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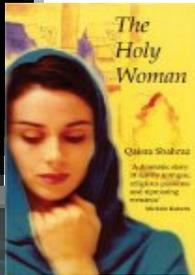
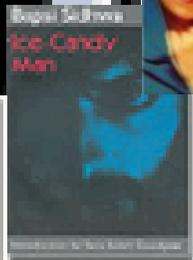
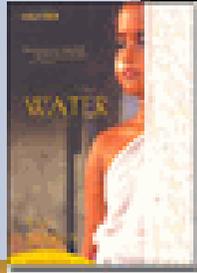
FEMININITY & IMAGE CONSTRUCTION

Identity development of women through Language

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PhD 1st Year

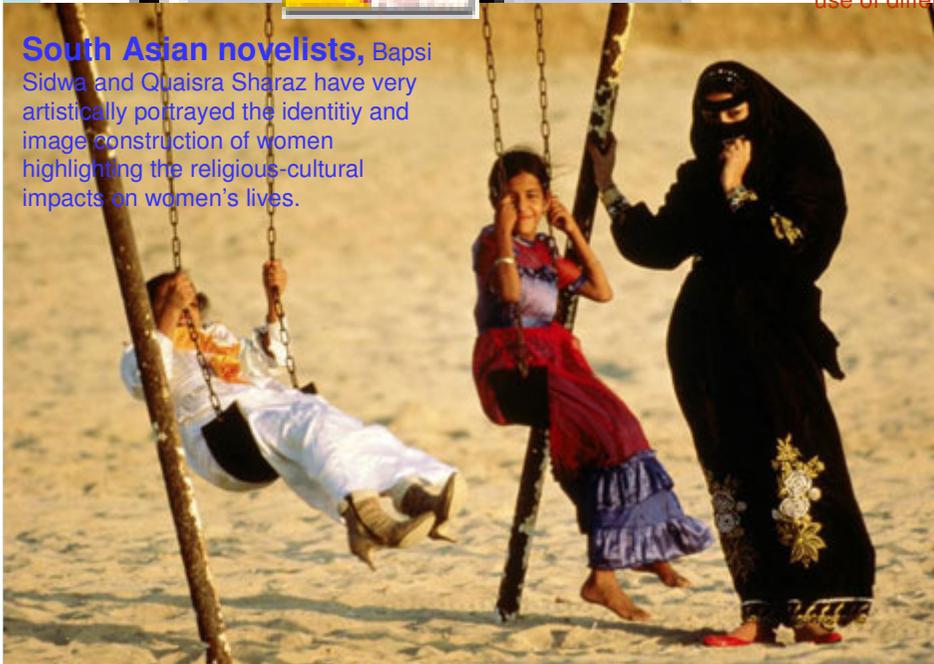
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Language constructs identity. The moment a person expresses something, gives his thoughts and words he lets others know of his position in the social set up. The particular choice of words may also highlight one's age, interest, gender, status and education.

Gender identity and male and female social roles are expressed by the use of different language. (Gal, 1991)

South Asian novelists, Bapsi Sidwa and Quaisra Sharaz have very artistically portrayed the identity and image construction of women highlighting the religious-cultural impacts on women's lives.



Patriarchy and South Asian Women

Women in the South Asian society are mainly, sadly to say, the victims of the patriarchal attitudes. Being forced to

live their lives in shadows, the women of such societies are forced to struggle continuously to prove their worth and get some appreciation. Unlike males, being women in the male dominant society of South Asia is certainly not enough to deserve love, care, attention, appreciation, acknowledgment and basic individual rights. Women in any phase of their life young, middle aged or old has to prove that she is also worthy of the things and opportunities that the brothers are getting in the family. This is usually proved by acting the role of an obedient daughter, sincere wife, caring sister, a good mother, helping daughter-in-law and a supportive member of the extended family till the day she dies. Women in the South Asian society seldom get to live the life they desire to live, basically due to the ideology built on the fact that women are weak, helpless, senseless objects with limited functions in the society and they need to be taken care of financially, morally, socially for their well balanced life. Due to this their being is usually considered as a "burden" carried by the father of the South Asian societal set up until the right time comes for the father to hand the "burden" over to the husband to be after marriage giving the future husband all the rights and control previously exercised by the father (or any other male guardian in case the father has died). The feudal and tribal family systems under the influence of religious extremists have set boundaries inescapable for the common, less educated village women.

Born and bred generation after generation in the atmosphere of servility, the South Asian women are programmed and conditioned to see virtue in their sins, wisdom in deception and freedom in serfdom. The decadent and superfluous social family system forced the women of South Asia to mortgage their noble pride, indomitable courage, love free will creative power sensibility and passion towards tribal and feudal damnation.