

Woman and Sexuality: Gender-Class Interface in Selected Short Stories of Ismat Chughtai

Megha Katoria

Lecturer

Bahra University and Institute of Business Management

Feminism interrogates patriarchal structure of society and it opposes women's subordination to man in public and private spheres of life. Women have often been called upon to make sacrifices and suppress their personal desires. They have often been left on the margins of the social set-up as far as their personal desires and fulfilment of those desires is concerned. Women are not a minority in our society but their "lives, experiences and values have been treated as marginal" (Sherry 6) and men's experiences have been assumed to be central to society. One also needs to contest the often stated view that in India women have always enjoyed a place of respect and dignity, that they have been respected as '*devis*.' It needs to be seen that "the respect and privileges which accompany the position of a '*devi*' (Goddess) are not only anti-individualistic," they are also anti-humanistic and "deny women a personhood" (Jain 10). Describing woman as a '*devi*' amounts to negating her a normal human life and demanding from her a 'divine' kind of behaviour where she blesses others and bestows favours on others. On the other extreme in our society, women are just treated as sexual objects or things of exchange, again denying their humanity, their wishes and desires, their individual self. The present paper focuses on selected short stories of Ismat Chughtai to examine how these depict suffering of women in a patriarchal set-up.

Ismat Chughtai began writing at a time when "any attempt on the part of women to write poetry and fiction was viewed as intellectual vagrancy" (Naqvi xiii). Ismat Chughtai used her pen as a weapon to question male authority and hierarchical power structure in patriarchy. Most of her work deals with themes directly related to women and their status and role in Indian society. She portrays the struggle of women against the oppressive social institutions of her time and her deep understanding and perception of the female psyche are clearly reflected in her writings.

Women are treated as property, as objects of exchange between men, a transaction which denies them subjectivity. Women are "commodified as sexual creatures to serve male desire" (Lim 817). Simone de Beauvoir used the term "Subject" and "Other" to show the real place of women in patriarchy. The "Subject" is the man who controls and rules over the woman and the "Other" is the woman who is supposed to have no identity of her own. She is not regarded as an "autonomous being" and "appears essentially to the male as a sexual being" (Beauvoir 16).

Woman is not only considered inferior to man but is largely perceived by man only as an object of sexual gratification. Ismat Chughtai candidly reveals in her stories, the working of sexuality in middle-class Muslim households. Behind every story lies a specific intent but Ismat Chughtai's stories do not preach, they just present some images of reality in our society. Female sexuality is kept invisible or mythologised as passive in patriarchy, more so in Muslim families where '*pardah*' is an additional custom to keep the woman's physical person hidden. Ismat Chughtai not only exposes the abuse of woman's body for man's gratification but she also delineates woman's sexual desire – a theme or subject considered forbidden in the patriarchal set-up.

"The Quilt" (*Lihaaf*) is a powerful story by Ismat Chughtai, which daringly sketches female sexuality and the loneliness of a woman who yearns for her husband's love. Written in 1942, "The Quilt" proved to be a landmark in Urdu short story writing. A frustrated housewife, whose Nawab husband has no time for her, finds sexual and emotional solace in

the companionship of a female servant. At a time when any talk of female sexuality was unthinkable, Ismat Chughtai had the courage to portray a lesbian relationship. Bonnie Zimmerman refers to Faderman's definition of lesbianism as follows: " 'Lesbian' describes a relationship in which two women's strongest emotions and affections are directed towards each other ... the two women spend most of their time together and share most aspects of their lives with each other" (81).

The protagonist of "The Quilt," Begum Jan is a young and beautiful girl. Being poor, she is married to the Nawab who is rich and of 'ripe years' but 'very pious.' Since Begum Jan's family is not well-off, they see in her marriage to the rich influential Nawab, a favourable economic option. After the marriage, he "deposited her in the house with all his other possessions and promptly forgot about her ! The young delicate Begum began to wilt with loneliness" (8). This highlights how the institution of marriage commodifies a woman and reduces her to an object of mere business transaction. The Nawab spends most of his time with the "young, fair and slim-waisted boys" whom he keeps at his place and whose expenses he meets. The Begum spends "sleepless nights" and becomes a picture of "melancholy and despair" (9). Begum Jan yearns for her husband's love and company, but the Nawab does not have even a single minute to spare for his wife. Her youth withers away and she loses all desire to live. At this crucial point, out of utter desperation she recklessly turns to Rabbo, her maid, for the satisfaction of her sexual desires. In the story Rabbo is shown as constantly massaging parts of her body: "Rabbo used to sit by her side and scratch her back for hours together – it was almost as if getting scratched was for her the fulfillment of life's essential need. In a way, more important than the basic necessities required for staying alive. Rabbo had no other household duties" (10).

This focus on woman's sexual desire and its fulfilment in a relationship with a woman is Ismat Chughtai's way of asserting the protagonist's humanity and her basic human needs. A woman's identity is not defined only by her relation to the male world and male literary tradition. The powerful bonds between women are a crucial factor in women's lives, and the sexual and emotional orientation of a woman profoundly affects her consciousness and thus her creativity. Bonnie Zimmerman regrets that "Heterosexism in feminist anthologies – like the sexism of androcentric collections – serves to obliterate lesbian existence and maintains the lie that women have searched fulfillment only through men – or not at all" (77).

A lesbian relationship, considered a deviance by patriarchy "might well embody the culmination of women's capacity to love and be committed to each other" (Smith 792). More than the bonding between women, the story reveals the deprivation of a poor young woman to a homosexual Nawab on the one hand and the assertion of woman's sexuality on the other.

The Nawab never displays any interest in his wife's life, her wishes, desires and problems and in fact, completely neglects and dismisses her presence in his life. Begum Jan is just a social stamp of approval for the Nawab. She is just a heterosexual cover for him so as to escape ridicule and suspicion of society for his inborn sexual orientation. Beyond that, the Nawab totally "forgot about her" (8). Such inequality in marriage is symbolic of the subjugation and oppression of women. Ismat Chughtai brings out the fact that how no heed is paid to female sexuality. The woman's needs and desires are not acknowledged even in marriage. Women are conditioned against any expression of their sexuality. The Nawab fails to realize that she has entered this marriage with certain hopes and desires but he is totally oblivious of or rather he ignores the sexual needs of his new bride . As he romances with the young boys "in gossamer shirts," (8) he never bothers to acknowledge the sexual expectations of his own wife, who lay lonely, confined and neglected. The very fact that he wilfully imprisons a poor young girl to meet the societal obligation of marriage, never bothering about

how he would never be able to fulfil her sexual needs, speaks about the repression of and absolute indifference to female sexuality.

How such inequality and oppression can lead a woman into a sense of complete loneliness and depression is another important aspect that is brought to light by Ismat Chughtai. While the Nawab fulfills his homosexual desires, Begum Jan, peeping “from the chinks in the drawing room doors... felt she had been raked over the coals !” (8). Such is her pain and desperation at the Nawab’s being oblivious to her presence. Romantic novels and sentimental poetry make her all the more restless and dejected as by reading them she became all the more aware of her own desires and fantasies. Gripped by a sense of failure in not being able to attract the Nawab, Begum Jan sinks to a pitiable condition, losing sleep and peace of mind.

The child narrator’s encounter with Begum Jan while Rabbo is away, also forms a significant part of the story. Once when Rabbo goes out of house, Begum Jan feels very lonely and yearns for the company of Rabbo. As the narrative goes: “All day Begum Jan was restless. Her joints hurt like hell, but she could not bear anyone’s touch. Not a morsel did she eat; all day long she moped in bed” (14). The child narrator, a nine year old girl, who is sent to live with Begum Jan for some days, sees Begum Jan and playfully starts scratching her back. Begum Jan “sighed as if with immense relief” (14) and feels a new life coming into her. Begum Jan tells the child to scratch other parts of her body. The child narrator, who had begun to scratch Begum Jan playfully, now begins to feel that something wrong is happening. The thoughts of the child narrator are very well brought out in these lines: “ I wanted to run away from her, but she held me closer. I struggled to get away. Begum Jan started laughing... I felt gripped by an unknown terror. Begum Jan’s deep dark eyes focused on me! I started crying. She was clutching me like a clay doll. I started feeling nauseated against her warm body” (16).

The child, in her innocence could not analyze the thoughts in Begum Jan’s mind but the child becomes fearful and terrified and runs out of Begum Jan’s room. The child narrator wishes her mother to come and take her back home. Finally Rabbo returns and Begum Jan feels very happy. The child narrator is so terrified from the day of her encounter with Begum Jan that she tries to stay out of Begum Jan’s room and spends time with servants of the household. Thus, the child narrator’s encounter with Begum Jan brings to light the fact that a woman who has been oppressed can at times become oppressive and this is how Begum Jan acted with the child. She herself is oppressed and in turn she tries to oppress the child for whom Begum Jan becomes a “terrifying entity” (16). The nine year old girl recounts things as she remembers them without self-consciousness or any inhibiting sense of social taboos and this gives a greater freedom to the writer to write on a theme which was to be hid behind the veil at the time in which she was writing.

Not only patriarchy has been silent about women’s sexual needs but even within feminist criticism, lesbianism has been marginalised. Radical feminists turned women’s attention to sexuality and the disparities of power that pervade heterosexual relationships in patriarchal cultures. According to radical feminists, male heterosexuality objectifies the female body. They aimed to reshape society and restructure its institutions which they saw as inherently patriarchal. They assumed all women to be good and all men to be bad and laid emphasis on the idea of “sisterhood.” Radical feminism thus, over-simplified the question of sexual discrimination. They failed to see that in real life, often the women of a superior class or race oppress women of lower class or of a subjugated race. Hence socialist feminists emphasize that while addressing the issue of women’s victimization, the factor of class should also be taken into consideration along with gender as upper class women often become agents of oppression of lower class women. Ismat Chughtai often depicts in her

stories, how in middle-class homes often it is women of the household who exploit or oppress poor women.

The gender-class interface is depicted with great boldness by Ismat Chughtai in “Lingering Fragrance” (*Badan ki Khushboo*) which frankly exposes another sordid side of the society. It also exposes the idea of “sisterhood” propagated by some feminists. Class becomes an important factor in determining the situation of women. Ismat Chughtai’s story “Lingering Fragrance” shows how poor village girls are employed in the palaces to train the young Nawabs and initiate them into the complexities of sex life. It shows the workings of the wealthy, feudal Muslim family, with a large household and a large army of servants. Maids are kept in order to provide sexual service to the young men of the family. The story becomes intricate when Chhamman, a young man of the household, becomes so much attached to his maid, Haleema that he refuses to desert her in childbirth and insists on marrying her.

We are presented with a social setting in which “women are turned into commodities, totally disposable, totally dispensable, to be used and discarded” (Kudchedkar 5). The elder women, including the senior servants, parcel out the maids in the service of the young men of the household. A maid who fails to attract and “serve” the man has failed in her task, she is not likely to be kept in the household. Chhamman, a young man of the household, is against the system of concubinage and initially he refuses to accept Haleema, a maid. Chhamman’s revulsion against the system of concubinage, however, makes Haleema fearful of the consequences that would follow if Chhamman does not accept her. She fears that if Chhamman refuses to accept her, she will be offered to a diseased old man in exchange for a pair of bloodhounds that the Nawab fancies. She had to plead to be ‘used.’ She says, “... what do you take me for? I admit I am a maid but I’m not a leper. The entire *mahal* is cursing the day of my birth. Everyone is laughing at me because I repulse you” (205).

A candid description of the lust of the rich, young men is given in the story and also how the women of the family support their actions. When the maids become pregnant, they are dispatched in haste to their far off villages to deliver the baby. Thus, the brutal use of their body and emotions is highlighted and how they are sent back to ‘repair.’ It is because of their poverty that these maids have to bear with the ruthless, brutal and abject exploitation all their life.

The story also shows how their motherhood is abused. Labelled as cattle, maids are sent to the village to deliver and then are brought back, their babies separated from them. While their children grew feeble, they had to return alone, their breast full of milk, to spend the rest of their lives as maids. The pain, agony, torment and injustice involved in the tradition can be glanced in the following lines:

How pathetically the wretches would wail and cry. Like animals they groaned for their young. Breasts filled up with milk, causing intense pain. Often they would burn with high fevers. Sometimes one of the Begum’s babies was brought in for suckling. How they would enjoy the pleasures of taking the baby to the breast. But such delights were ephemeral. Ladies of noble birth cannot be expected to breed like animals, just to give their maids the pleasure of suckling! Once their impotent grief had spent itself they were once again put back to work. (198)

In this story, when the enlightened Nawab Chhamman Mian remains indifferent to his maid, Haleema, for a long time, his mother becomes worried because according to her, such behaviour was not normal. Her own brothers had started flirting with the maids at the age of eleven or twelve and at this age they were “stomping and fuming for the kill” (201). When Chhamman expresses his opinion that this kind of liaison with maids was callously

exploitative and condemnable, people began to doubt his sanity. But when he declares that he has fallen in love with Haleema and will marry her in preference to the Nawabzaadi chosen by his mother, terror strikes the entire family. They could see their so-called family honour crumbling down to pieces. When all strategies to separate the lovers fail, Chhamman Mian is disowned and driven away from home. The inhuman practices of the Nawabs families are exposed where fair, just and good people like Chhamman also become victims and are powerless. The whole family joins hands against Chhamman when he tries to bring respect and happiness in the life of a destitute girl like Haleema.

Here man is not the oppressor but women are more eager to let their young sons exploit the maids. The story also questions the notions of family honour and disgrace. Thus, we see that class affinities are stronger and the women themselves become propagators of patriarchy. As wives, they themselves might be oppressed but as mothers they actively contribute to the same oppressive structures. Upper class women become active agents of oppression of poor women. The upper class women treat the lower class women no more than commodities to be used and discarded.

The active role played by the women of the family in providing “healthy maids for their sons” shatters all ideas of “sisterhood” among women. A woman at times subscribes to the double standards that support suppression of other women by the patriarchal order. These women are the victims of patriarchy and become the perpetrators of torture, inequality and injustice against other women.

Thus, we see that lower class women have no option but to become maids in the homes of the wealthy and depend on their masters and mistresses for their sustenance. Female servants in the upper class family are used by the women of the household as objects for masculine lust, to be discarded when they become pregnant or when a male becomes attached to them.

Another story “The Rock” (*Chatan*) reveals how men can also treat women only as domestic helps and sexual objects. The male protagonist, who remains nameless in the story, is an active exploiter of women as he sees women merely as attractive bodies, as sexual objects. After transforming his young and beautiful wife into a proper ‘housewife,’ he is attracted towards another young girl, Shabnam. He is attracted towards Shabnam as she “swayed like an intoxicated female serpent” (80). Seeing her movements, his eyes gleamed and he “revealed his teeth in a grin” (80). The man leaves his first wife and children for Shabnam. He marries Shabnam and after becoming his wife, she too meets the same fate as the first wife. Shabnam is also turned into a proper ‘housewife.’ Once, when they go out for dinner, this man is attracted by the physical beauty of an Egyptian dancer. This is how the narrator, who is his sister, describes it: “*Bhaiya’s* (Brother’s) hungry eyes crawled over her body like scorpions” (89). Shabnam, who used to be a thin girl and whose “complexion glowed like molten gold” (77) before marriage, had now become fat. She rapidly gobbles down roasted chicken in order to distract herself from the way her husband was looking at the Egyptian dancer. Thus, we see how man objectifies woman and treats her no more than a sexual object. He considers her only as a commodity to satisfy his lust.

The story “Tiny’s Granny” (*Nanhi ki Nani*) brings to light the social and religious hypocrisy of the society. It shows how poverty and circumstances can change people and how the poor girls are sexually exploited by the upper class men and how difficult it is for girls of lower strata of society to live a decent life.

The very beginning of the story brings forth the question of identity into focus. The first line says, “God knows what her real name was,” (117) as no one ever called her by it. She has no identity of her own and as the years pass, she is called ‘Baftan’s kid,’ ‘Bashira’s daughter-in-law,’ ‘Bismillah’s mother’ and ‘Tiny’s granny.’ She never had a childhood.

When she ought “to have been laughing and playing with other children,” (117) she had started working in people’s households.

As the years pass, she tries all trades for a living. She had been a maid, a cook, a beggar and even a thief. The miserable condition of the poor people is brought out in the story. Poor people do not get enough to fill their stomach and Granny, who was living a life of utter poverty, did not leave any opportunity of grabbing food for herself and her granddaughter, Tiny. Everybody knew about her stealing things but nobody questioned as she would “threaten to take an oath on the Holy Quran. And who would disgrace himself in the next world by directly inviting her to swear a false oath on the Quran?” (119). This shows that even religion becomes meaningless to the poor since their primary concern is meeting the basic necessities of their life.

The cruelty and hypocrisy of the rich people who hold positions of power is also brought out in the story. Granny puts Tiny into the ‘ancestral trade’ and Tiny works in the Deputy Sahib’s house. Tiny did “job at the Deputy Sahib’s for her food, clothing and one and a half rupees a month” (120). Granny always stuck to Tiny “like a shadow” but “a pair of old hands cannot wipe out what is inscribed in a person’s fate” (120). Even ‘fate’ is cruel towards the poor as Tiny’s chastity is violated by Deputy Sahib, the grandfather of three children. This is how Ismat Chughtai describes it in the story: “Tiny, who was supposed to be pulling the rope of the ceiling fan, was dozing with the rope in her hand. The fan stopped moving, the lord and master woke up, his animality was aroused, and Tiny’s fate was sealed” (120-21). Deputy Sahib was known as a religious man who said his five daily prayers and had provided water vessels to the mosque. This is ironical, as in real life he had no religiosity and the image he portrays in society is completely false and deceptive.

Even society is callous and cruel towards the poor people and does not raise its voice against the injustice and wrong done to the poor. Instead it makes fun of the poor for no fault of theirs. After Tiny’s fearful encounter with the Deputy, her Granny comforted the “wounded bird” (121) with sweets. Instead of sympathising with the poor girl whose innocence and childhood have been ravished by the Deputy, the women of the society would ask Tiny all that happened to her on the pretext of giving her something like bangles and after hearing the details from her, would laugh out loud. This shows the callous and unsympathetic behaviour of the women who are neither angry with the Deputy’s behaviour nor do they try to comfort and understand Tiny; instead they mock at her. The idea of “sisterhood” is thus, demolished as a ‘myth’ even in this story.

Tiny’s childhood is now lost forever and instead of growing into a girl, she directly becomes a woman and not a “fully-fashioned woman moulded by Nature’s skilled and practised hand, but one like a figure on whom some giant with feet two yards long had trodden-squat, fat, puffy, like a clay toy which the potter had knelt on before it had hardened” (122). Even the boys pinched her and teased her that she had relationships with many men. All the men share their claim on Tiny as “when a rag is all dirty and greasy, no one minds too much if someone wipes nose on it” (122). This brings to light the fact that after Tiny’s terrible encounter with Deputy, other men too consider her as no more than a sexual object. Tiny then runs away to a bigger city as “they say that in places like Delhi and Bombay there is an abundant demand for this kind of commodity” (122-123). Thus, from an innocent child, Tiny is made into a mere “commodity,” an object of sexual recreation for men.

Granny is left alone after Tiny runs away. Granny lies to people that Tiny died of cholera as Granny knows that people of the society would not stop talking about her. We also get an insight into Granny’s loneliness who is left with her only companion, the pillow. Fate had always been cruel towards Granny and even the monkeys do not spare her. A monkey steals her pillow and peels the coverings of the pillow and all things stolen by Granny are revealed to the people who then abuse her for her theft. “Thief! ... swindler! ... old hag! ...

Turn the old devil out! ... hand her over to the police! Search her bedding: you might find a lot more stuff in it!" (127). People abuse poor Granny for petty thefts but they do not raise their voice against the bigger crimes of the rich like the Deputy.

Granny then dies and in her death "she showered continuous abuse upon the world" (129). The lines at the end of the story are very significant bringing to light the truth of society: "On judgement Day... (Granny) burst into the presence of God the All-Powerful and All-Kind... and God, beholding the degradation of humanity, bowed his head in shame and wept tears of blood" (129).

"A Pair of Hands" (*Do Haath*) is another powerful story that brings out the issues of gender and class, of poverty, and of woman being no more than an object to be bought and sold and the hypocrisy and oppressive behaviour of the upper class. The title of the story, "A Pair of Hands" is very significant as the pair of hands are the hands that work and keep working throughout life. Ram Autar, the sweeper who returns from the army is not concerned about the fact that the child born to his wife Gori is not his but he is happy that in old age, a pair of the child's hands will be useful for him and support him. Like religion, morality also does not have much use for the poor who have to struggle at the basic level of existence. All the people say that the child had been born after two years since Ram Autar had left the village but Ram Autar says, "He (the child) will contribute his two hands, sir, and he will be my support in my old age" (175). Working and earning for a living becomes the prime concern in the life of a poor man.

After her marriage to Ram Autar, initially Gori was meek and cried a lot when Ram Autar left for his job but "then, gradually, the length of her veil begins to diminish." (163). Gori was "dark like a glistening pan," she had a "bulbous nose, a wide jaw," "squint in her left eye," a thick waist and her feet reminded one of "cow's hoofs" but still she "was able to throw darts that never failed to hit their mark" (164). Owing to Gori's 'indecent' behaviour, the women of the neighbourhood complain to the old sweepress, Ram Autar's mother, and tell the old lady to send her daughter-in-law back to her parents. The old sweepress however refuses to comply with their request. She says that she cannot send her back as she has bought her for Rs. 200 and much had been spent on the wedding and if she sends her away, Gori's father would sell her away to some other sweeper and it was all the more expensive for her to get another daughter-in-law as it would cost her not less than Rs. 400. Gori was "bought" and brought in the house so that she could help the mother-in-law in her old age as it was difficult for the old lady to survive without someone being there to help her. As it is put in the story: "A daughter-in-law not only warms a son's bed, she also does the work of four people... A well-built stalwart daughter-in-law like this one could not be had for less than four hundred now" (166-167).

This shows that the woman is just an object to be bought and sold, a business transaction. She is dehumanized and not valued as a person but she is an 'object' that is bought for man's sexual recreation and for the service of other family members. Gori works throughout the day in her own house and even in the house of others and also takes beatings from the old lady without letting out a word because she has been "bought."

The son of the old sweeper's brother-in-law, Ram Rati, comes to visit the old sweepress and stays on. Gori and Ram Rati get intimate and people complain to the old lady but the old sweepress protests and says that "people have become her enemies for nothing" (170). The story shows how it is difficult for the lower class people to live the way they want and they are questioned time and again by the upper class people. The upper class people do not peep into their own lives but charge the lower class people of doing all the wrongs. All the upper class women accuse the old lady's daughter-in-law for indecency but none of them accuses the men who are after her. Gori went about openly doing what she wanted to but the people of higher rank do all things but not in the open as "no one's dirt was hidden from the

old sweepress; her old hands had buried the crimes of many a respectable person. If she wanted to, she could overthrow the thrones of many a queen with these very hands. But she bore no ill will towards anyone” (170). Thus, we see the plight of the poor people and the hypocrisy and pretensions of the society. Certain moral codes are fixed by the society for the woman and going against them means being labelled as ‘indecent.’

The story also brings out the point that religion and morality have no meaning for poor people who have to struggle daily for meeting the basic needs of life. Ram Autar knows that really the child is not his but he says that it is “*Bhagwan's* (God's) gift” and will support him in old age. As the narrative goes on: “... these hands were neither legitimate nor illegitimate; they were only hands, living hands that wash away the filth from the face of this planet, that carry the weight of its aging. These tiny hands, dark and soiled, are illuminating the earth's countenance” (175).

As depicted in these stories, both men and women can exploit women's sexuality and can be equally ruthless. Ismat Chughtai, with great sensitivity, represents the plight of poor girls who are exploited callously by both, men and women of middle and upper classes. She also has the courage to portray the assertion of a woman's sexual desire and her attempts to fulfil it in a lesbian relationship. Ismat Chughtai thus, takes up the question of female sexuality in patriarchy with its complexity, not simplifying it as a matter of exploitation of women by men.

By portraying the suffering and abuse of women, Ismat Chughtai projects the individuality and humanity of women. Her writing about things usually kept invisible becomes an act of resistance and an act of interrogation of the prevailing social order.

Works Cited

- Beauvoir, Simone de. Introduction. *The Second Sex*. By Beauvoir. Trans. and ed. H.M. Parshley. 1949. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982. 13-29. Print.
- Chughtai, Ismat. “A Pair of Hands.” Trans. Tahira Naqvi. *A Chughtai Collection*. Trans. Tahira Naqvi and Syeda S. Hameed. New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2004. 162-75. Print. Rpt. of *The Quilt and Other Stories, The Heart Breaks Free & The Wild One*. 1990, 1993.
- . “Lingering Fragrance.” Trans. Syeda S. Hameed. *A Chughtai Collection*. Trans. Tahira Naqvi and Syeda S. Hameed. New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2004. 190-224. Print. Rpt. of *The Quilt and Other Stories, The Heart Breaks Free & The Wild One*. 1990, 1993.
- . “The Quilt.” Trans. Syeda S. Hameed. *A Chughtai Collection*. Trans. Tahira Naqvi and Syeda S. Hameed. New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2004. 7-19. Print. Rpt. of *The Quilt and Other Stories, The Heart Breaks Free & The Wild One*. 1990, 1993.
- . “The Rock.” Trans. Tahira Naqvi. *A Chughtai Collection*. Trans. Tahira Naqvi and Syeda S. Hameed. New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2004. 73-90. Print. Rpt. of *The Quilt and Other Stories, The Heart Breaks Free & The Wild One*. 1990, 1993.
- . “Tiny's Granny.” Trans. Ralph Russell. *Contemporary Indian Short Stories*. 1959. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1984. 117-29. Print. Ser. I.
- Jain, Jasbir. Preface. *Indian Feminisms*. Ed. Jasbir Jain and Avadhesh Kumar Singh. New Delhi: Creative, 2001. 9-19. Print.
- Kudchedkar, Shirin. “Feminist Voices from India and Canada.” *Feminist Spaces: Cultural Readings from India and Canada*. Ed. Malashri Lal. New Delhi: Allied, 1997. 1-10. Print.
- Lim, Shirley Geok-Lin. “Feminist and Ethnic Theories in Asian American Literature.” *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Robyn R. Warhol and Diane Price Herndl. 2nd ed. USA: Rutgers UP, 1997. 806-26. Print.

- Naqvi, Tahira. Introduction. *A Chughtai Collection*. By Ismat Chughtai. Trans. Tahira Naqvi and Syeda S. Hameed. New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2004. vii-xxii. Print. Rpt. of *The Quilt and Other Stories, The Heart Breaks Free & The Wild One*. 1990, 1993.
- Sherry, Ruth. "What is Women's Writing?" *Studying Women's Writing: An Introduction*. Great Britain: Arnold, 1988. 1-19. Print.
- Smith, Barbara. "The Truth that Never Hurts: Black Lesbians in Fiction in the 1980s." *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Robyn R. Warhol and Diane Price Herndl. 2nd ed. USA: Rutgers UP, 1997. 784-806. Print.
- Zimmerman, Bonnie. "What has Never Been: An Overview of Lesbian Feminist Literary Criticism." *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Robyn R. Warhol and Diane Price Herndl. 2nd ed. USA: Rutgers UP, 1997. 76-96. Print.

The Criterion