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patriarchal structure, and when she chooses to be with her love, she elopes with him, something Heer and Ranjha fail to do successfully throughout the story for various reasons. Sehti understands that she cannot successfully live with her love in the social environment that she is in, and her comprehension of the social norms enables her to make sound strategic decisions.

CONCLUSION

Like Heer, Ranjha's character is also presented differently in comparison to other male characters, and through him, Waris Shah is establishing the masculine gender norms in his narrative. Ranjha is reprimanded throughout the story, through which Shah is able to platform what he wants the reader to understand masculinity to be within the context of his narrative. Ranjha is a Jat, belonging to the Ranjha clan. His name itself identifies his caste, through which Shah reinforces the importance of class and status. His sense of status and masculinity are carved through ownership of property. In a pastoral setting the Jat caste are dependent upon landownership. Ranjha's lack of land prevents him from being considered a worthy match for Heer, by family. He is disinherited by his family in the beginning, and this lack of land consistently reprimands him through the story. Heer's family refuses to accept him and he undergoes one challenge after another to overcome this. Ranjha's appearance of a "dandy" is interesting. Ranjha is chastised by the mullah for his unorthodox and unconventional appearance; however, there are moments that this look also rewards him in the story, particularly when the leader of the yogis agrees to initiate him, primarily because he felt an attraction to him. Ranjha's tender, delicate, and charming look is successful in winning over attention. However, in the end, his gentle look and passive nature do not succeed, as in comparison to other qissa heroes, such as Mirza, who is discussed by Deol, his lack of courage, bravery and strength prevents him from stopping Heer's marriage and making her his own. Ranjha is not portrayed as strong enough to depict his own fate. The social norms and sense of gender that Waris Shah demonstrates in his story reveal a patriarchal and misogynist perspective, particularly through the actions of Ranjha. Ranjha and men are rarely spoken against in the story, but Heer and the female gender in general are consistently disrespected. The sense of loyalty and intelligence of women are constantly questioned. From the manner in which Ranjha is depicted as abusing and assaulting females, especially the character of Sehti, one can infer the standards that Shah is establishing. The relationships between characters and the references Shah provides reveal the gender structure Shah is choosing.

his qissa is one of the reasons why it continues to hold a place in the hearts of Punjabis 250 years after it was written. In addition to illustrating the landscape and environment of the region, Shah showcases a narrative that discusses gender, social relations, caste, and kinship. Through poetic verses, dialogues, metaphors, and exchanges between characters, Heer depicts an image of what gender norms look like according to Waris Shah. The plot focuses on the love story of two primary characters, Heer and Ranjha, and through the treatment of both by society and characters in the story enable us to ascertain the gender norms which are being reinforced by the narrative. The marginalization and chastisement of Heer Ranjha in the course of the story demonstrates the social constructs that are being established. Waris Shah creates these complex characters, which stand out in comparison to others in the story, and Shah chooses to establish gender norms through chastising them when they deviate away from the norms he elects to establish.

Jeevan Deol argues that Heer is a submissive and sexualized female. Ishwar Gaur on the other hand claims that Heer is a rebellious character that rebels against the patriarchal society. However, both these scholars did not appreciate the complexities of Heer. Deol does not consider the assertiveness of Heer and the way that she violently attacks characters that dare come in her way or challenge her status. Deol also does not consider the defiance that she exercises in dialogue with her mother, father and the qazi, as she persistently refuses to let Ranjha go, even when they threaten her. Deol chooses to emphasize the isolated moments where Heer is shown to submit to Ranjha in love, which is not consistent throughout the text, and moreover, as Christopher Shackle supports, shows the Sufi nature of the narrative, a tradition Waris Shah himself is part of. Gaur on the other hand amplifies Heer's sense of rebellion, not questioning the aspect of intersectionality. Heer most definitely does rebel in the story, but she rebels for love, not against the social structure she is part of. Heer is both happy and content to be in the social status that she finds herself in, and the text exposes countless occasions where she demonstrates a preoccupation with status, shown particularly when she questions Ranjha's caste and status. Despite being rebellious and defiant, Heer constantly loses every battle; she loses Ranjha and is married off, is considered a disgrace every step of the story and in the end is killed by her clan. Utilizing Judith Butler's concept of reprimand, we can see that Heer is consistently reprimanded throughout the story, through which Shah demonstrates the social norms established. Through the character of Sehti, a character which has not been dealt with significantly by scholars, Shah further establishes the female gender norm. In contrast to Heer, Sehti is shown as discreetly meeting her lover and never visibly defying her family in any way. Sehti is comfortably seated in the

and successes, Waris Shah is demonstrating what male and female gender should essentially look like.

Shah takes the opportunity to describe his style and swagger, through his altercation with the mullah, who refuses to allow Ranjha in the local Mosque. Through his altercation with the mullah, Shah also provides a subtle indication as to Ranjha's inability to conform to religious or social norms, a result of which, he is chastised and abused by the mullah.

"Mosques are the house of God; we do not allow the lawless here
 Dogs and ascetics are dirty; we tie them up and beat them
 You have long locks; we beat the ones with whiskers
 Clothing too long we rip away and moustache we chop off
 One who does not know religious rules, we shall hang
 Oh Waris Shah, enemies of God shall be scolded like dogs
 (Sabir, 1986, p.10-11, Verse: 23)

In their exchange with each other the mullah selects to criticize Ranjha's appearance and clothing. In insulting Ranjha, the mullah is targeting his appearance, which is outside the ordinary for a religiously orthodox society. Ranjha adorns long hair along with a long moustache, unusual for Muslim boys. Ranjha is more concerned with looking trendy than conforming to any religious or cultural ideals. His clothes are long and baggy. Ranjha's gentleness and panache is only further elaborated in the story at the point when after initially firing him for becoming involved with Heer, her father sends a letter to Ranjha's brothers sharing in detail his impression of Ranjha: Heer's father in fact compliments the attractiveness of Ranjha to his brothers, and admits the impact he has had on their village. Waris Shah creates multiple performances of masculinity through the character of Ranjha, as the other chapters in this part have argued; however, there are aspects of Ranjha's character that do not contrast far from a traditional male within the narrative of the story. This provides an indication of the perspective of Waris Shah, and the gendered formations he ultimately endorses. On one side Shah has broken down gender constructs and portrayed Ranjha in a manner that is dissimilar to the masculine 'Jatness', yet, when it comes to his social perspectives, Ranjha is depicted as possessing chauvinistic viewpoints, which are indicative of the patriarchal setting of the era. In this way Waris Shah reprimands female characters for their behaviour, and shores up a misogynist perspective.

FINDINGS

Waris Shah's ability to incorporate the culture and nuances of that time into

which compromises the construction of the Jat's masculinity within the Punjabi context. Male pride and their sense of honor and prestige are connected to their land ownership, and preserving that land and honor was considered of utmost importance.

In the cultural setting of Punjab, the construction of Jat masculinity is considered to be the quintessential type of masculinity. A Jat represents "hegemonic masculinity" and the men from other castes "are measured according to their ability to live up to this form of masculinity" (Sevea, 2014). Ranjha is depicted as taking on of religiously orthodox figures. In a society that is both respectful to and compliant towards religiously orthodox individuals, such as the mullah, Ranjha openly insults him, accusing him of immoral behavior and hypocrisy. Furthermore, in insulting the mullah during an argument, Ranjha is portrayed as daring enough as to question orthodox practices and prayers as well. In having the courage and audacity to challenge religious authority in an open fashion depict Ranjha as having a bold side to him. Through this example, Ranjha does not recognize authority and does not have any apprehension in opposing it. While this is an audacious stance from Ranjha exhibiting some element of masculinity, he also insults religious authority, through which he outcast himself from that social environment. Rosalind O'Hanlon asserts that the "emphases on the manliness of personal restraint are revealed in how men dress and elaborate ornaments usually associated with luxury" fall outside of the conventional dress code for what would be considered manly" (O' Hanlon, 1999). This is but one interpretation, however, of what is "manly." Ranjha is constructed by Shah as a character that selects to dress fashionable with ornaments. O'Hanlon's argument for a conventional dress code for the man, therefore, completely ignores the fact that conventional is dependent on the social context. As Sylvia Walby stresses, "masculinity and femininity is a construct of socialization, and hence dependent upon the social framework to which groups belong" (Walby, 1990). Masculinity and femininity in the South Asian context has always been more fluid than the western context. Subhadra Mitra Channa argues that "masculine and feminine qualities are not separated or dichotomized" (Channa, 2013). While O'Hanlon sees the division between how a man dresses and how a woman dresses quite distinct, that does not necessarily fully reflect the South Asian context from a social or historical standpoint. The male gender in a cultural setting might possess certain traits which may be considered feminine in a different era, nonetheless, there is a construction of gender in every setting, and there is the expectation that males and females of that period shall conform by those norms. Waris Shah establishes what gender should be in his story, and the norms that are established are done so by his characters. Through their interactions, the reprimands they face, and their failures

of Shah's version is dedicated to Ranjha's confrontation with Sehti, who is portrayed as being even more full-blooded and vigorous than Heer at times. As Anne Murphy notes, the dialogues between Sehti, Ranjha and Heer "comprises a major component of the narrative: 60 verses, with the scene continuing with further conflict among Heer, Sehti, and Ranjha for more than 50 additional verses"(Murphy, 2010). Murphy considers Sehti to be the "the real heroine of the text," based on the fact that "hers is a strong independent voice," in the narrative. A large portion of Waris Shah's Heer is dedicated to the interactions that Sehti has with Ranjha, as well as Heer. Sehti, plays a fundamental role in the bringing together of the two lovers after separation, and she also pursues her own lover in a conservative climate. Waris Shah's presentation of Heer in the latter half of his story is somewhat limited. However, he compensates her absence by providing a lengthy part of his narrative to Sehti, who is presented by him as an equally, if not more feisty and rebellious female. Sehti is depicted as a character that is arrogant and proud, and it is not surprising for which reason that a majority of the verses that include her presence are ones where she is engaging in some form of quarrel with either Heer or Ranjha; quarrels in which she almost always retains the upper hand. Similar to Heer, Sehti assumes her power through her social status. She is a willing recipient of her social rank and takes every opportunity to utilize this to her benefit. It also allows her to act as the catalyst that re-unites Heer and Ranjha, and enables her to successfully pursue her own love interest as well.

Sikata Banerjee states that "patriarchy and male dominance have meant that masculinity has been seen as immutable and natural" (Banerjee, 2005). Similarly, Mrinalini Sinha argues "there is no domain where masculinity necessarily or naturally belongs" (Sinha, 1999). Ronald Jackson and Murali Balaji stress that masculinities have to be examined "within their own domains" (Jackson, Balaji, 2011). As these scholars attest, then, our understanding of masculinity in Heer must be placed within the context in which Waris Shah's qissa is written, and must be understood as something that is constructed. With reference to more recent cultural production, Harjant Gill has argued that a Jat's "identity and status....are inextricably linked to his land and marked on to his physical body though his occupation as a farmer"(Gill, 2012, p.113). As Gill identifies, an essential part of the culture in Punjab is land ownership, considered to be the yardstick of Jat masculinity. There is great pride associated with the Jat male, and this is derived from "their desire to live a dignified life." Gill stresses that Jat masculinity is fundamentally connected to land, and "dispossessing a farmer of his land is framed as equally egregious as sexually violating the women of his family, hence posing a direct challenge to his masculinity" (Gill, 2012, p.113). The "celebration of Jat caste identity" occurs through their "patriarchal inheritance of land," the lack of

Turkman warriors from the Persian region during the early modern period" (Robinson, 2007). The confidence Heer exuberates is very much due to her social class, a position she is very contented in. This adds another layer of complexity to the portrayal of Heer. Both Deol and Gaur do not recognize that Waris Shah's martial images speak not only to Heer's character but also to her social power, because that is from where she derives her aggressiveness. Her social place has given her a sense of entitlement, and a launching pad to argue for her choices and desires. Shah depicts Heer as feisty, unwavering, and at times arrogant as well. She has been represented as a girl that does not adhere to social norms. As Gaur has argued, Heer was within the confines of a patriarchal society that limited her control, and the only way for her to exercise her desires was through rebelling; however, Gaur does not appreciate that although Heer does choose to rebel, she does not rebel against the social structure as a whole. She claims her high status in her rebellion. Heer is not simply challenging patriarchal society, but rather triggering the privilege she feels she has claim to. Gaur thus inaccurately concludes that Heer "initiated a personal struggle against the feudal patriarchal class to which she herself belonged," but in fact Heer is articulating her desires within it. An intersectional analysis thus allows us to reconcile the seeming contradictions between Gaur's and Deol's interpretations of Heer. Heer's obstinate nature is therefore partially indicative of her social class, as she considers herself the Heer of Siyals, bold and audacious to do as she wishes, and relentless against those who stand in her way. Heer's class privilege is consequently in many ways the basis for her rebellion, making her discourse one of privilege. She is not arguing for a broad social revolution, but is endeavoring to attain her ambitions, and in doing so challenges to use the social structure to her advantage.

Even though Waris Shah has limited the portrayal of Heer in his qissa, this does not mean that he has not dedicated his story to other female characters. Sehti, the sister-in-law of Heer, who has largely been neglected by Gaur and Deol in assessing the qissa, represents a tenacious young woman. Through her, Shah continues his representation of the rebellious girl in the qissa, one who challenges all those around her, while comfortable within the social structure in which she was born. Pankaj Singh argues that:

"Sehti's has been the loudest and most aggressive voice contesting the idle, impatient, intolerant, egoistical, quarrelsome, boastful imposter Ranjha, and has been presented by Shah as "Fearless and ingenious." (Singh, 2000)

Shackle correctly identifies that in Shah's version, Ranjha has "an immensely extended confrontation" with Sehti. A substantial part of the latter half

the social setting in which Heer finds herself, and what is expected from her. Here, there is a strong contrast made between the courtyard/home and the 'outside.' A girl is not supposed to "roam", and is expected to stay home and control her gaze. The parents and society her to obediently follow the wishes of her parents and expel any hopes of following her own wishes, as doing so would be against their honour. However, Heer's disregard for her parents' wishes demonstrates her defiance and rebelliousness nature. She exhibits no hesitation in quarrelling with her mother, who expresses discontent with her disobedience.

"Mother! Stop this swearing, it is a sin to give swears
 The woman is the source of divine, killing daughters invites a curse
 Take me as I am a disgrace, to a place which is evil
 Oh Waris Shah, I shall not leave Ranjha, even if my father, grandfather, or
 great-grandfather say"
 (Sabir, 1986, p.57, Verse: 111)

In isolation, this verse exemplifies an expression of Heer where she can be construed as being subordinate to Ranjha. Its meaning changes if taken in broader terms. Gaur supports Shackle's assertion, identifying Shah's Heer as a "sufic quest for mystical union with Allah"(Gaur, 2009), claiming the characters of Heer and Ranjha are representations of God and devotee, and that the "entire text is steeped in the non-conformist ambience of Sufism and the bhakti traditions that confronted religious patriarchs such as the qazi and the mullah," for which there are clear indications, principally the manner in which Heer and Ranjha confront immoral religious/legal authorities, such as the mullah and qazi. This is seen by Gaur as a component of her overall rebelliousness. Heer is portrayed as challenging the religiously orthodox qazi, who not only advises her but threatens her to do as her parents and religion demands, and to marry a boy of the same social class as her and stay far away from Ranjha. Heer defends her love for Ranjha and uses religious justifications in the process, all of which only further infuriate the qazi who simply amplifies his threats, none of which have any impact upon Heer whatsoever, who sees Ranjha in a divine light. From this standpoint Gaur's argument does have some support, since Waris Shah's version undeniably has Sufi elements scattered throughout the text. Shackle's argument of Heer Ranjha representing Sufi features provides an explanation as to why Heer is depicted by Shah as submissive on occasion. This provides an alternative to Deol, who claims she is a submissive character in general, by supporting the assertion that she is a rebellious character by nature, as Gaur argues, but is portrayed by Shah as submissive at times to reflect the Sufi elements of the qissa.

"Waris Shah describes Heer as galloping like the Qazilbash horsemen,

how Heer plans the vicious attack, and through Heer's description of how to beat Kaido, shows the extent of Heer's fury. Heer is very specific about the manner in which she expects her friends to attack Kaido, and the verse demonstrates that Heer's anger is such, that she would not be satisfied by simply attacking Kaido, but wants to burn his home and belongings, in order to teach him a lesson for committing the mistake of thinking he could attempt to blemish her reputation and get away with it. Deol also does not consider that although Heer led this attack against Kaido, she had already previously attacked him earlier in the text, when she had caught him spying on her and Ranjha.

"Heer caught up to him on the way, first deceitfully began talking to him she came close and roared like a beast, her eyes dripping with rage she took off his hat, broke his necklace, threw him to the ground from his waist she grabbed him and slammed him to the ground over her shoulder Oh Waris Shah, the angels from heaven have thrown this devil to the ground" (Sabir, 1986, p.43-44, Verse: 87)

The way in which Heer assaults Kaido for spying on her and Ranjha gives a stunning visual of the wrathful nature of Heer. She is depicted by Shah as a girl that becomes furious when she realizes that someone dared to cross her. The manner in which she is assaulting Kaido is also revealing, as Shah describes her body slamming Kaido over her shoulder, a maneuver which is used by men in traditional Punjabi wrestling. Through this graphic battering by Heer's character, Shah depicts her trying to fracture the gender constructions that surround her. Kaido was spying on Heer and Ranjha whilst they were together, yet, Shah chooses to have Heer's character attack him in this brutal manner, instead of Ranjha. This is a point to be noted, as Heer is showed as more proud, aggressive and violent in this scene, a sharp contrast to Ranjha who chooses not to do anything. Waris thus depicts Heer living in a setting where girls play a subordinate role to men. Demonstrated by Heer's father's response to her actions, it is a social context in which female infanticide occurred, and an environment where sons were preferred. This intense reference from Heer's father, Chuchak, also depicts a setting which severely limits the ability of women to participate in religion, especially non-domestic religious vocations. This is described by Shah in verse 111, where the qazi tells Heer to obediently stay home and occupy herself with domestic chores, as roaming around outside does not suit girls of respectable families.

Through the qazi's comments, Shah is providing an explicit indication of

offering metaphors to describe her arms, her breasts, her lips, and her navel.

"Red lips glittering like gems, chin an apple from overseas
 Nose sharp like Hussain's sword, snake like tresses are treasures
 Her teeth a string of pearls for swans, like seeds of a pomegranate
 The Jatti appears as a beautiful portrait, tall as a plant from heaven
 Neck of a swan and fingers like vegetables, hands cool as a leaf of the
 Chinaar tree
 Her arms are rolled butter, chest like fine marble
 A full chest like silk balls, like apples from the orchard
 Her navel fragranced by the heaven, her silk-like belly so special
 Lips are red like bark, searches to kill those in the bazaar
 As attractive as the queen fairy, can be seen amongst thousands
 Walks around carefree, like deer out of a forest
 Like the fairy from Lanka, Queen Indra, a beauty appears from the moon
 Walks dangling with desire, as the army marches from Kandhar
 A mannequin of China with features of a Roman, like a moon in the
 wilderness
 She comes walking smoothly, as a crane comes out of a flock
 Lovers that approach her, they escape the cutting edge of the sword
 The love of the girl speaks everywhere, like music playing from strings
 Galloping like the Qazilbash horsemen, running through the bazaars
 Oh Waris Shah when you place a bet on love, no one is spared in the
 gamble"
 (Sabir, 1986, p.27, Verse: 57)

Waris Shah's introduction of Heer is an exceedingly sexualized description, lathered with imagery and metaphors that endlessly discuss the various parts of her body in a suggestive fashion. Shah shows no restraint in describing Heer through an erotic lens. Deol notes that "in his very first description of her, the poet introduces imagery which removes Heer from the world of the chaste heroine and transforms her into a sexual being." In the opening introduction of Heer, Shah has provided the reader an indication as to the type of female protagonist he wishes to portray; one who was not going to be innocent or conservative. Examining the opening verse, one can ascertain, not only Shah has chosen to sexualize Heer, but he has attempted to demonstrate she is not a girl that shall take a passive approach in exercising her sexuality or her desires, but rather, is cognizant of this fact and ready to execute her lust without restriction. Through his description of Heer, Waris Shah confirms that not only Heer is beautiful with great sex appeal, she is someone that is aware of this fact and boasts it in the locale. Waris Shah illustrates

and through their chastising of the characters, one sees how particular gender identities can be accepted, and some can be regulated. Shah demonstrates through his characters that gender can be understood and interpreted in different ways, but that not all ways are deemed acceptable. In this way, Waris Shah's male and female characters demonstrate what the male and female norms are. This research utilizes the ideas of Judith Butler to understand how gender operates in the text to articulate multiple gender formations as well as different kinds of norms and their enforcement. Several key terms of Butler's will be used here. One of these is the idea of "reprimand." Shah uses reprimand and praise in his text towards the behavior of his main characters. Similar to how Butler claims that gender norms are made and enforced through the 'police officer metaphor', where one is reprimanded for certain types of behavior, and through praise, which is offered for behaviors that are socially accepted. Secondly, it shall be assessed, what kind of lifestyle for the characters leads to a "liveable" situation. Here, this involves exploring the various types of behaviors articulated through the plot, and identifying which are defined, in the text, are livable. Through these ideas we see both the multi-vocality of gendered formations in Waris Shah's text, and the limitations on that multi-vocality that are achieved through regulation and reprimand. Waris Shah introduces Heer's character as an exquisite beauty, with lengthy verses that stress the extent of her magnificence; however, he provides subtle suggestions within his verses of her rebellious nature, providing a foretelling the kind of role that she shall play in the story.

"What can a poet say about Heer, the moon's beauty
reflects on her forehead her snakelike tresses like the
night orbiting the moon, red skin tone like that of a star
flower-like eyes like that of a deer, cheeks a sparkling
rose eyebrows appear as arches of Lahore, no end to the
beauty" (Sabir, 1986, p.27, Verse: 56)

In describing Heer, Shah presents a 'sarapa', a head-to-foot description of the heroine. Jeevan Deol stresses that this initial description of Heer is "everything that one would expect from a Persian 'sarapa', plus a liberal sprinkling of distinctly Punjabi elements" (Deol, 2002, p.153). Shah describes Heer's forehead, and then delicately moves down her body, describing her eyes, her cheeks, and the rest of her body. Deol is correct in recognizing the Punjabi elements in this description of Heer, such as references to fruits, trees, and the 'Trinjan' (Punjabi young women sitting together with spinning wheels in the courtyard) which resonate with a Punjabi audience. He argues that Shah has sexualized Heer, confirmed through the 'sarapa'. In Shah's second introductory verse describing Heer she is sexualized by

story in written form was Hayat Jan Baqi Kolabi's *Masnavi Heer o Ranjha* written in approximately 1581-85. This version was written in Persian, reinforcing Frances Pritchett's claim that the initial qissas in Northern India were in Persian. The first edition of the story of Heer to be shared in Punjabi was of Damodar Gulati, likely in the late sixteenth century, during the rule of King Akbar. Gulati's version was soon followed by versions of Ahmad Gujjar and Muqbal.

Nowhere is the mention of Heer Ranjha more evident than in the Sufi lyrical tradition, which is said to have come much before Waris Shah's account of the qissa in the late eighteenth century. References of Heer Ranjha are found in the poetry of Sufi poet Shah Hussain from the 1530s to 1600, and some of the most popular references to Heer Ranjha till date in Punjabi are found in kafis of Bulleh Shah, whose writing had a profound impact on Punjabis. Again, it must be noted that all the manuscript evidence for these is late, from the nineteenth century. Most scholars have indeed interpreted the qissa to be a metaphor for Sufism, meaning that the love of the lovers in the qissa is a personification of divine love.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research seeks to understand how Waris Shah understands gender in his poem, *Heer*, belonging to the romantic folktale (qissa) tradition. Relying on Judith Butler's work on gender and religion, I have examined the ways that characters reprimand and praise one another as constitutive of gendered norms. As well, through Butler's idea of what constitutes a liveable identity, I examined, quite literally, who lives and who dies in Shah's plot. In broad terms, "Gender is the mechanism by which notions of masculine and feminine are produced and naturalized" (Butler, 2004). Ellen Armour and Susan St. Ville, based on Butler's theories, argue that "masculine and feminine gender roles," are "understood as socially constructed or matters of custom rather than nature" (Armour, 2006). She argues that sex is produced by gender in a way that ties bodies closely to performance. In *Heer*, females are portrayed as women and males are portrayed as men. Butler's understanding allows us to see that Waris Shah's gender ideology governs the sexual morphology, bodies, performance, and speech of all the characters. This is partially true in the early modern period, which precedes the period of Butler's concern, her idea of regulation is useful in understanding this pre-modern text.

ANALYSIS

In his version of *Heer*, Waris Shah offers his characters a variety of gender identities, through their actions, their personality, and their appearance. These identities are not always recognized or accepted by diverse characters in the story,

when Mahmud Ghazni conquered the Punjab region in the eleventh century. He made a Persian cultural center there, paving the way for Persian literature to grow. According to Alam, the arrival of the Turkish conquerors in Punjab during the twelfth and thirteenth century served to further strengthen Persian language use in northern India and expanded it eastward toward Delhi.

Beyond the courts, common people and soldiers had a taste for Persian poetry and spread its influence. The Sufis also played a prominent role, since their religious centers were an important public meeting place, and worshippers demonstrated a keen interest in understanding Persian, the language of significant religious scriptures. This momentum continued, as Persian poetry experienced a considerable lift during the Mughal Empire in the sixteenth century. This was predominantly the case during Akbar's rule. Akbar demonstrated a committed to Iranian literature, which led to a significant amount of Persian poets and writers travelling to India. In contrast to Iran at that time, where there was fear of persecution, the literary community found a safe harbor under Akbar's rule in India, as well as considerable praise. Persian language in South Asia experienced what Alam has called "Indianization." It was influenced by Indian vernaculars. Persian forms, such as its rich qissa style, developed in a situation of mutual influence between Persian and South Asian vernaculars. This was particularly visible in the case of Hindavi poets. Amir Khushrao, who was one of the most prominent writers of the fourteenth century and who wrote in Persian, identified his writing as "Hindavi." Notable poets, such as Munjhan, Jayasi, and Qutban, and writers of Hindavi romance poetry chose features of a Persian poetic genre of rhyming couplets (Masnavis) for their works." (Orsini, 2012, p.231)

VERSIONS OF THE HEER AND RANJHA NARRATIVE

The story of Heer Ranjha was well-embedded into the cultural history of Punjab prior to Waris Shah's account, and was well known to Punjabis both in and out of the qissa context. Long before the story of Heer Ranjha entered the literary ambit it existed within the margins of the religious and spiritual arena. The mention of Heer Ranjha can be traced back to Sikhism, by Hari Das Haria during the 1520s-50s, and Bhai Gurdas Bhalla in the 1550s-1635; however, it is important to note that these manuscripts are late. Bhai Vir Singh, a Punjabi writer of the modern period, portrayed Ranjha as the tenth Guru in his writings. Bhai Vir Singh wrote during the nineteenth century, a period that saw great focus on religious reform in an environment that perceived religious threats.

Outside of the religious context, the story itself had other versions well before Waris Shah. According to Jeevan Deol, the first textual version of the entire

romance stories are the Prem-akhyan, shared in multiple Indian vernaculars. The Prem-akhyan were essentially love stories in which characters travel a spiritual journey for their beloved, which reflects a path towards greater "spiritual maturity." The Prem-akhyan were written by Sufis during the Pre-Mughal and Mughal periods. Although the Sufis initially shared these stories in the Avadhi dialect, they subsequently shared them in other vernaculars, in particular those being Urdu and Bengali. This "hybrid narrative texture" of the Prem-akhyan allowed it to be shared in multiple vernaculars and, it can be argued, paved the way for romance literature to be told in other vernaculars besides Persian. In Punjab, romantic qissas garnered a significant amount of interest. Some claim this romantic focus is the hallmark of Punjabi qissas, but they are not unique by any means. Romantic qissas in Persian go back as far back as c.1000 C.E. Qissas became widely published in the nineteenth century and Northern India in particular, in both Hindi and Urdu. In the modern period, the inexpensive price of printed qissas enhanced their attractiveness to the general public. The simplicity of qissa, made it available to the masses in India, and the fact that it was shared through performance further enhanced this quality, making it all the more appealing to the layperson. These stories fulfill "the typical oral-literate dynamic of Indian literature." The qissa in comparison to other types of literature did not have a single purpose; Pasha Khan stresses that qissas "always incorporate inter texts of various genres," making the "hearers eloquent" as well as "prudent." Prior to the twentieth century, when the Urdu novel became popular in the North Indian context, the genre of qissa experienced considerable popularity.

PERSIAN LANGUAGE IN PUNJAB

Waris Shah's Heer is a qissa, representative of a popular genre in the region. The earliest examples of qissa poetry in Punjab are from the tenth century. Amir Khusrow (1254-1325) composed versions of the romances of Laila and Majnun in Persian. Pritchett stresses that the qissa came to India in its Persian form. This form achieved notable popularity and found a place in the Mughal court and after the flourishing of Persian qissa in South Asia, the form soon gathered momentum in other languages in South Asia, such as Urdu. Muzzaffar Alam stresses that

"There had been interaction between South Asian and Persian languages for two millennia, but it was only towards the end of the tenth century that Persian gained a foothold in Punjab due mainly to the Ismaili population there." (Alam, 2003, p.132)

Later on, as Alam claims, Persian's relationship with India and Punjab grew

depicts Ranjha in this manner, he also allows him to fit comfortably within the confines of a more neatly masculinist and chauvinist model as well.

OVERVIEW OF THE TALE

The story of Heer is generally consistent across versions. It is set on the banks of the river Chenab in East Punjab. Dhido Ranjha, Dhido as personal name and Ranjha as clan name, lives with his father, brothers, and sisters-in-law. As the youngest of the brothers, he is his father's favorite son. Waris Shah portrays Ranjha as a handsome young man whose beauty casts a spell on all young women who encounter him, and has Ranjha's own sisters-in-law swayed by that charm as well. Following the death of his father and having been swindled out of his land and inheritance by brothers, the powerless and empty-handed Ranjha heads off to the village of Jhang. Shah presents Heer's legendary beauty, known throughout the region, as Ranjha's motivation for heading to Jhang. Ranjha must overcome numerous struggles and obstacles to arrive in Jhang. There, he meets Heer and their romance commences. Heer is successful in convincing her father to employ Ranjha as their buffalo herder. This gives the lovers ample opportunity to secretly pursue their love. Upon discovery of Heer's relationship with their buffalo herder, Heer's family, partially influenced by the Qazi (Islamic legal magistrate), quickly arrange her marriage to Saida. Saida is portrayed as belonging to a rich family with plenty of land, and Heer's family, for which reason they see Saida as worthy of their daughter. Interestingly, Ranjha refuses to elope with Heer, since it is not the honorable thing to do. This sets up a situation in which their love could only succeed if Heer's family relented. They do not relent, however, and Heer is married to Saida. A distraught Ranjha eventually makes his way to Balnath, a yogi, and requests initiation to become a yogi. Ranjha's plan is to enter Heer's village in disguise. In spite of his followers' objections, Balnath is swayed by Ranjha's charm and charisma, and initiates him. Ranjha becomes a yogi and goes in disguise to Heer's village. He first encounters Sehti, Heer's sister-in-law, at which time they engage in a lengthy dialogue with each, much of which is overshadowed by their quarreling. Ironically, it is with Sehti's assistance that the lovers are able to meet and escape. At this point, the lovers try to convince everyone that their love is divine in nature. Although initially Heer's family agree, afterwards upon discussion amongst the clansmen, Heer's family, described as "intoxicated" by honor, kill her with poison. Ranjha takes his own life when he learns she is gone.

THE QISSA GENRE

Romance stories of similar nature to the qissas have enjoyed a long popularity within the Indian context, and played a formative role in the development of north Indian vernaculars. For example the most famous of the

reprimanded throughout the narrative demonstrate that Shah has included a number of gender performances, not all are liveable. Their failure in the story however, particularly when it comes to their union, is due to their inability to completely follow the gender roles as they had been created by others, further confirming that Shah has allowed a number of gender identities to find a place in the story, but privileged one. If gender is a social construct, and norms are created within a society, attributes and behaviors are reinforced within a social climate as to what it is to be masculine and feminine. Through his multi-vocality, Waris Shah shows that the concept of gender can be interpreted in numerous ways. At times, the alterity he presents is identified by other characters in the narrative, and characters are reprimanded or praised for these deviations from the concept of what is considered normal by others in the story. There is evidence in the text that the pastoral climate in which the story's setting finds itself is one that is patriarchal in nature, where girls are expected by their elders and religious figures to play a subordinate place in the family. Heer is encouraged by elders in the story to be obedient, compliant with social and religious traditions, and refrain from exercising their desires, particularly in the context of romantic desires. Waris Shah however, through his primary character of Heer, and secondarily Sehti as well, is breaking down and defying their social expectations, and carving out different explanations as to what it means to be feminine. The feminine characters that Shah is creating are ones which are rebellious, feisty, and demonstrate no apprehension in fulfilling their desires. They are depicted as both aware and comfortable with their status and do use it to their advantage also, but evidence in the text reveals that they do not passively follow the path, which has been carved out for them by their elders. Heer is reprimanded for not adhering to the advice of her elders, but this does little to alter her approach. Through these female characters, and Heer in particular, Shah is showing that the feminine gender can be depicted in a number of ways.

Similar to what Waris Shah does in expressing his version of what it can mean to be feminine is the same approach he takes for his male character, Ranjha. The narrative is set in the background of rural Punjab, where male masculinity was strongly connected to land ownership. Furthermore, the attributes of strength and assertiveness emphasized in the social setting, as these enhance what is considered to be masculine. Shah however, chooses to make his male protagonist multi-dimensional. In the text, Ranjha is seen as a fashionable "dandy" that is delicate and gentle more so than a muscular young man with brute force. Shah chooses to depict Ranjha as a handsome young man that does not conform to religious and social stereotypes, and he is chastised for his look as well, although he is shrewd enough to use it to his advantage on occasion too. While Shah

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EXPLORING THE PUNJABI CULTURE, FEMALE REPRESENTATION AND ROLE OF CHAUVINIST PATRIARCHY IN THE HELLENISTIC MYSTICAL ROMANTIC PUNJABI EPIC HEER BY WARIS SHAH

Abstract:

This research explores the Punjabi culture and female place in the society with mystical elements presented in the romantic epic of Heer Ranjha composed by Waris Shah during late 1700s in Punjab. This epic (Qissa) is sometimes called the "Romeo Juliet" of Punjabi Literature, in which a tragic story of Heer is portrayed, Heer was a young girl who belongs to Siyal clan and Ranjha, a young man known by his clan name. Waris Shah portrays gender through poetic metaphor, dialogue, character, and plot. This research is qualitative in nature, theories presented by Ellen Armour, Susan St. Ville and Butler support this research. This research interrogates the gender representation of characters to uncover the social constructs to which Shah subscribed and Shah's multi-vocality of femininity as tied to the character of Heer and the character of Ranjha, by attending to descriptions of his appearance, his loss of property and arc that ends in his death, as well as his interactions with other characters. Through these two figures, Heer and Ranjha, Shah articulates a range of gendered forms, while ultimately adhering to patriarchal norms that are presented alongside other models. This research will support the upcoming researchers and the scholars who have desire to know about the Punjabi culture and the great cultural epic (Qissa) of all times "Heer Ranjha".

INTRODUCTION

Waris Shah presents a range of gender identities through his narrative, which provide in some ways a varied range of gendered identities that were available in the world he sought to create through this text. The fact that the characters, in particular the main protagonists of the story are consistently