

Black Masks, White Skin: Neo Orientalism and Contemporary Pakistani Fiction in English

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Abstract

Orientalism is an academic discipline where series of representations about the Orient are recorded to dominate and rule them. These representations subject them as primitive, uncivilized, exotic, other. Binaries of East/ West, Orient/ Occident, Centre/ Margin are used to define both nations. The oppressed and marginalized nations appear to deconstruct these constructions by celebrating their rich historical and cultural heritage. The literature of Pakistan in English has its traces in its colonial past. The present paper aims to analyze a portrayal of Pakistani society in Pakistani fiction in English. The study is based on qualitative form of research by using the technique of close textual analysis of selected fiction. The works of Uzma Aslam Khan, Mohsin Hamid, Bina Shah, Nadeem Aslam and Qaisra Shahraz are selected to analyze the portrayal of Pakistani society. The study explores Janus-faced nature of Pakistani fiction that at one end aims to dismantle barbaric and uncivilized figure of the nation by portraying an esteemed and dignified nation that has, as a Muslim minority, history of great rule over subcontinent's Hindu majority. However, on the other, the discursive notion of realism provides lens to perceive the uncouth rituals of contemporary society. The study investigates this shift, from postcolonial commemoration to representing a muddle of unseen evils in the name of ignorant traditions and customs, to compete needs of international market. Being inspired by the Western hegemonic discourse, these writers silence the obscenities of colonial encounter and appear as neo-orientalists who are natives in origin but English in taste and intellect. The paper finally concludes that how diversion from native ideology to realism is serving the objectives of imperial ideology where natives are portrayed as uncivilized, emotional, fundamentalist and primitive.

Keywords: *Orientalism, Neo-Orientalism, stereotypes*

Introduction

The seed of inferiority that is sown by the colonial masters on the colonized lands has extended the web of its roots to the generations of natives. The British Raj in Subcontinent has marginalized Muslim community through its colonial discourses. The dehumanized and devalued natives of subcontinent aim to write back, in order to deconstruct the marginal and peripheral representations by bringing themselves to the center of the text. Creative thinkers and philosophers choose to write in colonial language with

a delicate touch of commemoration and celebration of their native culture. This commemoration in the colonized discourses depicts them as a nation with rich cultural and historical inheritance. Literature of Pakistan has introduced itself in English apart from its existence in other languages and thus, the literary discourses produced in this language have a distinct place in the rags of Pakistani history.

Pakistani literature in English is originated for national purposes, to serve nation and to battle its opposite discourses where native sighs and sobs for independence. It aims to deconstruct the cultural, social, regional and historical generalizations of Pakistani society. The rich customs, traditions and norms are interwoven in the fabric of grand stories. However, as the time flee, the cultural and national celebrations are replaced with the portrayal of realism. With the axe of realism the writer chooses to dig the anxiety and filth of Pakistani society in order to be recognized worldwide. They wish to achieve a distinguish place at international level. The audience bestows them a number of awards to continue this task. By portraying the 'misery' and 'dirt' in Pakistan they are actually performing the same tasks and assignments of the West that are once used to be done by the Orientalists; travelers, missionaries, traders and pilgrims. The creativity of Pakistani writers is not different from the Western travel logs where the natives are explored as primitive, uncouth and uncivilized.

In colonial era, the stereotypes and generalizations of Muslim community and its religion were perpetuated in the Orientalist discourses with assertion and authority. However, with the strong native resistance these stereotypes were appeared to be fake. The authenticity of these stereotypes is best authorized through native pen. The present writers; mimic men, in order to be renowned at international level, are giving West the descriptive snapshots of Pakistan by screening the bleakness, primitivity, irrationality of present Muslim society.

The selected works of contemporary Pakistani fiction identify the society of Pakistan at different emotional, political, economic, social and regional perspectives. It will be observed that these works present Pakistan before West as a dangerous threat of primitivity and fundamentalism. It aims to evaluate Edward Said's *Orientalism* and Bhabha's *Mimicry* to foreground the current phase of Pakistani English Literature. The textual analysis will find that the native writers are constructing the same generalizations and pre-conceived notions that are once structured by the West. It will insist that the image of Pakistan is presented as negative and other instead of presenting a positive picture of Pakistan. The paper will emphasize that the writers while asserting the realism are perpetuating the Western ideology of center and civilization where recognition is only achieved through "turn white or disappear."

Literature Review

In *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), Frantz Fanon speaks of the arousal of national consciousness against the colonial empire of France in Africa. He insists on cultural resistance through the revival of national culture and national literature. He is concerned with the revival of glorious past that has been demeaned and devalued by the colonial masters. It is one of their prime strategies to turn “to the past of oppressed people, and distort, disfigure, and destroy it” while it is assumed by the natives that “colonialism came to lighten their darkness” (pp. 210-211). Fanon persuades his community to rebel by referring other colonies of Whites where they have applied the same strategies to overpower. However, the natives of those colonies “remind their people of the great pages of their history” as “a reply to the lies told by the occupying power” (p. 213). Fanon insists natives to celebrate their rich cultural heritage in order to uncover the underlying dominating strategies to demean the nation's past. The past of the natives is introduced as pre-historic and primeval while culture, civilization and history are brought by the colonizers to their lands. By receiving constant dehumanization and condemnation, the natives internalize the inferiority complex.

Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks* (2008) sheds light on the psychological impacts of colonization by focusing on the development of inferiority complex. Through colonial mirror of binary oppositions; superior/inferior, White/black, civilized/barbaric, the natives find themselves captivated with an evident difference of color complexion. This differentiation eventually leads them to the extent where they began to accept the notions of the ruling power and subjugate themselves to serve the colonial masters. Fanon identifies his negritude with degradation and condemnation; “I discovered my Blackness, my ethnic characteristics; and I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects, slave-ships” (p. 84). For Fanon, with the treatment of Negroes as animal and dark, the white man becomes an epitome of perfection that reveals him a man of color, “a white mask” over “his black skin.” Fanon accepts Negro as black creature but does not find him an inferior, cannibal, evil creature. A Negro should be accepted and liberated if not anywhere else but on his own land, his territory. There is no need to submit before the white imperial power since a Negro is a man like the white man and is valuable in his community.

The idea of liberation and independence is rejected by Octave Manonni. In *Propero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonization* (1990) he describes colonization as an act to find people who require dependence. It aims to find a community of people who are in need of it: “Wherever Europeans have founded colonies of the type we are considering, it can

safely be said that their coming was unconsciously expected—even desired—by the future subject peoples” (p. 86). The colonizers aim to explore such lands for considering their holy duty of “Whiteman's burden. “Therefore, they appear to natives in colonial father figure who “tries to rectify the situation by establishing a dependence relationship on the pattern of that of the child with his parents” (1990, p. 61). They defend their dominance and superiority on natural grounds. The natives are born colonized, therefore, inferior and black whereas the colonizers are born to rule them, therefore, they are superior and white.

Their justification of superiority and inferiority, civilized and uncivilized, center and marginal needs a proper mode of representation. Therefore, they confined a proper discipline of criticism and generalizations through literary discourses. The natives are primarily subjected in this literary discipline as “orients”; non-Europeans, that can be described as “an idea, concept, or image. The word *Orient* has a considerable and interesting cultural resonance in the West” (Said, *Orientalism*, 2001, p. 202).

Edward Said in *Orientalism* (2001) calls Orientalism as an “academic tradition” a literary discipline to describe orients and non-Whites: “Orientalism is a school of interpretation whose material happens to be the Orient, its civilizations, peoples, and localities” (p. 203). The knowledge that it carries, is gathered by “travelers, commercial enterprises, governments, military expeditions, readers of novels and accounts of exotic adventure, national historians, and pilgrims” (p. 203). Said finds Orientalism as a practice of constructions and generalizations of/ about the orients since it is a product of personal assumptions of the Occident who identifies Orients as barbaric, emotional, uncouth, other and uncivilized natives of an exotic, mysterious and mythic land. Orientalism is a literary discipline with political and ideological constructions, therefore, it is correct to say: “every European, in what he could say about the Orient, was consequently a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric” (p. 204). Said argues Orientalism as an erection of “imaginative geography” where West constructs itself as center and civilized while marginal and barbaric land belongs to East. This imagination is the root of cultural diversity which divides into *us* and *them*: “imaginative geography of the 'our land-barbarian land' variety does not require that the barbarians acknowledge the distinction. It is enough for 'us' to set up these boundaries in our minds, *they* become *they* accordingly, and both their territory and their mentality are designated as different from *ours*” (p. 54). To synthesize Orientalism is a European advent and

A collective notion identifying "us" Europeans as against all "those" non-Europeans, and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what

made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures. (p. 7)

The politics of binaries identifies the natives as anonymous masses instead of individual beings. Their actions are measured with parameters of racism that are instinctively emotional (envy, lust, terror, ferocity). The otherness gives all Orients a collective self-identity that is negative. They are obliged to recognize themselves not as human beings with their own needs and desires but less than human, inferior and an object.

Homi K. Bhabha investigates the motives behind the colonial degeneration of the natives as: "The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction"(1994, p. 70). However, the colonial strategies to demean the natives in order to fulfill their motives, cannot achieve their ends since the domineering scheme is "on the one hand, a topic for learning, discovery and practice; on the other, it is a site of dreams, images, fantasies, myths, obsessions and requirements" (p. 71). Thus, orientals are discovered as barbaric, superstitious, emotional, violent, but at the same time paradoxically, the mesmerizing, enchanting and mysterious orientals bring Europeans from inside out. The stereotypical construction of orientals appears contradictory in nature: "colonial discourse produces the colonized as a social reality which is at once an 'other' and yet entirely knowable and visible" (pp. 70-71). The knowledge gathered through colonial discourses reveals that natives are not subjected 'other' rather they are studied by the colonizers and thus the distance between them is lessened. However, this distance is maintained by the colonizers through the generalizations of inferiority and slavery.

The black is both savage (cannibal) and yet the most obedient and dignified of servants (the bearer of food); he is the embodiment of rampant sexuality and yet innocent as a child; he is mystical, primitive, simple-minded and yet the most worldly and accomplished liar, and manipulator of social forces. In each case what is being dramatized is a separation between races, cultures, histories within histories - a separation between before and after that repeats obsessively the mythical moment or disjunction. (p. 82)

Their presence in the colonial discourses is "harmless" and "knowable" but at the same time "harmful" and "wild". Bhabha describes stereotype in

respect of its ambivalent nature: “form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always ‘in place,’ already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated” (p. 66). Bhabha scrutinizes the constant representation of colonized in order to fix their identity as “other” but their identity remains in motion and sliding between the polarities of known and unknown:

The stereotypes is not a simplification because it is a false representation of a given reality. It is a simplification because it is an arrested, fixated form of representation that, in denying the play of difference constitutes a problem for the *representation* of the subject in significations of psychic and social relations. (p. 75)

Thus, the stereotypes remain the subject of primary significance both for colonizer and colonized in terms of “fantasy and defense” and are “threatened by the differences of race, color and culture” (Bhabha, p. 75). The constant repetition of the stereotypes in known and unknown parameters insists on the idea of inability to take both notions side by side. They appear to be at war with each other. The continuous repetition reflects their instability to fix these stereotypes.

Colonial ambivalence reflects the inability of colonizers to determine and fix the stereotypical generalizations in an appropriate way. The reason behind it can easily be traced through distinct colonized behavior towards colonizers. The colonizers categorize natives in two ways; one, the natives accept the domineering authority of colonial rule and subjugate themselves before their interests, two, they resist the colonial rule and desire independence. The colonizers are the outsiders, therefore, they have to return to their mother land one day or the other. Their expected departure from the native land made them to contemplate over the future ruler for the natives who can preserve their authority on these lands. As Macaulay states:

We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. (Ashcroft, 2003, p. 430)

This native-English crowd was thus trained in English schools as a missionary to perpetuate English motives. Bhabha finds these missionaries as “Mimic men” who are an “inner compatibility of empire and nation” (1994, p. 87). Bhabha calls the “mimicry” of colonials “is the desire for a reformed, recognizable ‘Other’, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite” (p. 86). These mimic men identify themselves with the esteem

bestowed by the colonizers that “conceals no presence or identity behind its mask” (p. 88). These mimic men are not treated as barbaric, savages, cannibals but they exercise the power in place of colonizers. However, this mimicry due to its double vision can be a menace to colonizers by “disclosing the ambivalence of the colonial discourse” that will eventually disrupt their authority by comprehending the constructed stereotypes.

Their double vision can be a worrying danger to their ruling power with the resemblance of language that will eventually destroy the discipline of knowledge gathered with years of planning to overpower them.

These are the appropriate objects of a colonialist chain of command, authorized versions of otherness. But they are also, as I have shown, the figures of a doubling, the part-objects of a metonymy of colonial desire which alienates the modality and normality of those dominant discourses in which they emerge as inappropriate subjects. (p. 88)

Bhabha (1994) measures the ambivalent vision of a mimic man which can result into anti-colonial resistance by challenging the representations to define them as a nation if they do not enjoy the authority, the power. In his work *Culture and Imperialism* (1994) Edward Said by referring to Joseph Conrad and his novel *Nostromo*, highlights the condition of the natives and colonial frame of mind:

We Westerners will decide who is a good native or a bad, because all natives have sufficient existence by virtue of our recognition. We created them, we taught them to think and speak, and when they rebel they simply confirm our views of them as silly children, duped by some of their Western masters. (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* , 1994, p. xviii)

The theoretical perspectives of Bhabha on mimicry and ambivalence in the colonial discourse explore the representation of their objectives as unstable and wavering. The colonial discourses are unable to portray their values and motives. They could not successfully secure their aims and thus meet “resistance from the outset by indigenous inhabitants of colonized lands” (McLeod, 2000, p. 8). The apparent binaries of dehumanization and condemnation of the indigenous people produce contemplative indigenous thinkers to project the exploitation of natives, their culture, history and sources. They evoke the natives to celebrate their rich heritage, culture, religion and history. By analyzing the legitimacy and psychological consequences of the colonial ideology, they aimed to write back to the center, the white, occident, and European supremacy against the stereotypical generalizations of the orient, Eastern, blacks and marginal. The theoretical and literary discourses are produced by the natives in order

to break the stereotypes by celebrating the indigenous heritage and culture. Chinua Achebe resists the colonial condemnation on critical and literary grounds. After finding a sharp slaughter knife on the neck of African culture in *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad, Achebe rescues his indigenous culture with the celebration of his masculine cultural heritage in *Things Fall Apart*. In *An Image of Africa* Achebe calls Conrad a “bloody racist” and projects the denunciation of African culture and nation:

The real question is the dehumanization of Africa and Africans which this age-long attitude has fostered and continues to foster in the world. And the question is whether a novel which celebrates this dehumanization, which depersonalizes a portion of the human race, can be called a great work of art? (Achebe, 2010, p. 14)

The British colonization in Asia is seen by Allama Iqbal as a folly of its Muslim natives. He evokes his nation through his rich poetry on nationalism. He undermines generalizations about Islam as primitive, conservative, violent but an honorable religion to be followed ever. For him the religion Islam is not constrained to boundaries rather every Muslim on earth belongs to one nation. He criticizes the vicious policies of Western civilization who wish to split Muslims by indulging them in the politics of boundary lines with their associations to different lands:

Do not compare your nation with the nations of the West
Because, the nation of the Prophet of Islam is of a different mould.
Western nationalism is based on territory or race
But your nationalism gets its strength from the power of religion.
With the loosening of the religious hold
Your unity as a distinct nation will be lost. (Malik, 2003, p. 24)

He evokes his nation against the vanities of Western nation and calls his nation for liberation from colonial shackles to gain an independent land not based on differences of color and blood but in order to live by the practices of Islam:

Our Master, migrating from his fatherland, resolved the knot of Muslim nationhood, His wisdom founded one community – The world its parish. Those who adopted country as the basis of nationalism have shattered the fabric of human fraternity. By making country an object of veneration they have divided human unity into tribes. Your nation is above the considerations of color and blood. (Malik, 2003, pp. 26-28)

The philosophical resistance of Iqbal to the Western colonial power evokes its nation with the spiritual and divine duty to resist the colonial submission by having grand and rich history of ruling the world. Western rulers choose to identify Muslims as primitives, extremists, violent and conservative people by prioritizing Hindus over them since Hindus can wear an attire of a missionary but a Muslim cannot subdue his faith before Christianity. Akbar S. Ahmed (1997) depicts the plight of these Muslim natives as:

At one stroke, the Muslims of India had lost their Kingdom, their Mughal Empire, their Emperor, their language, their culture, their capital city of Delhi and their sense of self. Politically and culturally the loss was totally devastating. (p. 43)

The Muslim struggled for a separate land where they could continue their religious practices. The continuous resistance eventually resulted in the partition. This historical tragedy has been weaved in the fabric of literature in pre-partition and post-partition Pakistan. The untold and horrendous tales of partition become a major theme of literature. It unleashes the ferocious policies of British Raj over the wretched natives. These tales are told in various regional languages like Pashto, Sindhi, Siraiki, and Punjabi but particularly in Urdu and English with the celebration of its rich cultural heritage. By recording the vicious colonial strategies of cultural and historical denunciation with the commemoration of indigenous culture, the literature of Pakistan takes off in the land of English language. Tariq Rehman (1991) traces the ancestry of Pakistani Literature in English with the names of Feroze Khan Noon, Khawaja Ahmed Abbas, Ahmed Ali and Mumtaz Shahnawaz. Their works celebrate past glories of Mughal time and contemplate over its gradual disappearance with a use of hyperbole (Hashmi, 1989). However, later literature has a shift from fantasy to realism. Bapsi Sidhwa, Zulfiqar Ghose, Tariq Ali, M. Athar Tahir, Kamila Shamsie, Sara Suleri and Mohammed Hanif are some of the prominent voices who have introduced the realistic portrayal of socio-cultural and religio-political upheavals of Pakistan. The era of general Zia and Post 9/11 reshaped literary world of English with a wave of Islamophobia in its own ways. The sanctity of Pakistani English literature asserted its existence by enjoying a distinguished reception at national and international literary world through depicting a detached picture of socio-political and religio-cultural Pakistani society with convincing human portraits. This shift from attachment to detachment emerged in the world of post-colonialism to hunt for their recognition in international market. Pakistani writers use their pen to dig out the silenced middle of the society that is giving them a large audience for appreciation and recognition.

Preservation of Imperial Ideology in Contemporary Pakistani Fiction

With the traces of colonial history the writers of Pakistani Literature in English live a life of struggle for existence. They work to consider the needs of the hour. Early phases of English literature depicts national ecstasy; the rich traditions with a delicate religious touch. The writers choose to write in English in order to resist the generalizations against Muslim natives. It aims to demonstrate the cultural heritage before the audience who recognize them as violent, barbaric, conservative, uncivilized and emotional. The bent of realism with cultural glimpses indicates the level of refinement and delicacy in the genre. However, the contemporary literature is unable to find the glimpses of the cultural bliss. With the slogan of realism, present fabrication of the stories portrays a society that is corrupt and depraved. It appears at international level to perpetuate the stereotypes that are identical to imperial ideology. It reveals the same society that International audience is already familiar with. However, the native stamp it bears makes it appear more authentic and bona fide. They carry black masks on their white skin. The contemporary Pakistani writers are not English in their color or race, but in “taste,” “morals,” and in “intellect” they are English. They appear to be more refined in their description of Pakistani people, culture, religion, etc., since the Western Orientalists simply measure them in the tool of binaries. The present fiction generalizes them through description of each binary opposition though.

The picture of contemporary Pakistani society is bleak and miserable. Mohsin Hamid in *Moth Smoke* portrays each character as corrupt and immoral. Corruption is rooted in personal and social life. Through the character portrayal Mohsin Hamid depicts Pakistani people as a nation of money lovers and opportunists. The family bonds on which they pride are weak and fake. The justice system that serves the interests of elite is cruel and violent. The morally depraved society is a whirlpool of evils where robbers and drug suppliers live. Hamid portrays a class conscious society where power is held by the strong and elite class. The elite class enjoys comfort and ease even after the great crimes like murder, money laundering, adultery but the poor class is repressed by the powerful and accustomed to the judicial system. The illegal sexual relationship of Mumtaz with Daru exposes the immorality and dishonesty of Pakistani people who are habitual of deceiving their loved ones. Murad satisfies himself by robbing, cheating and supplying drugs to people. Through the character portrayal Hamid embodies the blind followers of id with an immediate satisfaction of their “instinctive emotions.” The description of “dark,” “evil,” “uncivilized” Pakistani society distinguishes Hamid in noble literary world of intellectuals.

Thinner than Skin by Uzma Aslam sheds light on the inhumanity of the elite class who raised slogans of equality at the time of partition. Uzma Aslam depicts dark picture of Pakistani society. People are still indulged in fake status consciousness where they treat humans on the basis of class distinction. They identify people through their caste. They are uncouth and uncivilized people who cannot give up their primitivity.

Through the portrayal of outcast herders in *Thinner than Skin*, Uzma Aslam highlights the superstitious people of Modern Pakistan. Though herders are living for generations in the valley but they are provided with no rights to live and survive in the society. When Kiran died after drowning while she was with Farhana and Nadir on boat, her parents were not in a position to question them because they were the suppressed one in that valley. This discrimination is clearly depicted when Irfan tells Nadir:

If this had happened in America, you'd be in jail. If this had happened to a child of landlord, you'd be in danger and in debt. So that's why our lives are spared, herders are disliked in this valley. They were considered outcasts. (p. 103)

Aslam reveals discrimination of justice system that is based on caste system instead of humanity. The herders are socially outcast on the basis of wealth and religion. Similarly, Maryam is a Hindu woman and thus unable to practice her religion in a Pakistani Muslim society.

The conformist society of Pakistan is also presented by Bina Shah in *Slum Child*. She portrays a Christian slum who suffers an emotional collapse due to the death of her lovable sister, Jamana. Laila is a nine-year old slum who struggles to survive in a Muslim community. She strives hard to overcome the marginalized oppression that she receives being a Christian. Her life encounters the economical, patriarchal and religious conditions to spend a contended life in Pakistan. Though Laila, Bina reflects the constraints of Pakistani people who try to impose their religious practices to a nine-year old girl by degrading her faith. Her life symbolizes a struggle to assert her religious practices before the Islamic fundamentals:

The thing that we learned best, I suppose, was how to fit in. This was a vital skill for any Christian living in a Muslim area. We had to be nondescript. We could not flaunt our faith outside of the safety of Colony. Nobody was going to accuse anyone here on burning a Quran or blaspheming against the prophet- accusations concocted for the purpose of grabbing someone's property or land rather than defending another's faith and nobody here had any property or land worth grabbing. We went to church and told anyone who asked that we were Christian, but avoided wearing crosses and our

women took to wearing *dupattas* on their heads or even *burqas* when venturing out of the house. Why ask for more trouble than you already had been born to. (pp. 19-20)

The religious suppression depicts Muslim community as fundamentalist and conservative. The representation of Pakistani society as primitive, uncivilized, barbaric, and conservative in Pakistani fiction is further demonstrated through its traditions and customs. Instead of celebrating the cultural heritage that is evident through pre and post partition literature, the contemporary writers choose to portray a society with its primitive and brutal traditions.

In *Maps for Lost Lovers*, Nadeem Aslam narrates the life stories of Pakistani community. It is a critique of fundamental and conservative Muslim inhabitants who justify their brutality in the name of religion. Aslam portrays a harsh stereotype of honor killing that is appreciated and legalized by the Muslim community. The punishment that is confined by British community is disregarded by the characters since murder in the name of honor is received as a noble prestige in the society with an expectation of clemency from Pakistani judiciary: "The law of Pakistan was almost always lenient with them and they were out of jail much sooner than those who had committed other kinds of murder" (p.357). The death of a married girl who is beaten till death on the fake conception of Dijins throws light on the ignorance, irrationality and brutality of Pakistani community. In words of Mah-Jabin, Aslam accuses Pakistani nation for their world-wide stereotyping by practicing the immoral and irrational traditions in the name of religion: "the so-called traditions that you have dragged into this country with you like shit on your shoes" (p. 139). He further states: "It's all the fault of you lot, you sister-murdering, nose-blowing, mosque-going, cousin-marrying, veil-wearing inbred imbeciles" (p. 320).

The Holy Woman by Qaisra Shahraz narrates another tale of sacrifice in the name of honor. She portrays an irrational and hollow tradition of Pakistan that could destroy the life of a human being. The novel revolves around marriage of a Muslim woman (who evolves from Zarri Bano to Shehzadi Ibadat) to the Holy Quran. This shift in status depicts the triumph of cruel and barbaric traditions of uncivilized Pakistan. Zarri Bano is a modern girl of Pakistan with university education. She bears the authority of patriarchal culture.

Dearest Sister I wish you would make sure that your scarf manages to stay in your place on your head when you are outside in a public place' he nagged her gently. Look at your hair! Don't you ever tie it up? It is everywhere! It is not for a woman to be seen like this. Men, especially *Badmash* men,

give women looks when they are as beautiful as you. You look so wanton! It creates a very bad impression. Not only of you but of us and our father. (p. 6)

However, her acceptance to marry Holy Quran reveals the termination of modernity before primitivity of Pakistani society. The veil over a modern woman; Zarri Bano symbolizes the veil of feudalism and patriarchy over Pakistani society: Where have your feminist beliefs and idealism disappeared to? How can a woman of your caliber, with university degree, a former editor of a magazine, at the end of the twentieth century, be so blinded? (p. 126)

When she sets free after spending years being a Holy woman, she marries Sikandar and spends a life she once desired for. Shahrzad draws conclusion that commitment and emancipation of women can challenge the patriarchal structures of Pakistan: "Zarri Bano, the university campus woman, the feminist, fighting with the recluse" (p. 176). Her determination finally leads her to break the customs and traditions of her region:

You know, Father, Zarri Bano has a lot of commitments. She can't just drop everything, now that she is married to me. One of those commitments is the women's Jamaat-i-Muslimeen tour of Indonesia and Malaysia. Zarri Bano had made plans for this a long time ago, well before the wedding came along. (p. 439)

By portraying the bleak traditions of Pakistani society Shahrzad suggests a Western movement to liberate and emancipate women from the shackles of patriarchy.

The character of Riffat in *Trespassing* by Uzma Aslam appears to be strong enough to manage alone to run her family's silk business. The liberal business woman raises Dia as an independent thinking young girl. The traditional woman Anu, independent Riffat, Dia and young beautiful Nissrine are both victims and survivors of the patriarchy:

There was an unspoken agreement between men: Woman was not a topic worth mentioning, unless she aroused them sexually. But man was a topic women devoured from every angle. Dia was certain this was the most obvious yet neglected reason for their disparate positions in society: time Women spent it on men. Men spent it on men. (p. 94)

The relationship of Riffat with her husband is not a humble relationship. Riffat is portrayed as assertive and thus her stability and independence is an outcome of her authority and determination. Anu in comparison lives a life of a submissive wife and devoted mother. The author's description of

different ends of both ladies insists on woman's liberation and emancipation: "Karachi's becoming a city of entrepreneurial Mothers. They get what they want. They just have to give in first. It's simple mechanics" (p. 114). The independent, emancipated woman of Pakistan is striving hard to be recognized by the society. If on one side they are liberal, authoritative, assertive, and independent then the world also identifies them as passive, oppressed, victimized, veiled looking for emancipation from the socio-cultural restrictions. In *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*, Mohsin Hamid portrays female characters in the context of patriarchy. They are depicted as dependent creatures who do not have an identity on their own in the world. Hamid identifies the female characters in relation to the protagonist. The protagonist "you" has a mother, a sister, a wife and a girlfriend, pretty girl. The mother of the protagonist lives a rural life and struggles to survive within a prescribed monthly income. She is responsible to raise her children and obey her husband and his family. The conflicts between the mother and her mother in law supports the notion of matriarchy. She is passive in her role and an object of sexual gratification for his father. The sister of protagonist also lives a passive and oppressed life. Her husband is a decade old to her. Though she doesn't like him, she seems not to resist the marriage.

Through the picture of women, Hamid presents a society where woman is oppressed economically, emotionally, physically, and sexually. The pretty girl who seeks ways for her independence also encounters sexual oppression. She becomes an object of objectification and commodification. She sells her body in order to survive in the world. Hamid highlights the strong hold of patriarchy in present Pakistani society where she has to sell her virginity in order to gain independence. By presenting sexually and morally depraved male counterparts, Hamid analyzes that a woman chooses to prefer a life within the domestic sphere in order to secure her virginity.

In *Moth Smoke* (2008), Hamid portrays Dilaram who narrates the story of her life, how she is exploited and used as a commodity by the male counterparts that leads her to brothel in Lahore:

The landlord of our area asked me to come to his house. I refused, so he threatened to kill my family. When I went, he raped me . . . I was so skinny. Not like a woman at all . . . He kept making me come. He let his sons rape me. And sometime his friends. One of them was from the city. He gave me a silver bracelet . . . then I became pregnant . . . (p. 50)

The pseudonym of Mumtaz; Zulfiqar Manto reveals the intolerance of woman on intellectual grounds since she is expected to be ill-witted who

cannot comprehend the controversial issues at social and political level. The writings of Hamid present status of woman as marginalized and dependent on its male counterparts. The world outside her domestic sphere appears to be cruel and immoral that is not reluctant to usurp her virginity.

Nadeem Aslam presents domestic women in *Maps for Lost Lovers* with new issues and projections. Koukab and Surraya are portrayed as passive women who choose to live within the domestic fence. They epitomize extreme negligence in the novel. They have their own assumptions and understandings. They do not hesitate to exceed in practicing an immoral and wicked act to gratify their pre-conceptions. The character of Koukab is portrayed as a symbol of decadence. Belonging from an extremely religious family she finds herself on white land with different insecurities. He portrays a Pakistani Muslim woman who though claims of reciting Quran and offering prayers five times a day is negligent and ignorant of her Islam. For her Islam is only confined to veil herself, to recite and to offer prayer. The practical implications of Islam are not known to her.

When she finds Shamas drinking with Jugnu and his girlfriend; Stella, she loses her temper. In return, she serves the dinner in shoes. Her immediate disturbing response reveals her cognitive disorder. She consults a holy man to bestow her something sacred through which she could rescue her children from the Western notions of modernity. The holy man gives her a sacred salt that is discovered by Ujala as bromide to lower her libido. Her bias against Western nation causes her fall in the eyes of her own children. Aslam depicts her inability to consider the generation gap and she eventually confronts the reality that she has lost her children. Aslam shows how she accuses Western world for the conversion of her children but in actual it is her own prejudices and ignorance that lead her to the end. Aslam also narrates the story of Surraya who is divorced for going to the enemy's place in order to conceal the sexual harassment of a fourteen year old girl by her own uncle. Through, the character of Surraya, Aslam criticizes contemporary Muslims who are immoral, irrational and barbaric. Surraya in order to remarry her past husband involves in sexual relationship with Shamas to convince him for marriage, who in the end refuses to marry her. The female portrayal of dependence and independence, oppression and authoritative presents the ongoing conflicts of "a problem that has no name." The figure of female is associated with the household. Thus, representing different roles of female characters the writers present the conflicts inside the home of Pakistani society.

Conclusion

Analysis of different well-known Pakistani fiction draws the conclusion that the writers in one way or the other penetrate the same issues that are already known to the audience at international level. These

issues are identical in contemporary debates where a true Pakistan is uncivilized, barbaric, emotional, irrational, violent, fundamentalists, and exotic. Through such portrayal, the writers emphasize their recognition as new Orientalists with same knowledge but with different race and color. Through male and female characters, the writers represent anonymous identity of Pakistani people, who are vile, devious, corrupt and nefarious. The pessimistic ends of these tales are invited by the immoral and ignorant characters. The writers while idealizing Westernization validate their tragic fall on natural grounds. They are born to be marginalized and colonized, though, this colonization is not geographical but rather occupies intellectual condition. It is finally observed that the ethnicity is sold for Western admiration and recognition that was once done by the mimic men.

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