The researcher applies the Care Focused feminism by Carol Gilligan which focused on the moral development of the main character. Hence, the researcher suggests the following researcher may apply Islamic feminism by Amina Wadud to depict the patriarchal tyranny that happens in Zarri Bano's family. The researcher also hopes for the next researcher to find other issues in *The Holy Woman* by using other theories such as semiotics, masculinity, and other feminism.

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