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The Caged Bird Sings: Resilience and Resistance against the Afghan Patriarchal Culture in Nadia Hashimi's *One Half from the East*

By Avijit Das¹ and Shri Krishan Rai²

Abstract

In a highly conservative society like Afghanistan, which is mainly governed by ancient codes of conduct and tribal laws, the discourse concerning the rights of women is primarily framed by misogynistic men. As portrayed by Nadia Hashimi in her book *One Half from the East* (2016), every aspect of women's lives, from education to expression to movement, is monitored and checked by the patriarchy through the perpetration of rigid cultural codes of conduct for women. But even within such strict patriarchal domination, women can create space for themselves to subvert such repressive hegemony and articulate strategic resistance in a culture susceptible to violence. Hashimi's meta-narrative debunks the totalitarianism and male chauvinism of Afghan culture through its protagonist who resists submission and becomes an instrument of transgression. Since women are aware of their marginal and subaltern positions in a repressive society like Afghanistan, they embody resilience and try to break their shackles. The present article, focused on *One Half from the East* (2016), highlights how the protagonist's exploration of the uncharted territory of freedom forbidden for women by performing patriarchal norms like the *bacha posh* ironically provides a space for resisting patriarchy even while staying within its discourse.

Keywords: *Bacha posh*, Misogyny, Patriarchal domination, Repressive hegemony, Resilience, Strategic resistance, Afghan fiction

Introduction: A Repressive Society for Women

Despite massive progress in the socio-economic and scientific spheres in almost every society in the world, the subjugation and exploitation of women in many cultures is still a stark phenomenon that haunts people who champion equality, justice, and human rights. In Afghanistan, the question regarding how much space and independence should be provided to women is determined by multiple factors because "women in Afghanistan are not an isolated institution; their fate is entwined with and determined by historical, political, social, economic and religious forces. In addition to a range of internal tensions, outside or international political forces have impacted Afghanistan in significant ways" (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2003, p. 2). In general, Afghanistan is a strictly misogynistic and patriarchal society in which women hardly enjoy any power to decide their fates and are primarily controlled by a dominating mode of "hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity," which is basically "understood as the pattern of practice (i.e., things done, not just as a set of role expectations or an identity) that allowed

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men's dominance over women to continue" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832). No matter which regime is in power in Afghanistan, this misogynistic attitude of Afghan society is visible through the application of different medieval rules for women and also through men's checking of women's activities at every step of their lives: "The ISA (1992-1996) invoked Sharia Law to restrict women's dress, movement, and educational opportunities. Women's freedoms and rights were even more severely restricted in terms of access to education, health, employment, and public spaces under the Taliban rule (1996-2001)" (Gissman, 2013, p. 7). But even within such rigidity and oppressiveness, women find spaces and loopholes within the patriarchal system to assert their identity, and "devise strategies to navigate the context in ways that help them both optimise their life options and generate resistance" (Cislaghi et al., 2020, pp. 166-183). Rather than explicitly confronting the rigid patriarchal values, these women stay within the system and find cracks, which eventually lead to the shattering and transmutation of patriarchal values (Agarwal, 1997, pp. 1-51). Since the Afghan culture considers the honour of women as synonymous with the pride and respect of the family, their protection remains one of the top priorities of families, leading to the adoption of such medieval practices as *purdah*:

[...] the collective honour of the family, lineage, and sub-lineage (*khaum*), which is central in the Afghan value system and self-perception, and which can be seen as the "symbolic capital" of the family, is perceived as being essentially dependent on the control of its women in relation to the outside world. (Boesen, 2004, p. 9)

The conservative and extremist regimes of the Mujahedeen (1992-1996) and Taliban (1996-2001) took the constraints and limitations imposed upon women to an extreme level by initiating rules which prevented women from going outside without the company of a male relative (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2003, p. 7). After the removal of the Taliban regime by the Western forces, these regulations for women slackened a bit in the urban areas. Still, rural "Afghanistan is the root of tribal powers that have frequently doomed Kabul-based modernization efforts" (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2003, p. 1). Because Afghan society is totally male-centric, the lack of male members in the family is therefore considered to be a failure, limiting the access of women to the community as well as their opportunities for financial gain (Nordberg, 2014, p. 13). Another essential factor for valuing a male child is that "boys typically stay within their family units when they get older, while women must join the households of their new husbands, and so inheritance is primarily passed through boys" (Corboz et al., 2019, pp. 585-598). Thus, the lack of male members in the family is considered to make it vulnerable and weak, becoming an object of criticism and stigma, often putting the blame on women considered to be responsible for giving birth to females. In one of her interviews with Nordberg, Azita, one of the female parliamentarians from Afghanistan, stated how "sneers and suspicion about her lack of a son soon inevitably extended to her abilities as a lawmaker and a public figure" (Nordberg, 2014, p. 16).

Nadia Hashimi's first novel for young people, *One Half from the East* (2016), is an effusive, excellent, and riveting coming-of-age journey in present-day Afghanistan that explores life as a *bacha posh*—a preadolescent girl dressed as a boy. Set against the backdrop of the fall of the Taliban regime by the Western forces in Afghanistan, Hashimi's fiction attempts to unearth the pathetic and inhumane conditions of Afghan women, whose plight remains frozen in time. However, Afghanistan has gone through much political turmoil and regime changes since the turn of the twentieth century. The narrative begins with Obayda, the youngest of the four daughters in the family, living in modern-day Kabul. Initially, Kabul is depicted as a society that strikes a fine balance between tradition and modernity. Here, she freely goes to school, watches DVDs with her family, and goes out with her father (Hashimi, 2016, p. 6). But the protagonist's serene and harmonious world turns upside down when her

father becomes an unintended victim of a car bombing in the marketplace. The family ends up moving to a small village in territorial Afghanistan, where life is much more traditional. Although the absence of a son in the family was not that much of an issue in Kabul, it became a crucial factor in the village, where women were not allowed to go outside without the company of a male family member. As a result, the family was left with no other choice but to turn the youngest daughter, Obayda, into a *bacha posh* so that she could have access to the outside world more freely and provide the necessary support in the absence of a boy. Obayda's story offers profound insight into the devaluation of women's contributions to Afghan society, limiting them to the four walls of domesticity.

The present study analyses the practice of *bacha posh* in Afghanistan as represented by the award-winning Afghan-American writer Nadia Hashimi in her highly acclaimed fiction, *One Half from the East*. Hashimi explores how some girls in Afghanistan are forced to be transvestites disguised as boys to acquire some basic human rights like education and freedom of movement, which are quite inaccessible for girls in Afghan society. While focusing on the inhumanity of the practice, Hashimi also draws attention to its redeeming qualities as an effective survival strategy. The current article discusses both the psychological and physical impact of such practices as *bacha posh* on a preteen girl like Obayda in the fiction and traces how the authorization of *bacha posh* by the repressive patriarchal society causes a change in Afghan culture, albeit unintentionally. The article demonstrates how the bodies of the *bacha posh* become an instrument of subverting the patriarchal psyche deeply ingrained in that culture. Additionally, the article highlights how the protagonist's cross-dressing as a *bacha posh* sends out a particularly defiant message to the repressive patriarchal society. It enables the "disciplined" bodies of women to transmute certain cultural norms and to become instruments of resistance to a "hegemonic masculinity" that aims to control their bodies and minds.

She is My Son: When Obayda becomes Obayd

[...] the male-centric texture of Afghan society is particularly visible when examining the construction of the family, where the birth of boys is highly celebrated, and where women are perceived to be responsible for producing male children (Corboz, Gibbs & Jewkes, 2019, p. 2)

Recognized by many international human rights organizations as the "most dangerous country for women" (Anderson, 2011), Afghanistan is a society exclusively ruled by men, in which the birth of a boy is a cause for jubilation, while that of a girl is considered to be a failure. The Afghan-American writer Nadia Hashimi has highlighted this issue in her debut novel, *The Pearl that Broke its Shell* (2014), which is intricately connected with the story of Obayda in *One Half from the East* (2016). Set after the Western forces dethroned the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, *The Pearl that Broke its Shell* (2014) charts the journey of Rahima, the *bacha posh* protagonist, interwoven with the story of Shekiba, her great-great grandmother, who lived at the turn of the twentieth century when Afghanistan was still a monarchy. Through these parallel stories spanning nearly a century, the author attempts to reveal the wretched and inhumane conditions of Afghan women, whose plight has remained frozen in time despite Afghanistan's political turmoil and regime changes. In the presence of an opium-addicted father and the absence of a boy, Rahima's family, under the advice of Khala Shaima, took the decision to turn Rahima into a *bacha posh*, naming her Rahim. She was transformed physically and reintroduced into society as a boy (Hashimi, 2014, p.34). When she became a boy in Afghanistan, she received many liberties and privileges that she would not otherwise have as a girl. This nature-nurture dynamic allowed Rahima, disguised as a boy, to embark on the uncharted territory of freedom forbidden to girls and to relish some of the fundamental human

rights like “flying a kite, jumping up and down [...] climbing trees to feel the thrill of hanging on” (Nordberg, 2014, p.15). Rahima’s transformation into a *bacha posh* helped her emerge with confidence a whole new set of potentialities. But the real challenge arrived when she was forced to marry the warlord Abdul Khaliq, leaving the life of a *bacha posh* to her opium-addicted father, who literally sold his daughters for the promise of a steady supply of opium from the warlord. The hard part arose in Rahima’s life when she was expected to become a girl again. This transformation again turned her whole world upside down, as she was expected to perform all the trajectories of Afghan women, like getting married and having her own kids.

The story of the *Pearl* is intricately connected with the story of Obayda in *One Half from the East*, which develops some of the writer’s arguments in her debut fiction. Like Rahima, Obayda in *One Half from the East* (2016) also comes from a family with only daughters. After the horrible accident in the marketplace, Obayda’s father not only loses one of his legs, but also his spirit. He is completely shattered, and he sinks into a world of depression. As Obayda points out, “he turned into a ghost” (Hashimi, 2016, p. 4). This terrible incident changes their circumstances drastically. So, whereas her father was once a breadwinner, he is now demoralized and an amputee who could no longer provide for his family (Hashimi, 2016, p. 4). This incident also compels them to leave Kabul and move back to their ancestral village to get the support of their extended family. Gradually, they realize that the world of rural Afghanistan is far more traditional and restrictive towards women than modernized Kabul. Although the end of the Taliban regime by the Western forces began the process of modernization in Afghanistan, “much of what Taliban had banned and decreed regarding women is still effectively law in large parts of this mostly illiterate country [...]” (Nordberg, 2014, p. 11). In the presence of such strict constraints and regulations for women, how much importance a son holds in the family can easily be realized from Obayda’s statement that “my family doesn’t have a son, which means we don’t have a backup father” (Hashimi, 2016, p. 6). On the advice of her well-meaning and meddling aunt, the family decides to turn Obayda into a *bacha posh* so that she can provide support and bring good luck to the family. Since boys hold such crucial status in Afghan society, it is not uncommon for many Afghan families to opt for a third kind of child, a *bacha posh* (a girl temporarily raised as a boy and presented to the world as a son). This phenomenon does not remain restricted to the poor rural people of Afghanistan, but actually cuts across all economic classes, geographical lines, ethnicity, level of education, and income: “A *bacha posh* is found in all walks of life. She cuts across the urban–rural divide. A *bacha posh* cuts across all economic sections as well” (Lalthlamuanpuii & Suchi, 2020, pp. 1-6). And so, Obayda, who has lived ten years of her life as a girl, becomes a boy all of a sudden. With mutual consensus within the Afghan patriarchal society, this practice is, in a way, a form of shared deceit on the parts of both the practitioner and the observer, so that the biological identity of the girl remains hidden in a crowd. This custom is, in fact, “one of those ‘informal structures’ that are part of gender roles and are not mentioned in the hegemonic structures of Afghan society” (Lalthlamuanpuii & Suchi, 2020, pp. 1-6). After her transformation into a *bacha posh*, Obayda is initially appalled by the changes happening in her life, as she realizes that “trying to act like a boy is like learning a whole new language, and I am really struggling to find the words” (Hashimi, 2016, p. 50).

Part of Obayda’s gender “dysphoria” with her new-found role as a *bacha pose* arises from the fact that she has not faced as many restrictions as a girl in rural Afghanistan faces (Hashimi, 2016, p.22). This “perceived incongruity” with her new-found body becomes a “source of deep and ongoing discomfort” for her (Yarhouse, 2015, p.19). Living in a relatively modern city like Kabul, she lived her life freely, totally unaware of all the rights that women in rural Afghanistan were deprived of. As a result, she loved her life as a girl in Afghanistan (Hashimi, 2016, p.19). Her mental conditioning is different from that of Rahima, the protagonist of Hashimi’s other fiction, *The Pearl that Broke its Shell* (2014), who accepts her

role as a *bacha posh* wholeheartedly. Unlike Obayda, Rahima found herself easily moulding into the part of a *bacha posh* as she became mentally prepared after hearing the inspirational story of her great-great-grandmother Shekiba, “the man-woman whose story had woven its way through my own” (Hashimi, 2014, p. 439). She is seen as “thrilled, I started to run faster. No one gave me a second glance. My legs felt liberated as I ran through the streets without my knees slapping against my skirt and without worrying about chastising eyes” (Hashimi, 2014, p. 48).

Like Shekiba, who had asserted her identity and achieved freedom, Rahima wants to explore the uncharted territory of freedom denied to women. Her role as a *bacha posh* opens up that opportunity for her, as she realizes that “everything I was experiencing was new and I wanted to enjoy it” (Hashimi, 2014, p.49). But, for Obayda, her discomfiture with her new identity grows stronger as she starts going to school. She finds herself in a strange place where she can neither fully integrate with the boys, nor blend with the girls. She cries out in frustration, saying, “Why has my mother sent me out into the world like this? I don’t have what it takes” (Hashimi, 2016, p. 50). But her world as a *bacha posh* soon changes in a way she had never expected.

Bacha Posh: Redrawing Boundaries and Recreating History for Women in Afghanistan

Obayda’s life as a *bacha posh* takes a drastic turn when she meets Rahim in school, who takes a kind of curious interest in her. Obayda gradually realizes that Rahim is actually a *bacha posh*, who has moulded herself so perfectly into her new identity that it is hard to recognize her as a girl. Rahim confesses her identity, saying “I know *you* because I *am* you” (Hashimi, 2016, p. 65). This chance meeting with Rahim changes her life completely, as she makes Obayda realize the benefits of being a *bacha posh* in Afghan society (Hashimi, 2016, p. 71). Since Rahima was raised in rural Afghanistan, she is aware of the ramifications of being a girl in that culture: “You’re new to this, which means you know what it is to be a girl. Was it anything worth being? ... I didn’t like it one bit. I didn’t realize I had a choice or I would have asked my mother to change me years ago” (Hashimi, 2016, p. 73). She makes Obayda realize how many different ways society puts restrictions on girls and how their new-found identity as *bacha posh* could help them overcome all these prohibitions. From Rahim’s conversation, Obayda realizes that she is determined never to turn back to a girl again. After spending a few months as a boy, Obayda starts to like the freedom associated with the custom, and she becomes mentally stronger and more confident.

The objective of “hegemonic masculinity” is to create a whole bunch of “docile bodies” that have internalized subjugation, thereby eroding any possibility of rebellion. In his famous book *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault’s politicization of the human body caught in the social dynamics of discipline and power reveals how people are made to internalize subjectivity by the exertion of power from different societal and institutional bodies: “[...] one may have a hold over others’ bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, ‘docile’ bodies” (Foucault, 1995, p. 138). This social conditioning and “disciplining” makes a girl like Obayda totally unaware of the many rights she is missing out in life. In almost every culture and civilization in the world, “the body was in the grip of very strict powers, which imposed on it constraints, prohibitions or obligations” (Foucault, 1995, p. 136). Hashimi’s narrative similarly shows how the body of the *bacha posh* is the site of struggle, which is both cultural and political, transgressing patriarchal boundaries defined for the girls in that society. This has in some ways positioned a *bacha posh* like Obayda as living “outside the reach of power; he upsets established law; he somehow anticipates the coming freedom” (Foucault, 1998, p. 6). In her book *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler has also pointed out that the human body is seen as synonymous with “the social

system,” and thus any “unregulated permeability” of the human body “constitutes a site of pollution and endangerment” to the social order (Butler, 2006 p. 180). The bodies of the *bacha posh* performing forbidden activities for girls send out a message of an air of defiance to the patriarchal societal order. Obayda gradually realizes how some slight changes in her bodily gestures and behaviors could open up for her a whole new world of freedom which she could never have experienced as a girl. Like Parvana in Deborah Ellis’ *The Breadwinner* (2015), who gradually realizes that “the more she was ignored, the more confident she felt” (Ellis, 2015, p. 67), Obayda not only accepts her transformed body as a *bacha posh* whole-heartedly, but even starts to adore it so much that she undertakes the life-threatening risk of journeying to the fountain in the rough mountainous terrain so that she can touch the rainbow and completely transform herself into a boy, following the legend she had heard since childhood. Obayda’s new-found love for her transmuted body as *bacha posh* is “radical self-love,” as it inspires others “to interrupt the systems that perpetuate body shame and oppression against all bodies” (Taylor, 2021, p. 5). This acceptance of her body as a *bacha posh* not only transforms her life, but it inspires other girls to fight for their rights and liberation, and thus the “individual body becomes an element that may be placed, moved, articulated on others” (Foucault, 1995, p. 164).

When Obayda returns to school, reluctantly leaving her identity as *bacha posh*, to her surprise she finds out that “Our classmates have gathered around us with nervous curiosity. Their eyes glisten with the same quiet rebellion, and that’s all I need” (Hashimi, 2016, p. 250). Although Obayda became disillusioned with the legend, she was able to break the psychological barrier created by patriarchal society, which limited women’s desire for freedom. The imposition of power is transmuted in the form of the *bacha posh*, perfectly moulded into the role of the boys, thus debunking the patriarchal myth of women’s inherent inferiority. Obayda gradually realizes that being a boy “is not all in your pants. It’s in your head. It’s in your shoulders” (Hashimi, 2016, p. 71). Her change of attitude is visible in her daring to climb up a tree to break down a straight branch, which could be used as a support stick for her amputee father. Although women like Obayda in such repressive cultures ironically need to resort to such inhumane practices as the *bacha posh* to assert their worthiness in society, “it is a form of submission that compels the oppressor into backtracking from an action which had been the source of his pride” (Choudhury, 2016, p. 173). The bodies of the *bacha posh* offer a very critical proclamatory space, by offering a space for women’s exploration of human rights within the context of totalitarian patriarchy. It is against the backdrop of such rigid cultural codes of conduct for women and various misogynistic norms that this practice of the *bacha posh* emerges; “in a society where having a male child is of utmost importance and a matter of pride, the *Bacha posh* provides social relief” (Sabet, 2018). Because girls like Obayda and Rahima are aware of their impending transformation back into girls and how the world will close down their possibilities, they try every possible means to maintain their *bacha posh* identity:

Being born a girl in Afghanistan is to be condemned to a half-life. At best, being a girl child is viewed with disappointment. At worst, it is a humiliation which calls for desperate measures, because having even one boy child is mandatory for good standing and reputation while no sons provokes contempt. (Sabet, 2018).

This resistance comes only because the *bacha posh* custom allows girls to see what life is like on the other side. The patriarchy wants the girls to internalize their subjugation in society as natural, thereby wiping out any possibility of rebellion against the misogynistic patriarchal structure. Performing the roles of the *bacha posh* sanctioned by patriarchy propels women to debunk the stereotypical myth of the inherent inferiority of women to men, as their bodies quite adequately mould into the roles of boys. Since this practice is championed by the patriarchy, it

becomes a more effective tool of subverting authority. As the feminist critic Judith Butler has pointed out:

[...] when agreed-upon identities or agreed-upon dialogic structures, through which already established identities are communicated, no longer constitute the theme or subject of politics, then identities can come into being and dissolve depending on the concrete practices that constitute them. (Butler, 2007, p. 21)

The feminist critic Gayatri Spivak also argued that this absorption into the dominant discourse is important to developing a distinct identity because “an individual cannot develop an identity without being the subject of a discourse over which s/he may have little or no control” (Nayar, 2010, p.171). The practice offers a kind of hidden challenge to the totalitarianism, hegemony, and value system of patriarchal society. This hidden resistance performed within patriarchal norms de-mystifies overt values regarding women’s secluded and protected states: “A *bacha posh* challenges stereotypes that are associated with Afghan women by opening up new challenges and dialogues that were otherwise swept under the complicated knots of the intrinsically woven Afghan society” (Lalthlamuanpuii & Suchi, 2020, pp. 1-6). When the *bacha posh* reach puberty, they have to leave the identity. However, they carry forward the mental strength and confidence that they have acquired during this period. This is visible in Obayda’s statement that “I went from Obayda to Obayd and back to Obayda [...] but I’m okay with that [...] I’m the girl that can do some really surprising stuff” (Hashimi, 2016, p. 255).

Conclusion

The imposition of power on the bodies of the *bacha posh* can only work through a particular societal process that manufactures “docile bodies.” However, those supposedly docile bodies have the capability to disrupt this imposition of power (Foucault, 1995). In Hashimi’s *One Half from the East*, the *bacha posh* protagonist Obayda accepts her transformed body, untangling the body shaming; this acceptance of her body disrupts the hegemonic structure of society. Thus, the transformation of the girls into *bacha posh* is a political act containing the seeds of rebellion, inspiring others to shed their subjugation and social conditioning and embrace liberation. In other words, the “deregulation” of the *bacha posh* custom “disrupts the very boundaries that determine what it is to be a body at all” (Butler, 2021, p. 181). Just as Spivak explains in her analysis of Mahasweta Devi’s story “Draupadi” that “Dopdi transforms her body into a mode of attack, confronting Senanayak with the very instrument that constituted her weakness” (Choudhury, 2016, p. 172), the bodies of the *bacha posh* like Obayda and Rahima similarly become tools for the transmutation of patriarchal authority. Such signification brings to light possibilities of resistance to social structures, and demonstrates the power of the female body by validating subjectivity and the terms of subjectivity. The story of Obayda is not a story of submission in the face of enormous challenges and difficulties, but rather a saga of immense mental strength and endurance to rise above all these obstacles and impart a sense of meaning and significance to her life.

As people grow up in society, they are made to believe that political activism means a special set of things like gathering for a particular cause, shouting slogans, and sometimes, at its extreme, engaging in violent acts. But the fact is that “resistance need not always be brutal, forceful or physically driven” (Choudhury, 2016, p. 172), and being political is not a matter of choice as people engage in political activism sometimes consciously and most of the time unconsciously. Although people consider their bodies personal, they are, in reality, “political anatomies,” carrying certain messages, conforming or militating against a particular political discourse of society. Given the political nature of the body, Foucault notes “a whole set of regulations . . . relating to the army, the school and the hospital, for controlling or correcting

the operations of the body” (Foucault, 1995, p. 136). So, the real question is whether the bodies uphold a particular political system or disrupt it. Obayda’s active participation in the activities specially designed for boys in society is actually a disruption of “the regulating practices of cultural coherence imposed upon that body [...]” (Butler, 2006 p. 178). While other girls in Afghan society fail to break the shackles of subjugation because “the fear of constant surveillance emphasises their obligation to serve the institute with which they are entangled, rather than enhancing their own existence” (Karmakar, 2021, p. 117), Obayda employs every possible means, even risking her life, to retain the freedom she has experienced as a *bacha posh*. There are different ways to utilize human bodies as everybody acts in resistance. According to Sonya Renee Taylor, this resistance comes in the form of a “radical self-love,” going beyond such flimsy notions of self-esteem or self-confidence or even beyond the notion of independence, and relying more on inter-dependence in the relationship with human bodies with each other (Taylor, 2021, p. 3). As people make peace with their bodies and with those of others, they create an opening for a just and equitable world. When a person calls a truce with his/her body, he/she interrupts a system of violence and power that profits by offering hate. The *bacha posh* making truce with their transformed bodies handed to them by the repressive patriarchy is actually a process of “de-indoctrination” militating against the authorities. As Sonya Renee Taylor has pointed out: “Dismantling body shame and body terrorism is a process of de-indoctrination requiring that we excavate the thoughts we have internalized about bodies and evict the voices of judgment, hierarchy, and shame” (Taylor, 2021, p. 71). The relationship of the *bacha poshes* with their transmuted bodies provides them access to a more just and equitable world, urging others to struggle for justice. Taylor argues that “radical self-love starts with the individual, expands to the family, community, and organization, and ultimately transforms society” (Taylor, 2021, p. 3). Hashimi’s narrative shows how Obayda’s mental transformation does not remain restricted to her, but it spreads across her family and schoolmates.

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