

Beyond Borders, Within Burdens: Diaspora, Identity, and Gendered Violence in

Sadhu Binning's Short Fiction

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the interlinked concerns of diaspora and identity in three short stories by Sadhu Binning—"The Burden," "Safe-Keeping," and "Eyes in the Dark"—arguing that migration does not dismantle patriarchal power but reconfigures and intensifies it across national and cultural borders. Through close textual analysis, the study demonstrates how diasporic mobility, frequently celebrated as a space of freedom and opportunity, becomes a structural mechanism through which gendered control, moral evasion, and female disposability are sustained within Punjabi diasporic communities in Canada. In "The Burden," marriage functions as a transnational transaction that transfers responsibility for women rather than resolving their vulnerability. "Safe-Keeping" shifts attention to second-generation diasporic girlhood, tracing Sito's emotional fragility as she navigates desire, familial surveillance, and romantic betrayal. "Eyes in the Dark" deepens this critique by foregrounding the racialised and colonial dimensions of diasporic patriarchy. Across these texts, identity emerges not as a stable or empowering category but as a contested site shaped by gender, race, and power. Women are positioned as bearers of cultural honour and domestic stability, yet systematically denied agency, voice, and protection. By centering women's experiences and

silences, this paper challenges celebratory narratives of diaspora and contributes to feminist diasporic criticism by foregrounding the ethical costs borne by women who live beyond borders while remaining bound within enduring structures of patriarchal control.

Keywords: Diaspora, Patriarchy, Gendered violence, Punjabi diasporic literature, Feminist criticism.
