

**Kashmiri Postmodern English Poetry:  
A Feminist-Intertextual Reading of the Select Poems of Asiya Zahoor**

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**Abstract**

The present paper aims to explore the feminist streak in the select poems of Asiya Zahoor taken from her poetic anthology *Serpents Under My Veil* (2019) in the light of postmodern theory of Intertextuality which can be defined as a collection of relationships that a text has with other texts and/or discourses from different cultural and literary domains (represented by symbols, images, and phrases). The technique has long been employed by authors to introduce allusions to other literary creations that may aid in increasing the impression that their texts intend to have on the reader. This paper blends Intertextuality and Feminisms to focus primarily on the poet's use of numerous elements and symbols in her poems drawn from various cultures and texts to highlight women's rage over their tragic past and the experiences that they continue to have even now. There's an enraged Medusa clad in *Burkha* warning and daring her gazers, a *Zulekha*, derived from Quranic and Biblical sources, demanding her dreams to be interpreted as she desires, and not from a male perspective, and a *Phelomela* in *Hawa Mahal* singing of her plight and collective woe of women and a fierce *Kali* sewing the tongues together and getting them ready so that they can speak up for themselves, and their rights in order to fight the atrocities meted out and injustices done to them.

**Keywords:** Postmodernism, Feminisms, Kashmir, Kashmiri, Literature, Poetry, Intertextuality

*Serpents Under My Veil* is the latest poetic anthology by Asiya Zahoor that came out in the year 2019. Asiya Zahoor is a contemporary Kashmiri poet, a linguist, a filmmaker and an academic who writes on diverse issues ranging from politics to the psychology of language acquisition, and the position of women and marginalized groups in literature. *The Stitch*, a 2018 short silent film by Zahoor, is about a Kashmiri Muslim girl who, like Zahoor herself, struggles hard to break societal conventions in the face of the challenges she encounters while immersing into art for solace. The film also won the critics award for Best Short Film at the South Asian Film Festival and has been screened at various prestigious festivals across the globe.

A collection of about 22 poems, *Serpent Under My Veil* (2019), is solely a feminist work that emphasizes the fate of women and the agonizing stories of love and loss. The poet cherry-picks various threads from Greek and Roman myths and characters, Quranic and Biblical tales, the epic material from Hindu texts, and various historical facts and matter and uses them to her heart's content. As a whole, the book travels through various geographically diverse regions and sheds light on the condition of women in general, and Kashmiri women and the scenario that they dwell in, in particular.