

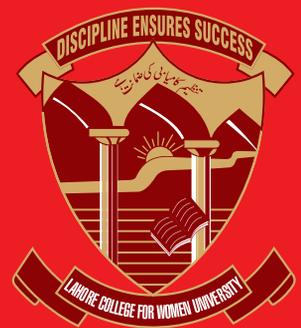
ISSN 2518-2471

Volume 3

December (2018)

RESEARCH JOURNAL OF

LANGUAGE
&
ITERATURE
(RJLL)



Department of English
LAHORE COLLEGE FOR WOMEN UNIVERSITY

Research Journal of Language and Literature

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Editorial

There has been a newfound interest in recent times in the research done in the third world countries with western academia manifesting genuine interest in counter point of views and alternative perspectives. This has led to much debate on the role of voice in literary and critical communities. On local level a growing number of academicians are in need of a platform where they can share their body of work and intellectually engage with the members of their community. Unfortunately till to date there has been a dearth of research journals especially in the field of literary research in Pakistan with the result that scholars have little body of work to look up to or engage with. It is high time that an academic and professional community devoted to meeting the information needs, research agendas and trends of the future is created. *RJLL* is not just relevant to our academic community in particular and to learned societies in general but can also fill the void which is created because of the absence of a professionally marketable venue for such body of work. It would provide an opportunity for our own academicians to engage with the international debates going on in the field of literature and language, extending or challenging existing arguments and above all making a niche for themselves in the international research community. *RJLL* seeks to share current research on contemporary literature with special emphasis on Post-modern, and Postcolonial literature. We are interested in new perspectives and emerging voices and research that contribute to the existing body of literary theory. Research journal of Language and Literature (*RJLL*) also reviews recent research in key areas of the broad field of Applied Linguistics. This journal provides cutting-edge and timely articles on language learning and pedagogy, second or foreign language acquisition and psycholinguistics and addresses to researchers and educators interested in Applied Linguistics.

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RJLL

The Praxis of Revolt and Revolution in Pinter's *The Lovers* (1962)

Basila Husnain

Abstract

This study examines the praxis of revolt and revolution in Pinter's play *The Lovers* (1962). The initial Absurdist critique of Pinter's plays failed to gauge their socio-political relevance. Later critics tried to comprehend his work in the template of political allegories. Pinter fought against such monolithic interpretations and "such final definitive". Despite all this opposition, the personal and the political remains a key dilemma in his works on the basis of which Pinter is considered a part of Revolt Theatre. However, in this thesis, I demonstrate how Pinter could not be constrained in any of the existing divisions of Revolt Theatre because he does not only challenge the boundaries of the established forms of revolt but also introduces a new dialect of revolution. Pinter's plays are not entirely based on the existing dichotomies of Revolt Theater: Man v/s God, Man v/s System or Man v/s Man revolutions but his plays position the actual possibility of change in the realm of Intimate Revolt, which is the border between the individual and social. It is a concept proposed by Julia Kristeva in series of her Revolt books. Therefore, this research proposes Pinter as the pioneer of fourth form of Revolt Theatre which can be termed as the Intimate Revolt.

Through this analysis of Pinter's play from the original perspective of Intimate Revolt we can understand the postmodern idea of Revolt and its expression in literature. Also in doing so, this work proposes to trace the progression of Revolt Theatre from "Existentialist Revolt" to "Intimate Revolt."

Keywords: Intimate Revolt, psychic life, interpretation, threshold, society of spectacle.

Pinter portrays the complex relationship of politics and individuals in his plays. He was easily considered as part of the existing long tradition of Revolt Theatre. No doubt the representation of “political” in his plays is the crux of all meanings and interpretations. Since Pinter has been overtly active in national politics his works naturally got labeled and confused with “political theatre” also known as Radical Theatre at times. Although he proclaimed in a speech at National Student Drama Festival in Bristol in (1962) “I’ve never started a play from any kind of abstract idea or theory”(ix). Despite such proclamations his constant defiance against tags was met with incredulity by critics. Many critics like Penelope Prentice came for defense of Pinter’s play against such reductive readings in her book *The Pinter Ethic: The Erotic Aesthetic* (1994) Prentice supports Pinter’s status as a postmodern playwright par excellence rather than a theorist.

The postmodern society cannot abide by the same or uniform meanings of political. It is a time of breaking free from the monolithic discourses and to invest multiplicity of meaning in the ever-changing realities of the world of internet and web. In this scenario Pinter’s work survives and thrives as a dramatist which can only be attributed to its contemporary relevance. Pinter’s politics is quite coherent with the idea of postmodern society and by studying it through Kristeva’s theory of Intimate Revolt we can understand the new expression of Revolt Theatre blooming in the works of Harold Pinter. Despite considerable work being conducted on Pinter’s plays from many angles like psychoanalytical, linguistic, socio political there has not been any research so far to regard Pinter as the pioneer of the fourth form of Revolt Theatre, the Intimate Revolt. By analyzing Pinter’s plays in the light of Kristeva’s theory of Intimate Revolt this paper addresses a huge research gap.

Firstly, in order to understand the meanings, implications and application of the term “Intimate Revolt”, I will contextualize the tradition of Revolt Theatre of which Pinter is assumed the latest prophet. Robert Sanford Brustein in *The Theatre of Revolt: An Approach to Modern Drama* (1964) defines Revolt Theatre as the theatre of “modern dramatists where myths of rebellion are enacted” (Burstein 5). For “the rebel dramatist is one who dreams— and puts his reality in such an important theme in the modern drama” (Ibid 14). Eventually in the tradition of the Revolt Theatre we see how God is assumed dead, institutions are shattered by Ibsenian characters. Now the Existentialist rebel has nothing but this own existence to challenge. This became the great theatre of Existentialism and Absurdism practiced by Strindberg, Beckett, Ionesco, Albee and many more. But this exhausted form is “probably not the last or final phase of the Revolt Theatre. It maybe the final phase-but it is not the conclusion of the modern drama” (Ibid 32). Hence, this brings us to the question Burstein asks at the end of his Introduction to the Revolt Theatre, “is this the end of modern Revolt Theatre?” It is for this very purpose that I chose Revolt as the key idea of my study because if we aim to understand Pinter’s work in its entirety we need to contextualize his work within the existing tradition of Revolt Theatre but in doing so we must strive to understand his unique contribution to the Theatre of Revolt. The exploration of the praxis of revolt and revolution in Pinter’s plays enables us to find the suitable idiom of our contemporary idea of revolt and revolution.

The social and political unrest, the drama of conflicts, which keeps haunting our TV screens and world, can be translated with the help of Pinter’s works. After all he is not only representative of the postmodern form of revolt but also as an artist who

has the power of consoling if not curing. There is more than one common aspect in Pinter's work and Kristeva's theory of Revolt. Beginning from the era, Post modernism, to which they both belong I shall discuss how Kristeva's notion of Revolt is actually an emulation of Pinter's unique Revolt. Thus the theory of Intimate Revolt has already found its representation in Pinter's Theatre of Revolt. To substantiate the point several comparisons are drawn between Kristeva and Pinter's political ideologies and their manifestation in their works. Julia Kristeva's relationship to modern and contemporary social and political discourses is complex, ambiguous territory. Though she has claimed that the "problem of the 20th century was and remains there habilitation of the political" (Keltner 68) and that our world is a "necessarily political" one (Keltner 235), exactly how her works are to be related to social and political thought is difficult to clarify. Her constant reluctance to define politics in the conventional sense serving the fetish of given ideologies resembles Pinter's effort to let the "play speak for itself". To draw yet another parallel, I think the primary reason for this is that both Kristeva and Pinter are obviously political in their interests but both use the term "revolt" in a unique and unprecedented sense. Pinter's practice of revolt is as unique as Kristeva's concept of Intimate Revolt but both are concerned with the "psychic life of the individual in modern society" (1). Thus there is an irrefutable parallel between Pinter and Kristeva as they both are concerned with the psychic life of individual, language and the new possibilities of Revolt in terms of meanings as well as representation.

Pinter as well as Kristeva propose a revolt against this complacent and "uninterrupted" order, the normalizing order. In simple words Kristeva declares

“interpretation” as a revolt. This idea finds its representation in Pinter’s works and his imploration against all “tags” and “labels”. His work invites the audience to construct his own meanings, revolting against the pre-constructs offered by the critics. Politics and language are crucial to Kristeva as well as Pinter’s work. However in both their works these terms are manifested and practiced in multiple ways, never abiding to any fixed context.

So, what exactly is Intimate Revolt? Intimate Revolt is Kristeva’s term for the revolts that are defense of the individual’s psychic life against the numbing effect of the society of spectacle. In her essay, “The Powers of Horror”, Kristeva proposes that the society is seen as nothing but a discourse created by individuals through their psychic life. If the individual lets his mind be bombarded by images, as is happening in our times, he is reduced to nothing but an automaton. He loses the ability to experience life, change, time and hence the other. The other here implies social norms and political realities too. In order to prevent the individual from such “dead” life and ensure a mobilization of minds at large in a society, one must turn to Intimate Revolt. It is this form of revolt that guarantees individual’s life as conscious beings comprised of subjectivity and living in a clock time. Kristeva’s concern for the Intimate is not a concern for the private individual in opposition to what is more properly “social” or “political”. Rather Kristeva’s concern with the Intimate is a concern for a border or threshold that is at once the border of affectivity and discourse, the social bond, and historical being (“The Powers of Horror” 2).

Subjectivity is essentially a concept that combines the psychoanalytical I with the social Self. It is a subject which is formed at the threshold of the semiotic and symbolic. Thus the moments where the subjectivity stands challenged are the moments of the Intimate Revolt where the semiotic and symbolic drives fail to create meaning. But in its positive usage, intimacy is conceptualized as the process of the production of meaning. Thus at one level we can say that the subjectivity is a subjective- symbolic dynamic of the advent and loss of meaning. It is the crisis of meaning and subjectivity is experienced in three concrete moments of intimacy: abjection, loss and love. These are the true experiences where temporality, subjectivity and meaning stand challenged.

But these moments of intimacy are also moments of open possibilities, change, transformation and re-turn. By re-visiting the boundaries of subjectivity, "I" the subject is able to change, transform, revolt and recreate meaning. Since, as Keltner proposes that Kristeva's theory of subjectivity is also theory of meanings we can approach these concrete moments of Intimate Revolt from another perspective that is the aspect of "meaning making". The advent and loss of meaning define my subjectivity, my position as a speaking being in a society is primarily dependent on my ability of meaning making. The symbolic order does not create meanings in the consumer culture of the modern society but repeat empty representation of unreal "reality". This is so because for "creating meaning" true genuine "experience" is needed but our society of spectacle is so engaged with "consuming images" that we barely allow the "individual" to experience the reality. Instead of becoming a subject with dynamic subjectivity, individuals are reduced to mere automatons who lack the power of meaning making. Hence, they are incapable of bringing about any change in the socio-political scenario.

The media friendly consumer culture of technocrats finds “alter ego of the society of the spectacle” (Keltner 29).

Therefore, in order to bring about change, revolt and revolution in our society, we need to create room, “space” in Kristeva’s language for meaning making. This space lies at the threshold of semiotic and symbolic, a moment of Intimate Revolt where the subject must engage with the process of meaning making in order to hope for a future. This process of re-visiting his subjectivity, recreating meaning is defined as an Intimate Revolt which is also a concept of temporality rather than ethics. Thus we return to Kristeva’s description of the word revolt which does not mean discarding of old tradition in exchange of new, an act of rejection but a re-addressing past values in order to create a better future.

Kristeva proposes three key avenues of Intimate Revolt: subjectivity, meaning and temporality. It is through the disruption of the meaning of the subjectivity and temporality that the individual’s psychic life can be brought back into the realm of “experience”. In other words, for modern man to live in the real time he must be wrenched from the dead time of spectacle.

The disruptive temporality in Kristeva’s sense is expressed in the form of “depression”, “dejection”, “melancholia” and “love”. These become the moments of experience that forces the individual to narrate and thus bring it in the order of the symbolic. First site of revolt for Kristeva is Time. Time in Kristeva’s world is inseparable from subjectivity. In her book *Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt* (2000) she writes:

This subjectivity is coextensive to time – an individual’s time, history’s

time, being's time – more clearly and more explicitly than anywhere else...Likewise, various modalities of time lead us not to imagine an end of history as some have been able to do in the United States or Japan but to try to bring new figures of temporary to the fore. (Kristeva 9)

In her book she engages with the works of writers who are “attentive to the drama of subjectivity and to different approaches of time” (ibid 9). In “New Forms of Revolt” Kristeva postulates that “today, mental life knows that it will only be saved if it gives itself the time and space of revolt: to break, to remember, to re-do.” These new figures of temporality disrupt the complacent experience of the time of automaton by offering the individual “an experience” “unknown, surprise, pain, or delight,” (ibid 11). In *Black Sun* (1987) Kristeva describes the time in which we ordinarily live as the time of discourse. This time of proper is the time of “subject/object” it is the normal time of “the speaking being” in the symbolic order. She calls this possibility of temporality as noon time which is a moment in time that has stopped being meaningful. It is this possibility of time which Kristeva presupposes as a site for revolt. Keltner writes about this time in her book *Kristeva: Key Contemporary Thinkers* (1994):

Contrary to ordinary time, the temporality of melancholia/depression is characterized by the absence of a future and a hyperbolic past that refuses to pass by. Melancholia / depression lack a future horizon and confront a traumatic, affective ‘space’ one may only characterize with the adjectives ‘too much’ ‘too much sorrow or too much joy’. (60)

In my research, however, I explore only the Intimate Revolt expressed on the sites

of two concrete experiences: Abjection and Loss / Melancholia. There are several examples of such depressed or melancholic characters in Pinter's plays. We see that Pinter's characters are usually living in this disruptive temporality. Memory, past and future are important tropes in Pinter's plays. Now using Kristeva's model of temporality we can see this interruption of time not as a lacking but as a moment filled with the possibility of revolt, revolution and change.

The Lovers was published in 1962. It is a one act play generally performed with *The Collection* (1961) by Pinter as both the plays deal with the theme of role-plays and games. The main character, Richard and Sarah, the husband and wife perform roles of lovers to sustain the spark of their cold marriage. But eventually, Richard's male ego proves a hurdle in the smooth game play. Yet it continues as arrangement but with a certain "change".

In this play, from the beginning, the binaries of "symbolic and semiotic" are clearly drawn. The male and female subjectivities represent the traditional division of semiotic and symbolic. As the play opens, we see the stage divided into "two areas". One is the "living room", where the main character, Richard, the husband and Sarah, the wife, engage as "lovers". They adapt pretense by choice in order to save the otherwise cold marriage. Apparently, the other part of the stage is the "bedroom" where they perform their original roles of husband and wife without actually performing the traditionally ascribed role as is expected of husband and wife in a bedroom (149).

Already there is an obvious statement of "confused" identities of the characters within the symbolic order which is further enhanced as the "traditional" woman doing her duties as wife, "emptying and dusting" (149). It is evident from the following

passage that Richard is clearly sure of their roles as husband and wife, a role imposed by the society:

Sarah: I find the thought of dinner fatiguing. I prefer not to think about it.

Richard: That's rather unfortunate. I'm hungry.

Slight Pause.

You hardly expect me to embark on dinner after a day spend sifting matters of high finance on the City.

She laughs.

One could even suggest you were falling down on your safely duties. (176)

Later we see how she transforms into an adulterous woman through the question put to her by her husband Richard who asks "is your lover coming today?" For Richard the other woman is "simply a whore, a functionary who either pleases or displeases" (156). Although Sarah can't really get accustomed to this role which is evident from her broken sentence where she censors the word whore as she exclaims "But, quite honestly, I can't really believe she's just...what you say" (156). It is this division or boundary of identification of the other, which strengthens his subjectivity but as the play proceeds, this boundary becomes more and more fluid until he exclaims that "I cannot go with it, it's killing me" (Pinter 169). His desperation is evident as he goes on insisting "it's got to stop. I cannot go on" (169).

On the other hand, the wife who symbolizes the semiotic does not draw such exclusive boundaries and hence she is less threatened by the dissolution of the borders.

We can see her mentioning her husband to her lover, Max and vice versa without any hesitation. Although she continuously tries to ascertain Richard's reaction to which she knows it might be offensive. She keeps on asking him, "you are happy, aren't you? You are not in any way jealous?" (161), for her the fluidity is not alarming. She thinks that "things are beautifully balanced" (161). It is so because she is not afraid to admit her expectations of love and sexual gratification as she describes both her lover Max and husband Richard as "terribly sweet" and "very loving" (160). This however, is very "nauseating" for Richard (160). Nausea is the obvious pointer of the feeling of abjection.

Abjection is the loss of identification with the symbolic and is a fear of the semiotic. It is a boundary where subjectivity and meanings seems to collapse. In order to live the subject "I" needs to identify with the symbolic and detach with the "other". Richard fails to demarcate the boundaries of his subjectivity and starts feelings intimidated by the "other" Max inside him, the extreme image of abjection. Consequently, he feels threatened by the liquidating boundaries; he experiences revolt as he expresses his aggression towards both the semiotic that is the law of mother, the female as he tries to resurrect his masculine image by expressing his desire to meet the lover, after all, he says "we're both men. You are just a bloody woman." (170). And at the same time he experiences revolt against Max too who seems "mad" (170) to him now as he represents the "other" in I, the abject.

All the balance and harmony of meanings collapse at once through this dialogue, the dialogue which is form of a subject's participation in the process of meaning making.

As the audience deals with this shock, confused identity, the whole play/ stage becomes a place beyond the symbolic and meaning. The couple takes up the role of lovers under pre-planned arrangements and with consent. A close reading of the play suggests, Richard is unable to explore and sustain his sexual desires as he feels challenged as a symbolic being by the powerful semiotic drives which are symbolized in the form of his wife's aggressive sexual needs. In order to retain his subjectivity, he completely blocks or separates the semiotic language from the symbolic language which is apparent in his unwillingness to his wife. Since he has a clear demarcation of identities which corresponds to his sense of being. He clearly states that the role he imagines for his wife as a lover is not that of a mistress which might appear as her "double". For him, the opposite of a docile traditional wife is a garden slut. He claims that there is a world of difference. For him the wife is an object he can possess and thus belongs to the symbolic where she can be defined as the other with respect to "I" which is his status as subject. This consolidates his subjectivity, for instance he says:

Richard: Great pride, to walk with you as my wife on my arm. To see you smile, laugh, walk, talk, bend, be still. To hear your command of contemporary phraseology, your delicate use of the very latest idiomatic expression, so subtly complied. Yes. To feel the envy of others, their attempts to gain favour with you, by fairs means or foul, your austere grace confounding them. And to know you are my wife. It's a source of a profound satisfaction to me. (75)

In order to restore the law of the father, Richard re-defines, re-evaluates the moment

of this Intimate Revolt, a moment of collapse, by introducing “the children” which then ensure his place in the symbolic order. This form or moment of Intimate Revolt is informed by subject's willing and active participation in the process of meaning making. Thereby, re-vitalizing his psychic life and helping him resume the boundaries of his subjectivity by performing his role in the process of meaning making.

Notably, Kristeva suggests that symbolic and semiotic are always at once part of the subjectivity. We see Richard resuming his game of “the lover” although he questions to whom the house belongs “either to me, or to you or to another”. It is through this question and support of the semiotic order represented by his wife who willingly adapts the role of a “slut” to offer conformity to his subjectivity and adapting to “change” which is the demand Richard keeps on repeating at the end. This desire for change can be seen as a desire to break free from the constraints of the symbolic order or the law of the father but it is at the same time an epiphanic moment offered to him by “experiencing” abjection as Max, a meaningless image. Since sexual desire comprises the pre-language state, it must be infused in the symbolic order, legitimated instead of disowned in order to have a revitalized subjectivity (induction of individual in the symbolic order).

In the end temporality as a site of Intimate Revolt is highlighted by the constant mentioning of time by the two characters. Their routine, as well as roles are divided by the clock time which is a new modality of time. Because one role and relationship belongs to the social or symbolic function that of husband and wife whereas the other to that of the semiotic world since sexual desire is pre-symbolic in nature. Eventually the complex temporality becomes a site of crisis and a portal of Intimate Revolt as the

evenings of the lovers start encroaching upon the time of legitimate love of husband and wife which is the temporality of symbolic order. So we see in the following passage, Richard asks Sarah whether she forgets about him while being with her lover or does she recalls him at times:

Sarah: Only at...certain times.

Richard: Of course.

Sarah: How could I forget you?

Richard: Quite easily, I should think.

Sarah: But I'm in your house.

Richard: With another. (154)

The house here becomes the law of the father that is the reminder and defense of Richards' role as the legitimate patriarch unlike the lover who belongs nowhere.

Then as the play progresses we see the encroachment of symbolic temporality over the semiotic. As Max asks Sarah as to what time her husband would come back or when she reminds Max that she's a married woman. Such instances of the moment of crisis of temporality eventually leave Richard tired and exhausted of the arrangement as he expresses his desire to get out of it. For instance, Richard asks "Doesn't he get a bit bored with these damn afternoons? This eternal tea time? I would. To have as the constant image of your lust a milk jug and teapot. Must be terribly dampening" (160). And here for example he says as a lover, Max, "I played my last game" (171).

Even Sarah finds this crisis of time difficult as she says "I wish you'd stop this

rubbish, anyways” (170). As she is unable to understand the moment of non-time where she stands at the threshold of crisis and must make her way out or take a de tour. Then as they introduce the role of lovers as the play ends at night which is the time of husband and wife, the symbolic temporality somehow gets infused with the semiotic desire there by resolving the crisis. Hence, in line with the theoretical framework the close reading of play shows how Sarah and Richard are eventually able to re-evaluate and re-define their subjectivity at the verge of dissolution of meaning and temporality.

Pinter’s plays become a piece of art that is politically charged but not in the traditional sense as it steers clear of all didactics and propaganda. The play becomes a form of resistance against the dead time of spectacle that merely “represents” and does not leave room for “expression”. In fighting against the “explaining away” the reductive critiques, Pinter is able to restore the essential of “experience” to the plays. The audience / reader will be able to and actually have been looking for interpretation instead of definite conclusions. If anything, this is the exact need of the extremist psyche of today’s individual which is constantly being fed with images of violence and prejudice. The binaries of self and other have become cruelly strong and current global politics is nothing but a power game between these two binaries. Through *Intimate Revolt*, that is shaken, confused, mitigated and questioned subjectively, art like Pinter’s work can develop a more empathetic understanding of the other and self.

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An Investigation of the Reasons of Code Switching (CS) in English Language Classrooms of BS in Context of Pakistan

Hina Nadeem

Abstract

The people living in Pakistan have tendency to switch from Urdu to English and from English to Urdu and they are continuously enjoying this amalgamation in language known as code switching. The main purpose of the paper was to examine the role and importance of code switching on the learning practices of the students of a public sector university in Lahore, Pakistan, by adopting qualitative and quantitative method of data collection. The main objectives of the study were to compare the views of the teachers and the students about the importance of code switching; to fetch out it's reasons, to explore the attitudes, effects and impacts of CS on students' behaviours and learning practices in their classrooms. This research is substantial as it opens the way for the students and teachers both to understand the role of CS in Pakistan.

Keywords: code switching, CS, English as second language (ESL), L1 (First Language), English language classrooms.

Communication in any language takes place for several reasons, like, to develop relationships, to assemble knowledge and to seek wisdom about different things. Human interaction is incomplete without verbal communication and for such reason people use an extensive variety of languages. This expresses, quite evidently, that bilingualism is a pervasive phenomenon. Swapping between two or more languages during verbal communication is paired with the experience of bilingualism.

Pakistan has a multilingual community where people communicate in Urdu, Punjabi and English. It is a common characteristic of Pakistani educated bilinguals that they often use code switching and code mixing during their conversation. Many other local languages are also used at local level like Punjabi, Saraiki, Kashmiri, Balochi, Pashto, Sindhi etc. It is observed that bilinguals mix two languages while speaking with their family members, colleagues, friends etc. Francois Grosjean said “this situation of bilingualism is present in every country, in all classes of society and at all age levels” (01). A much-esteemed position is given to English in Pakistan. Its dominance and supremacy in Pakistan is mounting day by day.

There are a lot of definitions insinuated by researchers, for instance Gumperz defined “code switching” as “the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems of subsystems” (is cited by Tariq in his “Functions of Code Switching in Bilingual Classrooms” 59). Poplack thus splits code switching into three categories that are Tag Switching, Inter-sentential Switching and Intra-sentential Switching. Tag switching is the substituting of either a word or a tag phrase, or both, from one language to the other. Tags can be

injected easily in a monolingual utterance at a number of points without disturbing syntactic rules. It may occur when we demand guarantee (e.g. I mean, you know, isn't it, right, aren't you etc.) (Poplack 613). For example:

a) You are Saba, "Haina" "Sahi kaha na mene" (aren't you)?

Inter-sentential switching is a shift made on sentence edge or between speaker's turn and a clause. A perfect example is the title of Poplack's paper: "Sometimes I'll start a sentence in Spanish *y termino en español*", English translation: "Sometimes I'll start a sentence in Spanish and finish in Spanish". It happens when the speech of an individual is divided into sentences. One sentence will be in English, other in Urdu. Romaine describes that inter-sentential switching would be studied as requiring greater smoothness in both languages (Poplack 613). For example:

a) I want to complete my assignment. Kyun k men beemar thi men kaam nahin kersaki and today is the last date to submit it.

Intra-sentential switching occurs within the sentence boundary or clause as a result of a word, insertion of a part of a word, a combination of a phrase or words. In it a speaker switches from one language to another within the same sentence, a sentence: made up of two or more languages. It is considered the most complex form of switching. For example:

a) It is a spade "jo k khudai k kaam ata hai".

The existence of code switching can be considered as a resource used by both teachers and students for interaction during the development of achieving a native like

ability in ESL (L2). Keeping in mind, the growing population emerging from a multi-cultural background, the teachers should know the importance of cultural awareness, the process of second language acquisition, being sensitive regarding students' learning process and knowledge about "how to address the behaviour in a way that enriches the students' cultural and educational process" (Algarin-Ruiz 22).

Research Question

1. What are the main reasons leading the students and teachers towards the use of code switching by comparing the responses of the teachers and students?

Reasons of Code Switching on Teachers' Part

Researchers got attracted towards code switching over the years. Humour, encouragement, praise and interpersonal purposes of communication can also be conveyed through the use of code switching. Numerous researchers (Lai, Cole, Critchley, Schweers, Burden, Tang, Greggio & Gil) have debated that during the assistance of teaching and learning English procedure CS can be a very advantageous tool.

Norrish demonstrated that the reason why teachers code switch is when the textbook have high level of English and it is beyond learners' competency level (37-51). It is quite right to highlight that students feel comfortable because of translation of a word, phrase or sentence in their native language. Sert affirms that, "the teachers' use of code switching is not always performed consciously; which means that the teacher is not always aware of the functions and outcomes of the code switching process" (09). Some more reasons of CS are when students don't know much about a specific topic. In most of the cases people don't know that they are actually practicing code switching, it can be a conscious or unconscious effort and practice.

Different investigators got involved and took interest in CS on the part of teachers. The major data collector in this field was Mahadhir, who in 2007, assessed Nine (9) pre service teachers in Malaysia that why teachers Code Switch in their classrooms. Personalization and seeking attention were the main features being observed. Furthermore, the practice of code switching was being applied in order to let the students understand the vocabulary and content in a better way which was the main concern of teachers. Sert uncovers that “this (code switching) is mostly observed in grammar instruction, that the teacher shifts his language to the mother tongue of his students in dealing with particular grammar points, which are taught at the moment” (10).

Reasons of Code Switching on Students’ Part

Gumperz’ Model is found beneficial in classroom environment for the study of code switching. Different studies were conducted on the topic of students’ code switching and the reasons behind. Choi and Kuipers reviewed a dialogue between two (2) Hispanic students when they were discussing about the procedure of a problem. They switched between Hispanic to English and from English to Hispanic in order to clear the problem or procedure of the problem. They switched many times, as they wanted to give stress to their idea. The involvement of code switching provides students with the opportunity to involve and occupy in the activities that are meaning focused in order to produce and understand coherent utterances. Consequently, code switching has been praised as the foundation for syllabus organization and is a device that empowers teachers and learners to regulate classroom communications systematically and efficiently.

Further investigations of researchers advised that CS can be used in order to

bridge gaps in conversation or comprehension due to students' lack of proficiency in language classes. "In students' speech it is not uncommon; code switching is one of the most frequent communication strategies used by foreign language students" (Flyman 57).

Methodology

Research Design

The purpose of this study was to explore the main reasons and academic motivation leading the students and teachers towards the use of code switching. Eventually, the outcomes were determined as how it is possible for the students to learn English, in their English language classrooms, with or without the use of code switching. The reasons were examined through the use of feedback forms and the semi-structured interviews.

Sample

Forty students of BS (Hons.) were selected as a convenience sample for this study. The students' age group was around 18-22 years. The sample was acquired from a public sector university of Lahore. Conversely, no consideration towards their major subject was given and no distinction or preference would be made on their socio-economic backgrounds or the grades they got in their academics, which was the main rationale of this study.

Tools of Data Collection

The instruments used for the data collection in this study were divided into two stages. Stage one represented the responses of the teachers gathered through semi-structured interviews. Four teachers of English department and four teachers of TESOL department were selected for qualitative data collection.

Stage two comprised of feedback forms that were filled by the participants of this research. The feedback form comprised of 40 questions, which were a mixture of close ended and open-ended questions.

Procedure

The teachers and the students were briefed about the purpose of the semi-structured interviews and the feedback forms. Graphs and tables were used to present the data collected from the questionnaires and interviews. Further information provided was about ethical considerations that the facts gathered would only be used for the purpose of the research and their identities would be kept secret. All the students belonged to different backgrounds and the whole corpus consisted of mixed ability students. The entire practice took place in their English language classrooms.

Results

This study was administered to raise awareness among the ESL teachers and learners about this substantial area of discourse practiced in Pakistani classrooms. The nature of this research basically revolved around the phenomena of code switching in English language classrooms. The results of some of the questions from feedback forms and semi-structured interviews are presented below in order to display the aftermaths of the students and teachers in the form of graphs and tables.

Thoughts and Perceptions of the Students

Question No. 1: *What language(s) did you use to interact with your English teacher in your classroom?*

Medium to Interact	Frequency	Percent
English	1	2.5
Urdu	5	12.5

Mixture of both	34	85
Total	40	100

It can be seen that the 85% of the students of the total data, believed that they conversed with their teacher with the amalgamation of both languages, 12.5% conversed in Urdu only and only 2.5% students talked in English.

Question No. 2: *What language do you use to communicate with your friends in your classroom?*

Medium to Interact	Frequency	Percent
English	2	5
Urdu	17	42.5
Mixture of both	21	52.5
Total	40	100

The above table showed that about 5% of the students used English, 42.5% used Urdu and 52.5% used the mixture of both languages while communicating with their friends in their classrooms.

Question No. 3: *Do you feel comfortable when your teacher doesn't translate the lecture in Urdu?*

Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	3	7.5
Agree	5	12.5
Neutral	21	52.5
Disagree	11	27.5
Total	40	100

The above table showed that 7.5% students strongly agreed, 12.5% students agreed, 27.5% students disagreed and 52.5% students felt neutral with this statement that they feel comfortable when their teacher doesn't translate the lecture in Urdu.

Question No. 4: *I am able to understand my teacher's instructions more easily.*

Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	20	50
Agree	13	32.5
Neutral	5	12.5
Disagree	2	5
Total	40	100

The above table showed that 50% students strongly agreed, 32.5% students agreed, 5% students disagreed and 12.5% students felt neutral with the above statement.

Question No. 5: *I am able to understand grammar rules more easily.*

Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	11	27.5
Agree	19	47.5
Neutral	7	17.5
Disagree	3	7.5
Total	40	100

The above table showed that 27.5% students strongly agreed, 47.5% students agreed, 7.5% students disagreed and 17.5% students felt neutral with this statement that the students were able to learn grammar rules more easily due to CS.

Question No. 6: *I feel more comfortable to learn.*

Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	20	50
Agree	18	45
Neutral	2	5
Total	40	100

The above table showed that 50% students strongly agreed, 45% students agreed and 5% students felt neutral with this statement that the students felt more comfortable to learn due to CS.

Question No. 7: *I feel more confident in scoring good marks for this subject.*

Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	16	40
Agree	19	47.5
Neutral	5	12.5
Total	40	100

The above table showed that 40% students strongly agreed, 47.5% students agreed and 12.5% students felt neutral with this statement that the students felt confident in scoring good marks in English because of CS.

Question No. 8: *I feel more engaged to the whole class and understand what is going on inside the class.*

Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	13	32.5
Agree	23	57.5
Neutral	3	7.5
Disagree	1	2.5
Total	40	100

The above table showed that 32.5% students strongly agreed, 57.5% students agreed, 2.5% students disagreed and 7.5% students felt neutral with the above statement.

Question No. 9: *Mixing of Urdu and English strengthens my English.*

Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	7	17.5
Agree	22	55
Neutral	7	17.5
Strongly disagree	4	10
Total	40	100

The above table showed that 17.5% students strongly agreed, 55% students agreed,

10% students strongly disagreed and 17.5% students felt neutral with this statement that mixing of English strengthened the English of students.

Question No. 10: *Teachers who switch codes from English to Urdu affectively engage students' attention.*

Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	10	25
Agree	23	57.5
Neutral	6	15
Strongly disagree	1	2.5
Total	40	100

The above table showed that 25% students strongly agreed, 57.5% students agreed, 2.5% students strongly disagreed and 15% students felt neutral with the above statement.

Question No. 11: *Teachers who switch codes from English to Urdu clarify instructions.*

Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	18	45
Agree	19	47.5
Neutral	3	7.5
Total	40	100

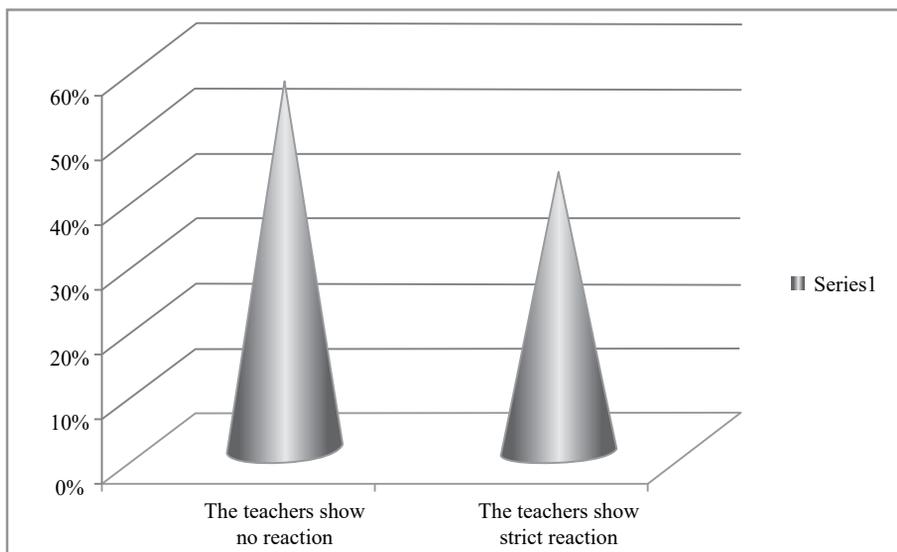
The above table showed that 45% students strongly agreed, 47.5% students agreed and 7.5% students felt neutral with the above statement.

Question No. 12: *Teachers who switch codes from English to Urdu or from Urdu to English can express themselves clearly in both languages.*

Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	19	47.5
Agree	16	40
Neutral	5	12.5
Total	40	100

The above table showed that 47.5% students strongly agreed, 40% students agreed and 12.5% students felt neutral with the above statement.

Question No. 13: *How does your English teacher react if you speak in Urdu in your classroom?*

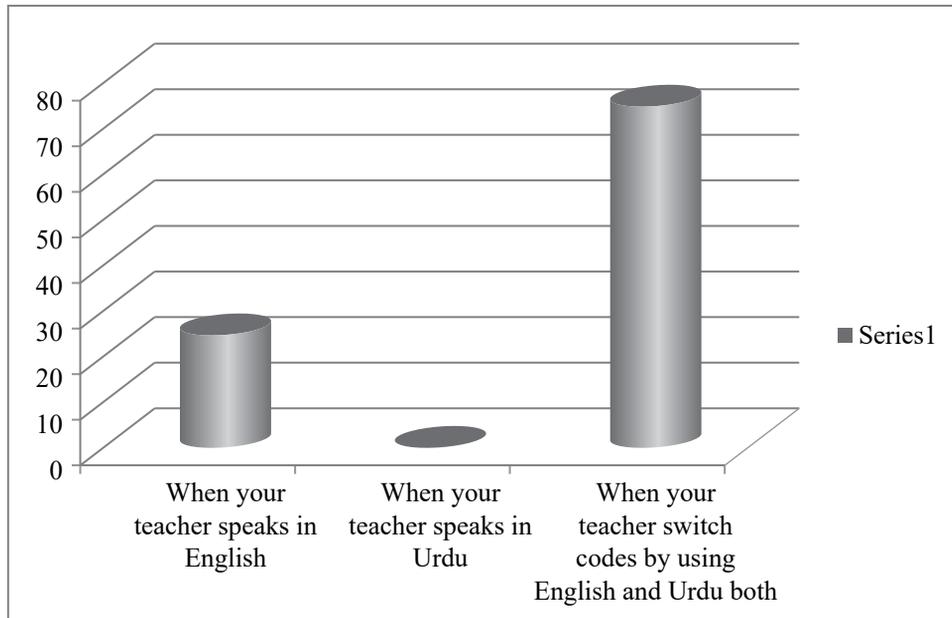


Reaction of The English Teacher

If the students practice CS in English language classrooms, 57% students believed that teachers showed no reaction and 43% believed that teachers showed strict reaction.

Question No. 14: *How do you think you learn English best?*

The below graph showed that about 25% of the students felt comfortable when their teacher speaks in English but the majority of the students that is 75% believed that they felt comfortable when their teachers switch codes and deliver the lecture with the amalgamation of English and Urdu both.

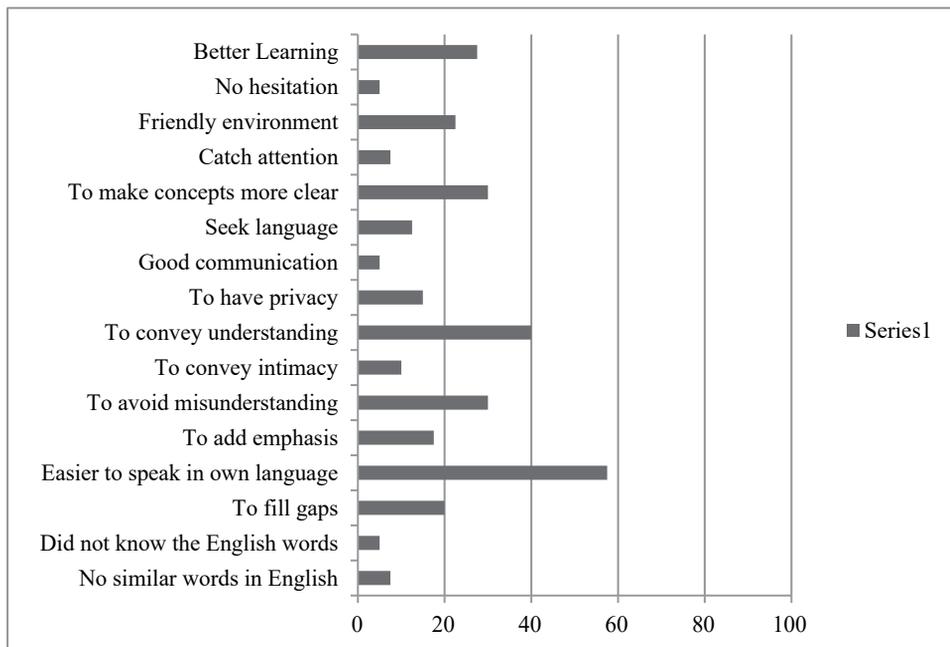


How do Students Learn English Best

Question No. 15: *Why do you use words of Urdu while speaking English and what are the reasons of code switching?*

The reasons of switching codes and their percentages showed that about 57.5% of the students said that they switch codes because it is easier to speak in their own language, 40% agreed that it could convey understanding, 30% believed that the use of CS cleared their concepts and there were less chance of misunderstanding, 27.5% students said that CS helped them in better understanding of a certain concept, 20% believed that CS helped them to fill gaps, 17.5% thought that to add emphasis was a reason of CS, 15% said to have privacy, 12.5% supported the reason: to seek language, 10% supported to convey intimacy, 7.5% said to catch attention and no similar words available in English, 5% said CS helped them and no hesitation was there, whenever they did not know

English words they used CS and for good communication as well.



Reasons of Code Switching

Thoughts and Perceptions of the Teachers

The analysis of the semi structure interviews of the teachers, uncovered the reasons of the existence and practice of code switching in English language classrooms which were mentioned below:

During classroom practices, when students were asked to provide answer to a certain question, they started feeling shy, confused and lacked confidence just because while answering, they forgot a specific word to be used in the occurrence, hence they switched codes in order to complete their answers. The students and the teachers, while explaining some concept, shifted the topic and started giving examples from their everyday routine, in order to clarify their thoughts. At the time when teachers started

explaining a certain idea, they switched codes, as they had to quote examples from other literatures as well. When the students were unable to interpret what was being taught to them, in that situation teachers started translating the sentences. Most of the students switched codes just to make sense of what they wanted to explain, when they were not feeling comfortable in using English language. The teachers and students used code switching in order to clearly represent their thoughts for the understanding of a certain concept or theory. The students and teachers felt relaxed while switching codes from English to Urdu just because they shared the same mother tongue, which was Urdu. One of the major reasons of code switching was that student lacked accurate words to express themselves clearly. They just used their receptive vocabulary comprised of novice words. The main duty of teachers is to let their students understand the lectures effectively and while doing so they switch codes just to assure that the students got their ideas. Most of the times, the students faced problems while uttering a sentence and there would be a change in tense.

Discussion and Conclusion

This research focuses on the main reasons leading students and teachers towards the use of code switching. According to the collected data the responses calculate their experiences and illustrate the reasons of code switching:

- The students of BS. (Hons.) feel comfortable while switching codes during their classroom practices.
- The teachers and the students used CS for translation purpose that if any student, a group of students or the whole class was not proficient then code switching was applied.

- The teachers switched codes to associate something with culture or from other cultures and to provide examples to clarify their thoughts.
- The teachers being interviewed declared that they started switching codes when students observed refused to answer or respond in English during classroom interactions.
- Another reason showed that the students having Islamiat, Punjabi, Urdu and Persian major did not understand English to a great extent. Their capabilities were very restrained and limited that is why the teachers switch codes.
- Lack of confidence, anxiety and shyness were also some of the reasons due to which the students switched codes.
- It was assessed from the feedback of the students and interviews of the teachers that lack of sufficient vocabulary also played an important role in students' code switching.
- To fill the gaps between the discussion of the students.
- The students and the teachers switched codes to add emphasis on a certain idea in order to clarify it.
- For the improvement of students' grades.
- For the encouragement of students in English language classrooms.
- For good communication skills, better learning and for representation of good thoughts.

- Most of the times, it would be a personal style of the teachers to switch codes during her/his lectures in order to add humour.

The qualitative and quantitative investigation of this research revealed that the chief reason of code switching in Pakistani classrooms is students' incompetence in English language. The main aim of the students is to compete in the world and to get a tight grip on English language that seems alien to them. The responses of the teachers being interviewed showed that the ratio or frequency of code switching differs according to the major subject, level of semester and socio economical background of the students.

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Globalized Mobility through Fluid Dynamics of Pakistani Fiction

Mahrukh Bokhari

Abstract

Pakistani fiction written by the Anglophone diaspora has lately been revolving around themes pertaining to borders, bordering practices, migration, citizenship, security, and sovereignty. However, it has conspicuously succeeded in transcending its boundaries: both ideological and geographical. By embracing the contemporary art current, Pakistani fiction has also procured its legitimization and circulation at international level. It is no longer representing our national issues parochially. Rather its focus is zooming in on how international politics and catastrophes post 9/11 are influencing and shaping the history of our nation in today's globalized world. A paradigm shift vis-à-vis the scope and structure of novels written by Kamila Shamsie and her contemporary diaspora Anglophone has assigned a unique, fluid dynamics to Pakistani fiction. It has become global in terms of its spatiotemporal zones, chronoscope, cultural diversity, and the range of characters hailing from across the continents.

The paper in hand attempts to examine factors that have contributed to the global structure and scope of Pakistani fiction with reference to Shamsie's work. Taking her novel: *Burnt Shadows* (2009) as primary text, I shall examine the devices that have given this novel its fluid dynamism, and subsequent globalized mobility. The paper is divided into two sections. The first section deals with the structural devices used by Shamsie to enhance the scope and circulation of her fiction at international level whereas the second section analyzes her thematic concerns.

Keywords: Pakistani fiction, Anglophone diaspora, spatiotemporal zones, fluid dynamics, globalized mobility, legitimization, chronoscope, international circulation, borders and contemporary art current.

Structure and Scope of Pakistani Fiction

Tariq Rahman states that the best art transcends national boundaries, both geographical and ideological (1). Pakistani diaspora fiction writers such as Nadeem Aslam, Mohsin Hamid and Kamila Shamsie have written fiction that has crossed both such boundaries. They have, undoubtedly, done the nation proud in terms of the international acclaim that their works have received in the last decade from far and wide. They have carved a niche not only for themselves but for Karachi, Lahore, Murree and Peshawar etc. on the international literary map by writing novels about these indigenous places from abroad. While inhabiting multicultural spaces in their diaspora capacity, these Anglophone writers, with Muslim heritage, are fearlessly grappling with the task of representing the Muslims beyond their reductive stigmatization at the hands of the western media. Their novels have attempted to project the plurality and complexity of the Muslim faith characterized by the cultural, linguistic and racial diversity of the global Muslim community or 'Uma'. During the SALA Conference held in 2016, Dr. Waseem Anwar strongly emphasized the "transnational interconnectivity" that, according to him, is mainly responsible for the native and diasporic reconfigurations in Pakistani literature in English by diaspora writers. He also appreciated Pakistani fiction's dynamism in terms of its globalized spatiotemporal scope.

Shamsie has structured her novels on a global scale in order to challenge the reductive western approach of stigmatizing all Muslims as "barbarians", "fundamentalists" and "terrorists" by ghettoizing them to specific places. *Burnt Shadows* (2009) is immensely ambitious in this regard because of its epic scale and

scope. It juxtaposes incommensurable and incompatible spatiotemporal zones across the globe such as Berlin, Nagasaki, Delhi, Missouri, Abbottabad, Karachi, Afghanistan and Canada. The plot as a chronoscope measures almost three quarters of a century of the world history ranging from World War II, to the partition of the Sub Continent to the Cold War to the 9/11 attacks in 2001 within one narrative. It is the:

tale of generations, Harry thought. James Burton watched with dismay the collapse of Empire; Harry was working for the collapse of Communism; and Kim Burton only wanted to know how to build, one edifice at a time, the construction process being all that mattered, not whether the outcome was mosque or art gallery or prison. (*Shadows* 177)

The whole history of a century is wrapped up in two sentences uttered by Elizabeth in the novel thus: “I’ve lived through Hitler, Stalin, the Cold War, the British Empire, Segregation, apartheid, God knows what. The world will survive this, and with just a tiny bit of luck so will everyone you love” (*Shadow* 271). The interplay amongst characters hailing from different origins, belonging to diverse ethnicities and following different faiths creates a global space. Here borders, both geographical and ideological, either do not exist or become visible only when one tries to slip past them.

The imaginary zone that *Burnt Shadows* (2009) projects has porous borders where sovereignty of countries is constantly violated by the Imperialist and/or Neo Imperialist powers to fulfil their hegemonic plans. The novel begins “on the morning of 9 August” with “the man from Berlin; Konrad Weiss, and the School teacher; Hiroko Tanaka from Nagasaki “stepping out of their houses to notice the perfect blue (color)

of the sky in 1945 when suddenly “a gap open between the clouds...And the world goes white” (*Shadows* 5, 23). The nuclear holocaust has razed Nagasaki, filled with Germans like Konrad to the ground. The novel ends with discussions revolving around 9/11 attack on the US and its global impact.

Hiroko Tanaka’s worlds; both public and private, have been destroyed in the bomb blast. “She’s lost everyone” (*Shadows* 56) and is forced to migrate to the Sub Continent of India, under the British Colonial rule operating from Delhi, in 1947. Delhi of the late 40s is projected as city of the Raj; “the rhythmically beating heart of cultural India” where “every English-man’s bungalow had lush gardens, lined with red flowerpots” signifying “separations and demarcations” (33). Sajjad Ali Ashraf cycles daily from Dilli to Delhi to play chess with James Burton. The game of chess with its black and white chess board introduces the discourse of power politics in the narrative, concretizing the same through James Burton. Such characters are representatives of the Imperialist, cosmopolitan world, constantly crossing geographical and ideological borders and shifting spaces, rendering the dynamics of reality fluid. Burton lives in a world where “Indians, Germans, the English, even Americans...he knew how to look at people and understand the contexts from which they sprang” (*Shadow* 48).

Shamsie’s paradigm shift in the narrative through discourse about the world reflects its inherent multiplicity. Sense making is managed through “a dialogical activity in which managers create organizational reality through the conversations they engage in with others” (“Postmodernism” 113). Sense making is not a solitary activity. It requires a social environment which entails interaction and building of relationships. The novel’s

appeal for the politically progressive scholars lies in its ability to function as a site of political value, the type of value that is unique to the postcolonial texts. It also functions as representative minority literature projecting minority's cultural formations as a site of resistance:

Stuart Hall has observed that the emergence of minoritarian cultural formations is a direct consequence of transnational cultural systems that have come into being during the era of decolonization. The contemporary world order in arts and letters has been marked by a 'profound cultural revolution [...] as a consequence of the margins coming into representation – in art, in painting, in film, in music, in literature, in the modern arts everywhere, in politics, and in social life generally. (Kalliney 298)

Embracing the contemporary art current and the aforementioned “profound cultural revolution” has enabled Pakistani fiction to procure its legitimization and circulation at international level. It has also made the globalized mobility of Pakistani fiction possible. While reviewing Clements' *Writing Islam from a South Asian Perspective* Rachel Fox writes that Clements mentions novels written post 9/11 that build a counter discourse to the monolithic categorizations of Muslims as fundamentalists and terrorists by the western media. Muslim identities, in the works of Mohsin Hamid, Kamila Shamsie and Uzma Aslam Khan, are often decentered to “find ways to connect and cohabit without needing either to deny or to justify the religious and cultural affiliations and affinities which international entities may seek to render suspect” (*Interventions*).

Creation of a hyperspace through decentering characters geographically or

ideologically results in a difficulty of mapping or locating individuals. It opens up debates about notions involving personal and/or national identities, diaspora, hybridity, citizenship and human rights. “The difficulty of mapping individual positions in a set of extremely complex global networks also confronts environmentalist discourses of place...allegorical visions of the global that over the course of time have shifted from utopian to a more dystopian emphasis” (Heise 157). *Burnt Shadows* (2009) encompasses all these issues within its plot ranging over a span of three generations which gives it its fluid dynamism and chronoscopic charisma.

Contestation, within the narrative, between different religions such as Christianity and Islam serves to challenge all grand narrative concerning faith, existence and death. The social construct projected in the fictional zone titled: *Burnt Shadows* (2009) questions the age-old “beliefs about the world...the perception that knowledge about the world is acquired through observation... it argues that experience is the result of active interchange between people engaged in reciprocal relationship” (“Postmodernism” 112). For instance Khadija Ashraf challenges the “God of the Ascetics who wants to be reached through deprivation” (*Shadows* 102). She disapproved of the thinking according to which the path to spirituality was through overcoming suffering by enduring it. She clarifies that: “It’s the Christians who believe we were put on earth to suffer. But Muslims know that Allah---the beneficent, the Merciful---forgave Adam and Eve their temptation” (ibid 102).

Burnt Shadows (2009) represents the *human* and *social* reality as something that is experienced through human discourse. Shamsie’s representation of the humanly experienced reality is in all its polyphonic complexity in Bakhtin’s style. “Behind each

discourse in the novel, as indeed behind each discourse in social life, we can...discern the ideological position or world-view which animates it" (McHale 165). Through the juxtaposition of a variety of languages, styles and intertextual citations, Shamsie creates a complex social reality in a globalized spatiotemporal zone. Raza; the hybrid polyglot is a unique site of heteroglossia. Whereas "acquiring language was a talent" with Hiroko (Raza's mother of Japanese origin), it was a "passion" with her son, Raza. "Raza's mind found itself instantly translating the words into Japanese, German, English, Pashto---a reflexive response to any piece of writing he glimpsed as he drove through the city's streets" (*Shadows* 148). It is through the creation of characters like Raza Konrad Ashraf, and Hiroko Sajjad Ashraf that Shamsie has successfully engaged with the notion of "global circulation" which is responsible for:

the breaking down of oppressive barriers among cultures, races, languages, and nations, including immigration restrictions and segregation policies. Diasporas circulate; bringing the wealth of their cultural heritage to new locations....Circulation is...tapped for the endorsement of multicultural enrichment, freedom, mobility, communication, and creative hybridity. (Tsing 54)

Themes in *Burnt Shadows* (2009)

Shamsie's concern in *Burnt Shadows* (2009) is as much with borders and migration as it is with bordering practices. Humans are all the time indulging in bordering practices, bordering others in or out on the basis of race, religion, language, ethnicities and/or ideological differences. Territories and human bodies are bordered, geographically

and politically through multiple devices and technologies. The Burtons' acceptance of Hiroko; "an ally of Hitler" in their house "two years after the war" can be analyzed from this perspective. The acceptance for Hiroko has come "sooner than they could accept someone of a different class" (*Shadow* 66). Earlier we are told that the status of Konrad, a German in Nagasaki (Japan) changes with "Germany's surrender... from that of an ally into some more ambiguous state which requires the military police to watch him closely...the lifeless words have become potent enough to send him to prison" (ibid 9).

Problems pertaining to the diaspora existence, deracination and hybridity are introduced in the narrative through Sajjad Ashraf's decision to migrate to Pakistan and marry a "modern" woman who can sit in council with men and be strong like the Rani of Jhansi and Razia of the Mamluk dynasty. "Sajjad had no political allegiances, but many narrative preferences---in the stories of history" and the two mentioned earlier were his favorite characters (*Shadows* 53). The modern woman that he finally marries is the Japanese Hiroko who volunteers to "learn the language they speak here" despite James' pronounced disapproval: "It's not necessary. English serves you fine. The natives you'll meet are either the Oxbridge set and their wives or the household staff like Lala Buksh, who can understand simple English if you just know a clutch of Urdu words to throw into the mix" (ibid 58).

Language is often the major barrier that can help one border people in or out of a social circle. Hiroko; a translator by profession, understands that she would need to bridge this gap between the local population of Delhi and herself. She decides to learn Urdu to facilitate two way communications. Sajjad tutors Hiroko in learning Urdu

and she learns very fast, being naturally good at learning languages. The natives are discriminated against by the Colonizers on the basis of language. Even Kamran Ali who is an “Indian Oxbridge set” denounces Urdu as the “language of mercenaries and marauders...the word ‘Urdu’ has the same root as horde” (*Shadows* 66). Shamsie, through characters like Ashraf Ali, demonstrates how in a society characterized by heterogeneity of all sorts, complex connectivity renders the ties of culture to place extremely weak. Continuous penetration of the local world by distant forces dislodges everyday reality and de-territorializes the site of culture. On the other hand the same de-territorializing opens up vistas.

Having migrated from Nagasaki after the bomb blast and coming to live in Delhi, Hiroko realizes that human beings crave for “familiarity...I want to hear Japanese. I want tea that tastes the way tea should taste in my understanding of tea. I want to look like the people around me. I want people to disapprove when I break the rules” (*Shadows* 101). Likewise Elizabeth, a German by birth, is married to James, an English man, whose country fought against the Germans in World War II. She realizes that:

She didn’t want to be married to a man she no longer knew how to talk to. She didn’t want to keep hidden the fact that at times during the war--especially when Berlin was firebombed---she had felt entirely German. She didn’t want to agree that the British had come to the end of a good innings. (*Shadows* 101)

Bordering practices involve and affect geographical and ideological boundaries. As regards ideology, it is: “a particular organization of signifying practices which goes to

constitute human beings as social subjects, and which produces the lived relations by which such subjects are connected to the dominant relations of production in a society” (Eagleton 18). The social fabric of society in the Sub Continent underwent a sea change during processes of colonization and decolonization in terms of the authenticity of its world view and the remapping of its geography on ideological/political lines. The devastation wrought by World War II further aggravated the situation by yielding a greater mobility of the population from the region in search of opportunity, security and a better livelihood. Immigration and population exodus are painful realities of Pakistani existence. The trauma of diasporic life is marked by nostalgia for the lost homeland and a feeling of constant displacement and rootlessness. *Burnt Shadows* (2009) is about “fear, prejudice and inhumanity” that “threaten even the most liberal societies.” It mentions the “horrors of Japanese nationalism” and alludes to “Nazi Germany’s mistreatment of the Jews...” Shamsie incorporates the “murderous hatreds that accompanied the Partition of India” as a central theme of her novel. The effect of World War II on America, and the 9/11 attacks on the US in 2001 have also been “structured into the plot” through “various conversations” by the characters which are “otherwise about loss, expatriation, and home” (Bruce 157).

The announcement of the British withdrawal from the Sub Continent and partition of the same into India and Pakistan disintegrated the Indians who had cohabited peacefully for centuries. Overnight “relationships that had seemed to be cast in steel disintegrated under the acid questions: Are you for India or Pakistan?” (*Shadows* 107). Partition led to riots, violence, and the destruction of “Muslim homes in New Delhi...

Women pulled out of their beds at night” (*Shadows* 126). Sajjad Ashraf chose to leave India. The novel is replete with the “muhajir” discourse. “Muhajir” is the Urdu word for “migrant” and many characters in the novel, including Harry identify with it. While in America Harry realizes, he is “surrounded by a group of immigrants. Germans, Polish, Russians. They were all, like him, bound by class in this exclusive public...school... their parents wanted no more to do with Europe after the war” (ibid 174).

Raza Hazara is a hybrid polyglot who speaks English, Japanese, German, Urdu and Pashto. “He only spoke Japanese in the privacy of his home...his mind contained words from a country he had never visited.” He had learnt to fit in everywhere with the help of a “studied awareness---one he’d had from a very young age---of how to downplay his manifest difference” (*Shadows* 141). Raza had heard about his mother’s journey “from Tokyo to Bombay” and from Bombay to Delhi, slipping “from skin to skin, city to city.” But his mother did not tell him anything about “the momentum of a bomb blast that threw her into a world in which everything was unfamiliar” (ibid 227). Raza’s entanglement with Abdullah and his subsequent disappearance into Afghanistan through a mud track that naturally bridged Pakistan and Afghanistan, introduce the theme of Afghan Civil War and terrorism into the novel. The war in Afghanistan is said to have been funded by Saudi Arabia and the US because of the economic interests that these countries had in the region. These economic interests ranged from the mining of gems to the production of opium and heroin through the cultivation of poppies. Afghanistan’s geographically strategic location amidst oil-rich states was an added attraction to the western agenda. The country, with its rich ancient traditions is still perceived as a

crossroad between east and west. Afghan Civil War is shown to have global dimensions and an international agenda and Raza Hazara is the converging point for almost all the strands within this complex plot involving global mobility. Harry envisions a map of the world in which countries appear as:

mere outlines, waiting to be shaded in with stripes of red, white and blue as they were drawn into the strictly territorial battle of the Afghans versus the Soviets...it had been a three-way affair: Egypt provided the Soviet-made arms, America provided financing, training and technological assistance, and Pakistan provided the base for training camps...the war was truly international. Arms from Egypt, China and ---soon---Israel. Recruits from all over the Muslim world...India might be willing to sell...the arms they had bought from their Russian friends...Harry couldn't help enjoying the idea of Pakistan, India and Israel working together in America's war. (206-7)

Global projects like the Afghanistan War had capitalist agenda which wedged open a gateway for the Neo Imperialist colonizer: the US of A. Capitalist economy of the US went global in the wake of Afghanistan War at a surprisingly fast pace and made America the only Super Power of the world. Globalization appeals to advocates of hybridity [...] because it seems to harmonize the universal and the particular and, in the process, it seems to open up to a multiplicity of cultural relationships unheard of in the age of empire: for Bhabha, the globalization of social spaces reflects a state of dissatisfaction that, nevertheless, enables the articulation and enunciation of a 'global or transnational

imaginary and its “cosmopolitan subjectivities” (Gikandi 110).

Globalism is opposed to homogenization, standardization, cultural imperialism, westernization and Americanization. Rather globalism achieves its goals through hybridity of race, cultures, and economy. It is “an endorsement of international free trade and the outlawing of protected or public domestic economies” (Tsing 51). Globalization of the capitalist economy renders geographical and/or ideological boundaries irrelevant. It disperses the authority of sovereign nation states to accommodate the transnational scope of contemporary finance, marketing, and production. Global financial projects have to be replicated at various new places for maximum output. Hence border crossing, travelling, and connectivity through multiple advanced technological devices are unavoidable. All this has contributed to the strange heterogeneity and open-endedness of the world. Look at the extract that follows from *Burnt Shadows* (2009) to see what existence is like for Raza Hazara in a globalized space:

In his decade in Dubai, prior to Harry re-entering his life, he sought out as many nationalities as possible, acquiring language with the zeal of a collector---Bengali and Tamil from the hotel staff; Arabic from the receptionists; Swahili from the in-house jazz band; French from Claudia--the most consistent of his many lovers; Farsi from the couple who ran the restaurant at the corner of his street; Russian from the two hookers who lived in the apartment next door...and beyond this a smattering of words from all over the globe. The more languages you learned, he discovered, the more you found overlap: “Qahweh” in Arabic, “gehve”

in Farsi, “café” in French, “coffee” in English, “kofi” in Japanese... .

(*Shadows* 262)

Shamsie projects a world that is in “transition from Solid modernity to a more liquid form of social life” (Bauman). In such a world construction of a resilient identity that is constricted within the geographical or ideological borders is becoming increasingly impossible. Human beings have come a long way from a period where they understood themselves as ‘pilgrims’ who crossed boundaries in pursuit of truth and profundity to a stage where they are mere ‘tourists’ in search of entertainment, security, and better means of livelihood and/or fleeting social experiences.

Heterogeneity of the fictional construct namely: *Burnt Shadows* (2009) in terms of its socio-cultural institutions builds a counter discourse to the stigmatization of all Muslims as “terrorists” or “fundamentalists” by the mainstream media. Shamsie’s novel projects the plurality and inclusivity of Islam as a faith and Muslim marriage as social institution. The openness with which Sajjad Ashraf accommodates the practicality of Hiroko’s conversion (to Islam) is worth mentioning here. Sajjad volunteers to have a court marriage because Hiroko is neither a Jew, nor Christian. Hiroko, however, wants to repeat “the Kalma---la ilalahilallah Muhammadurrasool Allah---three times” without even knowing what it means because she sees “no reason to make things more difficult for you with your family than is necessary” (*Shadows* 120). At a later stage in her married life Hiroko retrospectively thinks about her decision to start covering her legs by wearing Shalwar kameezes to “be more Pakistani” by giving in to her teenaged son’s rebellion which was “asserting itself through nationalism”. Her husband, Sajjad

says nothing. He only gives her a “slightly wounded look of a man who realizes his wife is willing to make concessions for her son... she would never have made for him” (ibid132). Sajjad Ashraf is portrayed as a devoted husband who genuinely loves his Japanese wife. The loss of home has taught Hiroko how to survive, leaving everything behind. As for her husband; Sajjad, he believes that he only survived... because he had her” (*Shadows* 137-138). The historical experiences shared by Hiroko Tanaka and Sajjad Ashraf such as the bomb and the partition produce a collectivity between both through reciprocity of exchange and shared oppression and weld them for life.

Conclusion

Through a discussion of the global structure and scope of *Burnt Shadows* (2009), the paper in hand has explained how Shamsie juxtaposes geographically distanced, incompatible places to bring out the cultural diversity of the Muslim community. Spatially separated and racially different characters are brought together to concretize the plurality of world views. The diversity of discourses is projected through heteroglossia by correlating different characters, situations and stylistic features of language. The discursive heterotopia inhabited by the fictional community gets transformed into an ontological heterotopia. The novel challenges the Western reductive approach of stigmatizing Muslims as “fundamentalists” and/or “terrorists” by constricting them to distinct geographical spaces. The cosmopolitan nature of Islamic culture in which various national languages are mutually aware of one another, results in a radical heteroglossia. The multiplicity of races, cultures, and ethnicities add complexity and plurality to Muslim community. *Burnt Shadows* (2009) constructs a polyphonic world

view celebrating dialogism which is fundamentally irreducible to essentialism and an exclusionist world view. Muslims emerge as well integrated citizens of a cosmopolitan world on a global scale.

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Defying all Odds: Female Agency and American Worldview in *The Low Land* (2013) by Jhumpa Lahiri and *An American Brat* (1993) by Bapsi Sidhwa

Nadia Anwar

Abstract

In this paper, an attempt has been made to explore the way female agency works when it is granted an opportunity by a new culture and a new land. In *The Lowland* (2013) by Jhumpa Lahiri and *An American Brat* (1993) by Bapsi Sidhwa, the American land is delineated as an idealized imaginary land which provides a smooth ground for the female agency to work freely without any restrictions. These two novels actually echo Lyotard's theory of postmodern aesthetics and Bhabha's theory of cultural hybridity. *The Lowland* and *An American Brat* explore how a great desire to get rid of a tragic past and a longing for building and sustaining an individual identity in a new place within the context of a new culture provides new parameters for female agency to work. Whether it is due to the oppressive social environment or because of the set ideologies of females in a patriarchal society, the emergence of female agency always opens up new ways for women to make their own rational choices and decisions in order to construct an individual identity and independent social world where they can better exhibit their skills and talent. Both novels explore that it is the American world view which enables the females to become an independent human being from an oppressed and subjugated person.

Keywords: postmodern aesthetics, female agency, displacement, cultural hybridity, quest of identity, double-colonization, patriarchal oppression.

This study looks at how American world and female agency work in conjunction in the novels *The Lowland* (2013) and *An American Brat* (1993). In Lahiri's and Sidhwa's novels female desires and ambitions are explored. The narrative dwells on how these subjugated and oppressed women succeed in constructing their own social world in order to give vent to their suppressed desires when a new land or culture provides them with an opportunity to do so. It can however in some part also be attributed to the rich solidity of their writing and their enthusiasm to discover new ways in terms of thematic concern, that have rarely been explored before. This research explores how the female agency works in order to build an individual identity, and it constructs individual realities based on personal experiences of the old world and the changing perceptions of the new world.

Women's agency refers to the capacity of women to make on their own rational choices or decisions and in this sense their agency involves social competence in different arenas of action. Their discursive capabilities and practical consciousness and dialectic of control are often reflected in modes of coping with new and many times oppressive social environment. (Jain 2312)

The credit goes to the postmodern epoch that has granted the individuals with an opportunity to explore their reality in different ways depending upon their own desires and perceptions. As, Sardar has discussed in his book *The A to Z of Postmodern Life* (2003) that the dream of "personal ideal utopias", without a consideration to distinguish restrictions, limitations, prohibited norms and "social acceptability" is the worldwide

acknowledged claim of individualism (240). It is the innate desire of all the individuals to do away their past in order to break with the barriers of old traditions and values. When these individuals enter in a new culture, a desire to exterminate their old identities and adopt new ones becomes more intense and sturdy. In 20th century postmodern era it is only American world view which is reflective of that personal ideal utopia having no precincts and margins of any community or culture. American worldview refers to a particular perspective in diasporic circles regarding the potential of America as a safe haven for disgruntled and disillusioned migrants. In contemporary times America is perceived as an imagined land free of any flaws and restrictions which provides equal opportunity to all the individuals having no ethnic, religious or gender privileges. In what appears to be an extension of the same argument, Ziauddin Sardar, in his article “Americana,” states that in 20th century America is considered a nation that is created as a refuge for all the rest of the world; and moreover, it is a nation that is made up of refugees and immigrants (16). American culture or society is as open and accommodative for the female wing as for men. It provides a welcoming environment for the female agency to work freely without any obligations or pressures, and in that vast and liberated world the female can better reveal their flair and hidden talent. Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Lowland* and Bapsi Sidhwa’s *An American Brat* present a true picture of female agency working in American culture with full flamboyance and modishness.

Like various other writers of diasporic fiction, Sidhwa and Lahiri also discuss about the “hybrid lives and identities” in the contemporary transcultural world. But the way they look at the cultural hybridity in the lives of individuals, who come from

the postcolonial societies, and their characters' exceptional discernment regarding dislocation differentiates them from other contemporary writers of diasporic fiction. Both these female diasporic writers are writing from the "place of hybridity". As Christine Wick Sizemore has described in her book *Negotiating Identities in Women's Lives*, "if most late-twentieth-century cultures are hybrid and heterogeneous and if identity is best understood as narrative, it is valuable to look closely at women's narratives that are consciously written from the place of hybridity, from the interstices of culture" (143). Sizemore further justifies this point by emphasizing that the "author's sense of dislocation or liminality comes from a geographic experience of immigration, emigration, or exile. It does not matter if this is an awareness of geographic invasion and the super-imposition of an alien culture as in colonialism, or if it is a consciousness of a mixed ethnic and cultural heritage or even a sense of marginality". According to her "the narratives of such women come from a different space than many narratives from the earlier twentieth century, which were often nation based" (143).

In Lahiri's narrative female characters perceive displacement or dislocation as an opening to move away from their awful pasts which splinter their lives. On the other hand their preference for displacement is an obvious warning that they are not ready to surrender in front of patriarchal domination and exploitation. Lahiri's novel examines the terrible impact of history on the lives of females, and how this collision destroys their lives and wheedles their rebellion against the conventional authority and social standards. Thus, Lahiri depicts female perspective of displacement as an endeavor to discard the power and supremacy of colonial authority as well as the patriarchal order

of the society. The females disallow their suppression, be it by colonial power or by patriarchy. In *The Lowland* Gauri's character is typical of a woman in post-colonial India where females are suppressed and oppressed doubly, as a colonial subject and as a victim of patriarchal society. The incident of her husband's death and its after effects upon her life is an obvious sign of her oppression as a colonial subject, and the society's mistreatment of her as a widow exemplifies her as a subject of patriarchal coercion and cruelty. She was so badly treated by her own society after her husband's death, in the name of social values "the vermillion was washed clean from her hair, the iron bangle removed from her wrist. The absence of these ornaments marked her as a widow. She was twenty-three years old" (Lahiri 109). Gauri was also an ill-fated victim of the malicious customs of the society like many other widows.

In *Colonialism / Postcolonialism* Ania Loomba has discussed that "Spivak's choice of the immolated widow as emblematic of the 'subaltern' is significant. Such a figure is in fact the most perfect instance of subaltern silence, since she is conceptual and social category that comes into being only when the subject dies". Spivak further argues that "The to-be-sati is merely a widow, the *sati* is by definition a silenced subject. Her silencing points to the oppression of all women in colonial India, but at the same time not all women in colonial India can be collapsed into such a figure" (196). Gauri was dissimilar to many other widows of the post-colonial India. She challenged and discarded the old morals and ideologies which were the reason of female domination and suppression. Her decision to marry Subhash was an act of rebellion against society. "The relations between colonizer and colonized were, after all, constantly spliced by

many other social hierarchies. This suggests that any instance of agency, or act of rebellion, can be accessed from divergent perspectives” (Loomba 199). Subhash had given her an opportunity to move to a new world that had no traces of the old world where Gauri was doubly colonized. By marrying Subhash, “though in one way she’d burrowed even more deeply into their family, in another way she’d secured her release” (Lahiri 127). Gauri’s second marriage was a rational decision in order to secure her life from the ruthless traditions in the name of religion and social standards. For the sake of her safety she took refuge in another culture that protected her liberty and individuality. This act of Gauri refers to the notion of women’s agency.

Moreover, Sen considers agency as “the pursuit of goals and objectives that a person has reason to value and advance” (qtd. in Jain 2312). Though Gauri knew that “in a way it had been another flaunting of convention, perhaps something Udayan might have admired. When she’d eloped with Udayan, she had felt audacious”. And now again “agreeing to be Subhash’s wife, to flee to America with him, a decision at once calculated and impulsive, felt even more extreme” (Lahiri 127). She thought about second marriage on rational grounds. She was aware of the fact that only displacement could shield her from the social oppression and suppression. She had an immense desire to do away with her past that had caged her. So, in order to fulfill her desire and for an improved life Gauri happily chose displacement. She availed the opportunity offered by Subhash in order to break with the barriers of conventional past: “Though their marriage had not been a solution, it had taken her away from Tollygunge. He had brought her to America and then, like an animal briefly observed, briefly caged, released her” (242).

In both novels female agency is at play on multiple levels. While talking about Sidhwa's female characters, it would not be wrong to say that displacement grants them an opportunity to take a turn from the subject position as a victim or hostage of a system where individuals have to live their lives following the tenets and ideologies which are inflicted in their minds by the establishment or the government of the country. It is through displacement that they come to know how to judge the world through their experience and perceptions. As, in *An American Brat* Feroza was a Parsee girl, but she was expected to follow the basic Islamic laws while living in Pakistan. She was not a free individual, and could not afford to look at her life from her own perspective. Her mind was imprisoned by the practicing ideologies of the society where she had the position of a minority subject. It was only after experiencing a new life in America that she came to realize the value of her own individuality, freedom and her autonomous acuity of the world. "There was also the relief from observing the grinding poverty and injustice she could do so little to alleviate, the disturbing Hadood Ordinances that allowed the victims of rape to be punished, and the increasing pressure from the fundamentalists to introduce more Islamic law" (Sidhwa 347). In American culture Feroza was happy and relieved as she was no more a victim of constraints and limitations that she had to follow in her own society. "Her wide-open eyes soaking in the new impressions as she pushed the cart, a strange awareness seeped into Feroza: She knew no one, and no one knew her! It was a heady feeling to be suddenly so free---for the moment at least---of the thousand constraints that governed her life" (57). It was the same feeling which Gauri went through while travelling to America "she preferred being on the plane, detached

from the earth, the illusion of sitting still” (124). Gauri had a strong feeling of captivity related to brutal and violent Indian post-colonial society. That was the reason she wanted to stay away from the earth where she had undergone a lot of pain and viciousness due to the nasty customs and way of life. “On the plane time had been irrelevant but also the only thing that mattered; it was time, not space, she had been aware of travelling through”. It was staggering to see Gauri being so happy and gratifying while thinking about displacement or dislocation. While sitting in the plane she was comfortable to think that now she was free from the old world, and would not follow its rules and values anymore. Gauri content that “she sat among so many passengers, captive, awaiting their destinations. Most of them, like Gauri, freed in an atmosphere not their own” (Lahiri 125).

It was an advantage of displacement that Gauri and Feroza belonged to neither one place, nor the other, and they were not obliged to follow the customs and norms of any particular society. They could follow any rule which was convenient for them. According to Bhabha “hybridity or transnationalism is a challenge to the idea of a unified ‘imaginary community;’ hybridity brings up the idea that you may belong to many communities or cultures at once, and trans-nationalism brings up the idea that identity may not be determined by national boundaries, either political or geographical” (qtd. in Klages 159). So by picking up displacement or cultural hybridity Gauri asserted that she was no more a colonial subject of Indian society to tolerate the cruelty and mistreatment, and at the same time she was not an American to follow the social and religious standards of that culture. Feroza on the other hand was not a subject of a

dominated marginal community of a Pakistani Muslim culture; as she had not to face the social, ethnic and class hierarchies in American culture. As, Bhabha says in *The Location of Culture*, the “interstitial passage between fixed identification opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertain difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy” (4). For Gauri and Feroza cultural hybridity is an underpinning of fulfillment and accomplishment. It fulfills their desire of independence and freedom.

Both Gauri and Feroza’s accomplishment in attaining everything they wished in that new world is a clear notion of female agency working freely in American culture. In case of Gauri “She had been given what she had demanded, granted exactly the freedom she had sought”. So in a way, “Gauri’s mind had saved her. It had enabled her to stand upright. It had cleared a path for her. It had prepared her to walk away” (Lahiri 213). On the other hand “the heady sense of freedom, of youthful happiness, deepened in Feroza” (Sidhwa 112). While living in America, “She felt she was being initiated into some esoteric rites that governed the astonishingly independent life and unsupervised lives of young people in America. Often, as she sat among them, Feroza thought she had taken a phenomenal leap in perceiving the world from a wider, bolder and happier angle” (179). That was the reason she did not want to go back to Pakistan. In that new country both of them had succeeded in building up a new identity. As, Mark Currie has defined in *Postmodern Narrative Theory* that “identity is relational, meaning that it is not to be found inside a person but that it inheres in the relations between a person and others”. According to this argument, the validation of a person’s identity “must designate the difference between that person and others: it must refer not to the inner life of the person

but to the system of differences through which individuality is constructed. In other words, personal identity is not really contained in the body at all; it is structured by, or constituted by, difference” (25). So in a new world Gauri was completely successful in building up her individual identity.

She is the member of the virtual world, an aspect of her visible on the new sea that has come to dominate the earth’s surface. There is a profile of her on the college website, a relatively recent photograph. A list of the courses she teaches, a trail marking her accomplishments. Degrees, publications, conferences, fellowships. Her e-mail, and her mailing address at the department, should anyone want to send her something or get in touch. (Lahiri 276)

And Feroza was sure that “she was in the right place, that her life would develop in unexpected and substantial ways” (Sidhwa 234). The new world had given her the opportunity and freedom to do anything according to her will and desire, “Within the heady climate of her freedom in America, she felt able to do anything” (239). So besides building up new identities in a new culture, both Gauri and Feroza had also successfully joined new social circle.

In “Women’s Agency in the Context of Family Networks in Indian Diaspora” Shobhita Jain has discussed that for some feminist scholars, it is only by looking into the social worlds of women that we can bring women’s capabilities out into the open and fully discuss them. In this view it is held out that the institution of patriarchy segregates them off from men in such a way that their capabilities remain hidden. These

capabilities become apparent only when one looks at the ways in which women's own social relationships construct women's world that is not only different, but also special in its form and content (2313). In the American world away from the domination of Indian patriarchy Gauri had vigorously revealed her talent. "She had published three books in her life: a feminist appraisal of Hegel, an analysis of interpretive methods in Horkheimer, and the book that had been based on her dissertation, that had grown out of a blundering essay she'd written for Professor Weiss: *The Epistemology of Expectation in Schopenhauer*" (Lahiri 234). That new place was her sociable home where she had given meaning to her life. It was that new world which had given her a new personality, autonomy, distinctiveness, and a prospect to live an enhanced life. "In any case, California was her only home. Right away she had adapted to its climate, comforting and strange, hot but seldom oppressive" (235). Likewise Gauri, Feroza's experience of living in America proves invigorating as well. "Menak she had become used to the seductive entitlements of the First World. Happy Hour, telephones that worked, the surfeit of food, freezers, electricity, and clean and abundant water, the malls, skyscrapers, and highways" (Sidhwa 346). She also succeeded in building up an individual identity and her own social world. "She had gone too far. Finding herself awash in this exhilaratingly free and new culture had made forget the strictures imposed on her conduct as a Pakistani girl" (104).

In that new culture, Gauri and Feroza feel liberated as they are not subjected to any kind of repression and maltreatment in the name of marriage and family life. By leaving their past behind they had maintained a new identity and the new world gave them that

opportunity to build and then sustain that identity. Sardar quotes an American scholar Cornel West who has suggested that individuals construct their identities according to their desires and experience. It is their desire for appreciation, quest for identification, the sense of being accredited, a deep desire for alliance which invoke them to have a desire of belonging to that new world by building up a new identity (100). Displacement had given them a self-determined life full of opportunities, and freedom. “A boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing” (qtd. in Bhabha1). So the lives of Gauri and Feroza got a new start through displacement. American world allows them to show their expertise and proficiency. It had given them a chance to build a new identity in a new context, and to construct a social world where they could show their hidden talent in a more open and free environment.

Besides giving them liberty and independence, female agency also offers them an opportunity to become an oppressor instead of an oppressed and subjugated self. Lahiri’s female characters get freedom, independence and security through displacement, and on the other hand their intense craving to espouse new cultural habits and lifestyle makes them the tormenters who deliberately hurt those people who are dependent upon their love and care. Gauri’s cruel sacrifice of her relations determined her status as an oppressor or teaser. She wanted an escape from her tragic past, and for that particular reason she left her husband and daughter who really needed her, especially her daughter Bela. Ignoring the fact that her daughter was too young to live without her she left Bela. By doing all that with Subhash and Bela, intentionally or unintentionally Gauri

succeeded in avenging all that was done to her by other members of her society. Being aware of their innocence Gauri destroyed the lives of her husband and daughter in order to fulfill her repressed desire. And it was through displacement that she got that chance to payback what she received from the Indian society. It was in the new world that she had been given an opportunity to do so, as it was not possible while living in the Indian society. She was ostracized and marginalized by her in-laws and relatives in India, but in America it was not so. It is indicated that she detested Subhash and her daughter, because the two were reminder of a hellish past.

Like Lahiri, Sidhwa's female characters also take a turn from a subjugated position to an independent and free self. It was the American land which provided Feroza with an opportunity to reject her identity as an ideological hostage and build a new identity as an independent being having her own relations and self-sufficient social world. Like Gauri she did not become an oppressor towards her loved ones intentionally, but she too sacrificed her relations in order to secure her freedom. "These and the other constraints crush her freedom, a freedom that had become central to her happiness. The abandon with which she could conduct her life without interference was possible only because of the distance from her family and the anonymity America provided" (Sidhwa 347).

So, Lahiri and Sidhwa delineate American land or culture as a milestone for the females of third world postcolonial countries who can achieve everything in that utopian land which was impossible in their own societies. America is presented as a ground-place for the female agency to work liberally without any oppression or incarceration. American culture is a landmark for their objectives and aspirations. It allows the

female agency to operate in an immeasurable prospect. Females from an oppressive patriarchal background or from a fundamental patriarchal system get everything they wish in American land. They construct their own social world and build up an individual identity, and fulfill all their curbed desires and aspirations in that new culture.

In one way or other these narratives offer a chance to the female characters to enjoy liberty, autonomy and confidence, and if necessary, become an oppressor or dominating personality instead of an oppressed and vanquished self. So it can be suggested that *The Lowland* and *An American Brat* represent the notion of the female agency working freely in a new land, America, where women can make their own rational choices or decisions and show their social competency in different fields of life. However, personal angst, which this displacement caused to their family members, also suggests that they have paid a heavy emotional price for their freedom.

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Indigenous Landscape and Scents in the Poetry of Taufiq Rafat

Rahat Amin

Abstract

This paper looks at Taufiq Rafat's celebration of indigenous landscape with respect to "faunal images" and "rejuvenation" presented in his poetry. This study highlights concrete images and prosaic language to express Rafat's views about his landscape with delicacy and leniency of his diction. His idea of celebration also contains enthusiasm, ecstasy, liberty, serenity and harmony. In this paper a vivid picture of Pakistani land is presented to the readers through poet's superior expressions. In a nut-shell, Rafat delineates his indigenous landscape with association of various seasons.

Keywords: Taufiq Rafat, faunal images, diction, Pakistani land, indigenous landscape.

The central concern in modern Pakistani English poetry is the portrayal of socio-cultural and religious rituals through local images. The main concern of Pakistani English poets seems to be the creation of a core identity with indigenous roots which distinguishes them from the romantic tradition of Urdu and native English poets. This is due to the fact Pakistani poets have often been compared with Romantic poets, as Romantic poets use common man's idiom and focus on spontaneity. This ties in with Wordsworth's idea of "spontaneous overflow of feelings" and Keats's assertion "if poetry comes not as naturally as leaves to a tree, it had better not come at all".

The difference between Pakistani English poets and Romantic poets is the employment of both imaginative and romantic elements by the latter group. Their poems start with something realistic. For instance "cuckoo", "daffodils", "rivers", "mountains", "sea", "evening" and "rainbow" all exist in the real world. But the imagination of Romantic poets dominates the reality. For example, "Kubla Khan" takes the readers into a supernatural world of imagination. Romantic literature focuses on the celebration of beauty, nature and imagination. There is also a rejection of industrialism, rationalism, idealization of rural life, the inclusion of supernatural or mythological elements prevalent in Romantic poetry. Contrarily, Pakistani English poets do not talk about a romantic or fantastic world while conveying the idea of an eastern landscape. They mainly talk about their own homeland. After the partition of 1947 they have given a new mode to poetry which is an epitome of their tradition, culture, religion, identity and ideology. Their poetry gives a glimpse of celebration of local coloring, rejuvenation, ecstasy, liberty and serenity. They use prosaic language in order to present their culture, traditions and colors with which they fill the pictures of their terrain.

This paper explores how Pakistani poets differ from Romantic poets in their portrayal of “local coloring”. Local coloring in this context refers to the celebration of local flora and fauna and seeing the ‘muse’ in local colors.

Taufiq Rafat is a pre-eminent Pakistani English poet of the 20th century. Among the Pakistani poets in this era who have contributed to the development of a Pakistani idiom of poetry are Kaleem Omar, Daud Kamal and Maki Kureshi. Their style is significant because they represent their own country, but Taufiq Rafat’s name is often attuned right at the top. M. Athar Tahir beautifully comments on his poetry in the introduction of the book *A Selection*:

Taufiq Rafat, the foremost poet English in Pakistan, has for five decades been bending words from a foreign domain for the purpose of his province. By so doing he has carried English to a new creative and imaginative terrain. Of Pakistani practitioners of poetry and prose in English, he has been the most consistent in his calling. (Rafat 1)

His influence on the other poets has been remarkable as he introduces his own idioms to give a glimpse of his local terrain like “baithak”, “veranda”, “koel”, “lichee tree”, “sheesham”, “gulmohur”, “brilliantly white courtyard”, “last night curry” and “brown water”. These images we do not find in Western writings. Due to Rafat’s discerning quality his fellow M. Athar Tahir praises him in the introduction of the book *A Selection* (1997) he writes, “Rafat sang not of Daffodils but of gulmohur and cacti. He wrote not of civilized pattern of English rain, but of heat, dust and thunder and relieving the monsoon” (Rafat 3).

Rafat's main claim to fame is his collection of poetry *Arrival of Monsoon* (1985). It remains his most famous collection, and for many decades dominated the literary world of Pakistani English poetry. In his collection, Rafat presents seasons, the characters, fragrance of mud and cultural substratum of his homeland. His remarkable collection has gained special attribution by reviewers and critics in Pakistan as well as abroad.

The distinctive quality of Taufiq Rafat among all the Pakistani English and Romantic English poets is his usage of own indigenous idiom and terminologies through which he delineates his countryside. In many ways, he seems to echo Wordsworth in *Preface to Lyrical Ballad*, when the latter says:

There will also be found in these volumes little of what is usually called Poetic diction; I have taken as much pains to avoid it as others ordinarily take to produce it; this I have done for the reason already alleged, to bring my language near to the language of men, and further because the pleasure which I have proposed to myself to impart is of a kind very different from that which is supposed by many persons to be the proper object of poetry. (1798-1805)

He gives new mode to Pakistani poetry. His poetry is a paradigm for his contemporaries especially those of Pakistani origin. The superiority of his style lies in the fact that he remains close to his landscape and employs those images and symbols that give an inclusive picture of his local terrain. His use of prosaic language gives a glimpse of rejuvenation and optimism. The unique quality of his style is that he implies multifarious

images in such a skillful manner that these images create pictures before the mental eye of reader and through this, he conveys his own ideas and concepts. For instance, in his poem “*Karachi 1955*” he does not only give the fanciful picture but also points out reality.

The bald sparrow scrounges in the dust bin;
only the spendthrift gul-mohur spills its gold
in the pitiful spring that time allows.
We wear our feature to suit the landscape,
and malice moves like a rainless cloud
over the brown cliffs of the teeth. (14-19)

Taufiq Rafat’s poetry gives a sight of inspiration including affliction and joy. His poetry is an amalgamation of sadness, truth, beauty and a celebration of natural world in positive ways. Beside “gulmohur spills its gold”, there are other images in the poem like “sweet water”, “little rain”, and “road of greenery” which reflect Rafat’s concern about his land. His pattern is striking and readers discover and trace the delicacy of his mode. He has a cognizant quality which makes him want to express his emotions, thoughts and overwhelming feelings toward his land. For instance in his poem “The Last Visit”, he presents the idea of rejuvenation with the tread of an old man who visits his countryside. His every step toward his home town gives a glimpse of his reinvigoration. Taufiq Rafat uses simple images, precise and graphic details and exactness of life which formulate the poem genuine. He uses daily life diction and presents the idea of rejuvenation in an exact way. He celebrates his local coloring with the image like “sherwani”, “turban” and “pumps”. As he says:

He put on his best sherwani
and turban and new pumps. We left
the warmth of the room for the rawness

and bluster of the porch, where
his ninety years swayed in the wind. (6-10)

His unique idiom is comprised of images that come to life fully realized in their potentials. His expression contains an economy with clarity. He does not give fanciful details and neither exaggerates about the presentation of his local terrain. He describes the real and actual picture of his homeland magnanimously. His style is dexterous as he celebrates his local coloring while referring to important indigenous landscapes such as the ancient civilization of Mohenjo-Daro and Himalayas. This proves the speaker's attachment to his landscape. As he says:

Thinking of Mohenjo-Daro
Alexandria and Rome;
I note how time curves
Back on itself
Like an acrobat. (1-5)

As Kaleem Omar gives his views about Taufiq Rafat's poetry in his interview in Dawn Newspaper published on 16 April, 2017.

I am reminded of Taufiq Rafat's haunting words, when I think of Mohenjo-Daro in the context of its links to the architecture of other ancient civilization such as civilization of ancient Mesopotamia, (present day Iraq) which existed roughly the same time as the Indus valley civilization, of which Mohenjo-Daro is perhaps the most important archaeological site. (n.p)

Rafat, as a versatile poet does not confine himself to a single idea, in fact; his idea of the celebration of local coloring is grand. His tone is harmonic rather than harsh. The

spectacle of celebration of local coloring is splendid as he presents concrete images in the particular area of his country. For instance, he talks about Karachi and Taxila with their cultural and social rituals.

The season telescopes
 a short summer into a short of winter
 topped by a mini-monsoon. Each new morning
 brings no hope of change. Generally the clouds
 Are sexless, mute, and above our affairs.
 A splitting sky announces a jet not rain (9-14).

His emphasis on certain untapped parts of his country seems to serve a specific purpose—that of clarifying the reader’s thoughts about his nation state. In his poems like “Flood in a Narrow Valley”, “Street of Nightingale”, “Soil”, “Ramzan”, “Eid”, “Pigeons”, “Mango Trees”, “Family” he presents his own homeland, culture, religion, traditions and society. His symbolism, poetic style and imagery reflect the context of Pakistan.

Another important feature in Taufiq Rafat’s poetry is his delineation of faunal images. He associates various themes like liberty, harmony and serenity with birds. Like Wordsworth he also implies multifarious images like “ducks”, “gulls”, “sparrow”, “parrots”, and reference of “seldom bird”. His versatility takes into account even small insects and animals like “geese”, “squirrel” and “fireflies”. Moreover, there are various animal images like “snake”, “frog”, “horse”, “monkey”, “camels”, “cat”, “wild hen” and “dog” with whom he very conspicuously composes curiosity of the reader’s mind. Tariq Rehman pays tribute to the magnetic facet of Taufiq Rafat’s poetry in his book *A History of Pakistani Literature in English*:

Nature provides the dominant images in most of the Poems of Rafat.

Besides the flowers and grass images the poems feature animals. These range from the wild snow leopards and snakes to the domestic goats. He has also an eye for birds with the list including geese, kites, sparrow, eagles, partridge and so on. This imagery reinforces the theme of the healing quality of closeness to nature while alienation from it is the beginning disquiet. (5)

One of the most remarkable qualities in Taufiq Rafat's celebration of local coloring is his astounding ability to maintain a precise and simple diction. Rafat describes faunal images in such a way that his presentation enlivens the readers. For instance in his poem "Arrival of Monsoon", he consolidates the rainy season with life. Rafat depicts a season of monsoon which is general to the context of South Asia but more specific to Pakistan. He enlivens the readers with gorgeous sight. He presents the inspiration of upgrading in a superior way. He uplifts the celebration of human beings and animals to their height, when he gives a glimpse of lively spectacle:

Alive, alive, everything is live again.

Savour the rain's coolness on lips and eyes.

How madly the electric wire is swinging! (16-18)

There is ecstasy, which everyone feel with the arrival of monsoon. Even the wire is swinging madly; this gives the idea of the poet's conspicuous nature. Taufiq Rafat is a genius who celebrates his local coloring with idea of rejuvenation. He amalgamates multifarious images in order to give a glimpse of his ecstasy. His superiority of style lies in the fact that he delineates different seasons in a splendid way. For instance, he implies beauty in "snow of winter season", celebrates "arrival of monsoon" in his region, gives a

glimpse of marvelous “summer evening”, wondrous “cool may”, stupendous “ceremony for autumn”, “sugarcane stalk” and liveliness in the “tread of an old man who visits his native town”. His talent reflects in every sight which he notices in his local terrain. There is enthusiasm, diligence, elegancy and profundity in his style. His poetry seems to aim at the mitigation of anxieties, miseries and agitations of people belonging to his land. He wishes to make people alive again through his inspiration of innovation which people forget in their hustle and bustle of life. He is a vigorous poet to whom liberty, certainty, harmony, clemency, and authenticity have great values. His poetry takes readers to ecstasy when he gives glimpses of rejuvenation in his own land. For instance, in his poem “After Rain” he delineates the idea of buoyancy and enthusiasm with rejuvenation. As in Pakistan, people experience prolonged summer, for them rainy weather brings enjoyment, celebration and, serenity. He also implies bird images in order to show the idea of liberty. As the opening lines of the poem “After Rain” presents tenderness, commemoration and festivity:

Birds, too, have sensed that the whole year
may not gift another day like this.
They have turned out in force. In the heady air
they spurt from poplar to eucalyptus. (1-4)

Another remarkable quality in Taufiq Rafat’s poetry is that he illustrates the scene not only with the perspective of human beings but also with reference to universal living creatures. Because for him, everything in his land whether ancient civilizations or rituals have great values. He presents the pleasures of birds:

and back again, singing all the while,
I am their auditor transfixed by choice.
In the background to make the evening full
the frogs and insects are in good voice. (5-8)

The enthusiasm and ecstasy of local coloring is also prominent in his other poems like “Trees in March”, “Mangoes”, “To See Fruit Ripen” and “A Cool May”. He uses concrete images of localism and indigenization which reflect the romantic imagery that we find in Wordsworth or P.B Shelley’s poetry. There is also a nostalgic touch present in poetry of Taufiq Rafat. As Wordsworth gives a pleasant and innocent view of past in “Tintern Abbey”:

Five years have past:
Summers with the length
Of five long winters! And again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain springs
With a soft inland murmur (1-5)

Correspondingly, Taufiq Rafat also calls to mind his childhood days. With childhood, he associates an idea of harmony, innocence and purity of thought. While looking on stone chat all the memories of childhood are now awakening and desire for liberty like singing bird is also rising. As the speaker presents in these lines:

I would have missed him. But for his tail
Vibrating with excitement. He hops up
the slop held in place by a slab of sunlight,
to ridicule terrace of wheat
which does not seem worth tending (19-23)

The use of faunal images in Taufiq Rafat’s poetry gives a new paradigm to his poetry. He does not associate any supernatural element unlike Coleridge’s use of albatross in “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.” Rafat’s mode is vigorous and there are always feelings of serenity and buoyancy in his poems. His attitude is raucous when he refers to animals as in his poem “Monkey at Hardwar” the speaker recalls pre-partition days and associates dual names Bharat and India. There is a beautiful recollection of memories

when he recalls his childhood days:

We were children then, on our way to Lahore
 For the winter break. When we reached hardware
 We anticipated the monkeys, who perched in rows
 On the terrain roof, solemnly, awaiting their chance. (5-8)

He even considers the motif of snake as ‘not entirely malevolent’. In his poem “Snake”

he beautifully portrays the picture in the reader’s mind:

The cottage
 We had rented for the season
 Was hundred feet below
 Road level and a long
 Serpentine gravelly path
 Poke with stones, led to it (2-7)

Taufiq Rafat also uses comparison of rural or urban life of his country. Like Romantics he also shows love for rural life. He uses an image of “stainless homogeneity” for urban life in his poem “Kitchens”. He presents the typical culture of Pakistan and uses his own idioms as he says:

Kitchens were places
 We grew up in
 High-roofed spacious
 They attracted us
 With the pungency
 Of smoke and spices

The images of “smoke”, “fire”, “curry”, and “high roofed” give a glimpse of his roots. Like Frost, Rafat also talks about ordinary life and experiences. We can say that Rafat’s poetry is a blend of both modern and Romantic conventions.

Taking into account all the above mentioned examples of Taufiq Rafat's poetry, it is evident that an essential feature in his poetry is celebration of local coloring. He is a great poet in history of Pakistani English poetry who gives remarkable impression of landscape. He relates significant ideas of peace, positivity of spirit, optimistic nature, religious rituals and liberty in a superior way. Local coloring, therefore, finds its expression in Taufiq Rafat's poetry. It is for this reason that Rafat is successful in thinking a new idiom for Pakistani poetry that celebrates the local coloring.

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Religious Spectrum in Khushwant Singh's Short Stories

Samina Ayub

Abstract

This paper aims to explore anti-romantic orientation of religious landscape reflected through the short stories of Khushwant Singh in his two collections *Paradise & Other Stories* (2005) and *The Collected Short Stories of Khushwant Singh* (2005). The writer mocks at increasing religious temperature, pseudo-religious godmen, blind ritualistic adherence, credibility of spiritual illumination, role of karma, and significance of sacred places like temples and gurdwaras in the world's largest secular democracy, India. He maintains that the institution of religion is used as a smokescreen to hide growing violence, intolerance and bigotry. His deliberate renunciation of religion is a product of his thoughtful humanistic weltanschauung that preaches crucial need for evolving a new religious charter for 21st century people, which involves love for humanity, belief in rational inquiry, confidence in the work ethic, and equal opportunity for peaceful co-existence.

Keywords: Indian culture, religious landscape, holy choices, question of morality

India – the land of Ganges, the birthplace of four religions and home of various saints has a long history of fascinating and drawing devotees to her religious temperature. India's unchallenged religious precedence infuriates Khushwant Singh so much that he proclaims agnosticism, and denies conforming to the philosophy of an ever-existent God. He himself ridicules the concept of God in "Wrestling with the Almighty", saying that, "I came to the conclusion that the concept of God is like a gas balloon which will burst on contact with the pin of truth...In the religion I have evolved for myself and recommended to my readers God has no place" (374-375). He states that all religious texts are boringly "repetitive, banal and often illogical" (376) and reading the works of great writers happens to be more instructive than reading "religious prose and poetry [that] is largely an exercise in self-hypnosis" (*Truth, Love & a Little Malice* 376). His utter disgust with the world of religion is enormously highlighted in his short stories through religious penchants of his characters coupled with wolfish facets of the well-established institution of religion that is proving to be more destructive than beneficial in the modern era. Being a non-conformist, his objective is to expose downside of both Abrahamic and Hindic families of religions believing that actual strength of all major religions is lost because instead of curbing violence, they are playing an indispensable role in instigating social unrest, anarchy, extremism, communal breach, hatred and insatiable hostility among believers. He hates flying upon "magic carpet of faith" woven by age-old messengers; instead he prefers to build his conscience on a "solid, concrete bridge of reason" (Singh 32). He believes that God is an "undiscovered power" and "an illusion" that is why the idea of an omnipresent God ought to be discarded (28,

48). Singh's call for logical submission is captured vividly in “The Mark of Vishnu”, a story depicting the thrall of orthodoxy embedded in the consciousness of an old Hindu Brahmin named Gunga Ram who firmly believes in the trinity of Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the preserver) and Siva (the destroyer) but preferably, he observes obeisance to his beloved deity Vishnu in the incarnation of Kala Nag living in the hole of the lawn; proudly demonstrating its indomitable six feet long body and glistening black hood with its grandeur. Devout Gunga Ram takes delight in paying homage to the snake-god Vishnu by offering a saucer of milk every night to Kala Nag; as he believes that offering milk to the Nag would save every member of the family from its dangerous bite.

The character portrayal of Gunga Ram in the story captures the primitive ritual of worshipping snakes in India, in particular, its southern part is famously known for keeping up this archaic practice that had once been celebrated in Babylonian, Greek, Egyptian, Chinese, Arabian, Japanese and Nepalese cultures (Deane 41-77). In *The Worship of the Serpent* (1833), Deane informs his readers about the practice of eating “the heart and liver of serpents, for the purpose of acquiring...knowledge” in both Hindu and Arabian civilizations (77). With the advent of Islam, this particular custom was repudiated in the Arabian lands, but India still enjoys the status of a snake-loving country that proudly appreciates snake-worship through her famously held festival of Nag Panchami in which serpent-deities are honored with a considerable amount of milk in the similar fashion Gunga Ram offers milk to Kala Nag. Stylistically, the plot progresses with the induction of a contrasting picture pitting young generation against the older one. There are four stout school-going brothers in the habit of nagging their

only servant Gunga Ram for his blind adherence to the mundane ritualistic practice of offering milk to the snake. These boys serve as the writer's mouthpiece because they keep on questioning Gunga Ram's irrational beliefs in the due course of the story. Feeling unconvinced with Gunga Ram's convictions, inquisitive boys make fun of him by calling him a "stupid old Brahmin" whose ignorance has landed him into the sea of superstitions that is engulfing many other Indians into its enslaving fold. "The Mark of Vishnu" encapsulates a single credulous belief, but evaluation of present scenario in India reveals that there are various other common superstitions including bad dreams, broken-glass, black cats, astrological forecast, fear of eclipses, twitching of left eye, cawing crow promising arrival of guests, custom of throwing rice in the weddings, hanging shoes on newly purchased vehicles, putting black soot on face to ward off evil and house sweeping after sunset—all are considered highly unlucky. But the query is that apart from India, all regions in the world share superstitious elements in different measure, then why does Singh castigate India in particular? The obvious response comes from the writer's column "Fad is Vastu" in which he laments the fact that "no people in the world are more receptive towards irrational beliefs than...Indians" (33). He also imparts his conclusive knowledge through the radical approach of Vijay in "The Mulberry Tree" who strongly believes that "continuing backwardness" is the actual dilemma that is making "India a laughing stock of the world" (228-229). Following in Vijay's footsteps, little school boys challenge Gunga Ram's fundamental acquiesce to an established custom by rendering scientific information involving food habits of snakes that do not include daily milk intake, in fact snakes eat only once in many days.

Here, Singh shows that Kala Nag is the key object of focus in the story but it is evoking conflicting responses from both the parties namely Gunga Ram and school children. Interestingly, Kala Nag serves as a symbol of religious integrity for Gunga Ram but curious boys share a relationship of irreverence with the snake. They tell their servant about the story of a grass snake swallowing a frog that sticks in its throat like a blob eventually taking many days to dissolve and go down in its tail. This proud show of iconoclastic knowledge, contempt for sacred life and religious detachment perturb Gunga Ram so much that he warns them by saying that they will pay for it one day. On one hand, the writer paints orthodox Gunga Ram with profound detail to expose fanaticism in such devotees that makes reaching any compromising panacea impossible. On the other hand, there is a liberated voice embedded in the boys' consciousness. Through this stark juxtaposition, the writer employs two dominant mainstreams complicating the unified structure of Indian society. Above all, the curse of increasing fundamentalism is playing havoc with global harmony. Hence, Singh himself holds religious-maniacs, orthodox militants, Shiv Sena, Bajrang Dal, Vishva Hindu Parishad and Sangh Parivar responsible for religious crisis in the country in his book *The End of India* (2003). He strongly feels that:

The worst enemy of every religion is the fanatic who professes to follow it and tries to impose his view of his faith on others. People do not judge religions by what their prophets preached or how they lived but by the way their followers practice them. (16)

The real contemporary challenge lies in addressing the extremist mindset where

destructive fundamentalism grows. It is not that only Singh's collage of stories pinpoints the aftermaths of extreme religious choices. Comparative analysis of Hanif Kureishi's "My Son the Fanatic" also highlights how religious choices of Parvez and his son Ali create immutable differences between them. On one hand, Ali's mind is obsessed with Islamization, mosque, prayers and jihad. He questions Parvez's western ways of eating pork pies, enjoying drinks and the company of a prostitute, Bettina. Hence, agitated Parvez brutally punishes Ali for taking such liberty with him and bloody-faced Ali poses another complex question to his father at this crucial moment asking him that who is the fanatic now? This is important to notice how both the writers bring out the irony of the situation by showing psychological chambers of both the characters. Similar to Ali's holy preoccupation, Gunga Ram's monomaniacal devotion with sacred life including serpent, scorpion, centipede and wasps brings him under the spotlight in the narrative. Moreover, belittling efforts made by the boys fail to bring his religious confidence down, and, he considers boys' snake killing lab-activities and the gory description of a snake killing a Russels viper in the jar of methylated spirit completely sinful. By pitting old generation against the youngest one, the writer brings out puritanical beliefs in discord with unorthodox approach, religious fervor contrasted with unconventional dispositions, false assumptions challenged by logical reasoning and blind religious observance in confrontation with rationale. One is the voice of an unflinching worshipper representing stereotypical lot of dogged believers; second is a collective consciousness advocating rejection of superfluous rituals, alarming superstitions and psychological inertia deeply rooted into the religious structures of backward societies.

Upon finding Kala Nag's alfresco appearance, the way boys chase their prey,

vehemently break its back with bamboo sticks and, carry the body of snake into a tin-box to the school for preserving it in a lab-jar. From this stage onward, the writer alters the locale for the story by shifting it from a house (place of snake worship) to the school lab (platform of scientific reasoning) where a science teacher opens up the tin-box and scarcely saves himself from the angry cobra attacking to catch for his face. In the meantime, Gunga Ram appears at the lab-door with a jug and saucer full of milk to entertain the approaching Nag but, petulant cobra starts hissing and spitting in pain, eventually, awarding devout Gunga Ram with its fatal poison. The punch lines in “The Mark of Vishnu” accentuate the tragic fate of conformist Gunga Ram who dies in sheer pain after Kala Nag digs his fangs on his forehead where he bears a sandalwood V mark as a sign of obeisance to the deity. Hence, the audacious writer castigates regressive mindset, sheer ignorance, and blind confidence in false assumptions through the gullible face of his religiously devoted characters. Similar abomination is found in *The Discovery of India* (1946) in which Jawaharlal Nehru declares, “I was ashamed of much that I saw around me, of superstitious practices, of outworn ideas, and, above all, our subject and poverty-stricken state” (49).

Notably, this story is Singh’s attempt at fighting against old absurd notions, the way once Achebe fought against irrationality of African culture. The writer’s frustration is evident with the outcome of the story in which he assigns noxious qualities to holy customs and the institution of religion itself. Another point for consideration is that the flat character of Gunga Ram gets severely punished because of his inability to learn and educate himself. The writer strongly believes that education gives you the insight

to examine and judge things for yourself. And this is the obvious lack of education that primarily plays its role in costing Gunga Ram his life who behaves like a yoked bull with covered eyes unable to heed the scientific knowledge propounded by the boys. Moreover, the writer repeatedly employs devices of irony in his stories to expose darker sides as it is evident from the irony embedded in the title of "The Mark of Vishnu" where he questions god Vishnu's most celebrated powers of life preservation. Does the god justify his role by taking Gunga Ram's life? Does snake-love introduce any remarkable charisma in the character of this Brahmin? Why does Vishnu choose Gunga Ram for his wrath instead of the actual culprits? All of these questions provoke an anti-religious spirit, defying the need to follow old traditions of untenable beliefs. In fact, the writer has kept young disbelievers on the vantage ground because being disillusioned is a blessing in disguise rather than ignorantly losing one's life in the name of religious spirit. Disbelievers are portrayed as champions in this story and a resolute believer is shown as a loser. The writer has intentionally depicted four boys as a foil to Gunga Ram in order to show that survivors exercise deliberate thought while ignorants are often hunted with their own guns. The satirical aspect is that those who harmed the snake are alive but the person trying to compensate for the evil act is chosen for penance. Close analysis shows that Gunga Ram's compassion for wild creatures is in sync with the attitude of the mariner in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" who blesses water-snakes with benevolence and it brings him peace and lifts the curse brought on him after killing the innocent Albatross. But, the case of Gunga Ram is quite different, for he is punished instead of being saved for the crime in which he has performed no role. By contrast it is

clear that the mariner is peacefully liberated while Gunga Ram is captivated in the claws of death. Mariner's belief saves him while Gunga Ram is pushed towards his eternal abode.

Hence, the denouement of this narrative shows the barbarous face of religion that has historically played havoc with the world. Several brutal wars have been fought in the name of faith such as French wars of religion, Crusades, Reconquista of Spain against Muslims, Thirty Year's War, the troubles in Ireland, Palestine-Israel wars, Sudan conflicts, Nigerian fights, Iraqi sectarian tussles, Sikh genocide in India and Afghan Talibanization against America. Accordingly, Singh reveals absolute religious futility through "The Mark of Vishnu" and encourages living without conforming to the glory of religion. Besides, the human-animal relationship has played a vital role in showing how the snake has justified its animalism and Gunga Ram desperately fails in the executing human rational capacity. Moreover, "The Mark of Vishnu" clearly demonstrates clash between three worlds by pitting natural world against human world, human world against the world of superstitions and the world of religion against human-animal forces. All of the three worlds foster their designs with unending rivalry in the plot. But, the resolution of the story portrays the collapse of a single world revolving around religious institution and the other two worlds progress unstoppably with their assigned attributes in their respective moods.

"The Mark of Vishnu" shares an account of individual setback caused by religion whereas "Wanted: a son" deals with the grim application of social beliefs, status of religion in marital life, reality of places of worship and religiously inflicted psychologies of several characters on a larger canvas. It is a powerful story turning

the scales for irresistible yearning for a male heir and its culmination through immoral means. In this piece of writing, Singh has thoroughly charted two generations with their respective *modus vivendi* encompassing stark social realities in a religious-oriented society that entertains miscellaneous attitudes, atypical responses, multiple beliefs and mixed moral values of different ethnic groups. Moreover, a profound analysis shows that Singh follows Miltonic matrix in "Wanted: a son" by subtly illustrating "inscrutable and strange ways of God" (152) as Milton had to "justify the ways of God to men" in *Paradise Lost* (2).

Stylistically, the story is divided into three parts: first serves as a prologue, second screens Devi Lal's life and third impartially captures religious beliefs. Right from the exposition, the protagonist Devi Lal is depicted as an eager inquirer yet a skeptic. Surprisingly, unending metaphysical pursuits, friends' encouraging convictions, godmen succor and the euphoric birth of a grandson help him to ascertain the truth in an unseen divinity. Is it really possible to venerate God by borrowing explanations from others? A case study of Devi Lal's character shows unceasing turbulence in his mind that compels him to analyze the notion of an "all-knowing, just and merciful" Providence (151). Established religious ideals mystify him because if God is an existent power then why there is so much suffering in this world. He is unable to decipher what is there that makes God an apathetic fellow? Why do the prayers remain unanswered? Devi Lal's peculiar streak of skepticism complements to Singh's personal credo in his detailed columns about his meeting with Buddhist Dalai Lama in which he poses the same questions to the Tibetan leader that if God exists then why there is a rampant

injustice, cruelty, violence and suffering in the world (“Dialogue with the Dalai Lama” 126). In another column “Just God?” he questions the validity of an eternal power by asking if there is a powerful God then why he has no ruling values according to the legal “norms of justice” (48). Similarly Devi Lal’s inquiry rests on the same pillars of disbelief when he is faced with the challenge of finding plausible answers to the queries that why some people are born with brains, enjoying good health, living well in prosperity and begetting sons, while others are born dim-witted or diseased, remain poor all their lives and only beget daughters (152).

Generally Singh’s men share utter disbelief in God, for instance, agnostic Vijay in “The Mulberry Tree”, religiously indifferent Mohan Lal in “Karma”, unmoved Mr. Sen in “A Bride for the Sahib”, and nonconformist Brahmin Hari Mohan Pandey in “Life’s Horoscope”. Besides these skeptics, there is a different category of pseudo-religious men who are severely flogged by the writer for their hypocrisy. As far as the conglomeration of ardent believers is concerned, there are only a few in Singh’s short stories such as Gunga Ram in “The Mark of Vishnu”, Ramzan Ram Jawaya in “The Riot”, Peter Hansen in “A Punjab Pastoral” and Pesi Lalkaka in “The Bottom-Pincher”, but none of them truly epitomizes peaceful religiosity that is why the writer largely frowns upon them.

The institution of marriage is regarded sacred in many cultures around the world. Thousand years old Hindu culture recognizes matrimonial alliance as a social and *dharmic* obligation, for it is believed that conjugal commitment lasts not only for this life but for seven birth cycles. It is also believed that entwined karmas of both

the partners bring them closer through the wedlock. “Wanted: a son” unfolds marriage experiences of two generations in its plot: one of Devi Lal’s and second of his children. As far as Devi Lal’s marital life is concerned, it is a prototype of mainstream Indian connubial lives engaging in limited sensuousness and, yet detesting its unwanted outcome in the form of three burdensome daughters: Savitri, Leela and Naina Devi. At this point Singh shows how this particular aftermath plays havoc with the emotional and psychological equilibria of both the partners; for their craving for a son is denied by a “fickle God” (158). But, luckily after the gap of eight years, thirty-seven years old Janaki gets pregnant for the fourth time and, suggests aborting fetus under the impression that fourth child will be another female inclusion in the chain of her family. Ironically, the idea of dropping fetus does not make this couple religiously conscious. Whereas, strong condemnation of abortion is registered in Hindu scriptures such as Bhagavad Gita, Kaushitaki Upanishad, Vaishnava texts, Atharva Veda, Hindu Ethics—all of these texts strictly prohibit this sinful act. A famous Hindu scholar Sripati Chandrasekhar informs in his book *Abortion in a Crowded World* (1974) that “Hindu scriptures from the Vedic age down to the Smritis” disapprove of “*bhrunahatya* (fetus murder) or *farbhahatya* (pregnancy destruction)” and *Vishnu Smriti* also denounces infanticide, because it is “tantamount to killing of [a] holy or learned person” (44). According to *Puranas*, the prophesied Kali Yuga (Dark Age) has approached India because heinous abortions are in rife these days, *Bhagavad Gita* refers to it as “embryo murder”, *Vishnadharma Sutra* states that it is equal of killing a Brahmin; and *Hindu Ethics* considers it a violation of “personal integrity of the unborn” (“Unborn Child under Different Religions” 6-9).

Serious look at religious teachings shows that besides Hinduism, no religion in the world encourages this abusive practice, yet Singh mocks at the institution of religion for its inefficiency in eradicating the application of aberrant acts in the society. His religious coldness is a product of historical crisis attesting indefatigable rivalry between adherents of different credos, Indo-Pak partition tragedy, worldwide ethnic conflicts, ongoing episodes of violence and personal experiences in India.

The writer quickens the wheel of the plot and in one small paragraph where the readers are told how grateful Jankai and Devi Lal feel on the unexpected birth of a son Raj Kumar in the family and all three daughters are married off in their youths; for, it is believed that securing a good husband is more important than having an excellent education.

As far as religious stance on educating women is concerned, there are references to Vishnu and Shiva's feminine avatars, female gurus and well-versed women in Vedas. Hinduism is based on various texts supporting different positions on the same subject that is why, at times, it becomes hard to come up with a single determinable approach. But separate evaluation of significant books shows highly optimistic response for women, for instance, there is encouragement for women in *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* whereas *Manu Smriti* puts restriction on women rights ("Hindu Women in the Mirror of Time: At Once a Goddess and a Slave?" p. 83). It is also observed that there is a contradictory face to Hindu society, on one hand, women enjoyed equal rights in Vedic and Gupta periods and female idols like Lakshmi, Parvati and Durga are revered by millions of devotees; whereas living women had been forced for undignified "self-immolation" known as *sati*.

It is also evident that every religion has exclusive specific moral codes to enlighten their followers so that they can successfully pursue the path to salvation. The question of morality is raised in the subplot of "Wanted: a son". The writer mocks at the marriage drama that is conducted by the parents right after the incident of Raj Kumar's civil marriage with a Sikh girl Baljit during the common Indian Police Service. A Hindu-Sikh conjugal alliance shocks the parents of both the families, therefore disappointed parents arrange for marriage ceremonies prescribed according to their respective religious norms. Religious sarcasm is woven into the narrative through the episodes of performing both, Sikh-Hindu rituals of *Anand Karaj* in a gurdwara and *pheras* in another temple. Singh colors the story through this marriage-parody in which a conscious couple ties nuptial knots for three times as Muslim Samina and Hindu Tashar does it in Ismat Chughtai's "Sacred Duty". The only difference between both the couples is that Raj and Baljit take it as a fun activity but Samina and Tashar consider it because all is done in the name of family honor. This is how both the writers bring out heartrending attitude of selfish adherents who use religious norms as a tool for sharpening their own axes. By depicting religious and social collision, Singh shows that societal pressure is a mighty power capable enough to defeat world's biggest institution. Another blow to moral values is exhibited when Raj and Baljit get completely frustrated with medical check-ups and nagging demand for a grandson but nothing happens in two-year period. From here onwards, the conflict in the plot is established which forces succumbed Baljit to visit some *peer's dargah* to seek his blessings. Physical excursions at the *dargah*, between Baljit and the caretaker of shrine, bear fruit.

The writer deliberately installs sensual feats into “Wanted: a son” in order to expose the reality of miracles, prayers, places of worship and shrewd holy men. The way Singh deconstructs their angelic image, lost conscience, and unveils brutish proclivities does really make his prose realistic, intrepid and complimentary. The Muslim caretaker’s foul play of mixing some drug in the prasad (sweet substance) and savagely ravishing Baljit’s privates corresponds to a similar instance in *I Shall not Hear the Nightingale* (1959) in which another Peer Sahib copulates with infidel Shunno with the intention of bringing her closer to Islam (157–158). Such carnal endeavors testify facade of piety maintained by the flock of holy people. Besides, the writer shows his repugnance by attaching awful attributes to most of the places of worship. In “Let Us Clean Our Temples”, he affirms that Hindu and Muslim places of worship are unclean locales and centers of corruption, for they are usually flooded with beggars and gullible pilgrims (145-147). There is another reason for attacking such places because Singh feels that holy zones have become “places of commerce from which parasites like priests, pandas, pujaris, mullahs, mujawars, granthis and ragis draw their sustenance” (376). His pragmatic stance upon building places for worship is also controversial because of his repeated slogans telling that home is the best and only legitimate place for worship and its verity cannot be denied. He also maintains:

When people acquire vested interests in places of worship, these places become bones of contention and subject to litigation and, far too often, attempts are made to seize them by force. The Kaaba has witnessed many bloody battles. So has the Sikhs’ Golden temple. The managements of

most Hindu temples and ashrams are periodically before the courts. (376)

Through these escapades, the writer shows unpredictable fate of morality that simply cannot be subdued by religious ethics. Likewise, Jawaharlal Nehru in *The Discovery of India* claims that “moral approach is a changing one and depends upon the growing mind and an advancing civilization; it is conditioned by the mental climate of the age” (29). Apart from the subject of morality, Singh deals with the gospel of miracles by demonstrating how they occur in the lives of religiously devoted people. The statement in “A Love Affair in London” that “the age of miracles...[has] not passed” does not substantiate writer’s viewpoint because he repeatedly repudiates the possibility of miraculous happenings in his prose (184). His opinion is that miraculous escapes do not guarantee divine providence and they are simply chances of good luck as he maintains in the “The Mulberry Tree”. In his column “God Incarnate”, he openly states that he does not believe in “avatars or miracles” but “[he is] fascinated by people whose lives have been changed by...such phenomena” (135). Besides, he rejects Hindu, Buddhist and Jainist theory of *karma* that is based upon the ideology of good and bad deeds affecting an individual’s fate in the next reincarnations. Singh makes it a point that religious and spiritual endeavors are incapable of illuminating the life of a single devotee and they are helpless tools in the face of sexual appetite.

Recent studies show that women are religiously very active and their participation in religious rituals is greater than men. Undeniably, the role of women is very significant, for they are more inclined to contact holy men to find solutions for their problems, they have convenient schedules and no matter how much educated they are, they prefer

empirical understanding rather than logical one. These idiosyncratic streaks are seen in the characters of Janaki and Baljit in “Wanted: a son”. Although Baljit serves as a foil to Janaki because she is beautiful, educated, strong, professional and rich; on the other hand, Janaki is plain looking, less qualified, obedient, gentle and homely. But both of them share a common zeal for visiting temples, gurdwaras and shrines for the fulfillment of their solitary wish of acquiring a male heir to the family. Enormous societal pressure, family expectations and patriarchal influences are important *raison d’être* for superstitious bent in educated, semi-educated and uneducated women, and hence they rush for holy cult with high hopes.

Besides, Singh questions scriptural understanding of religious followers as it appears mechanical in nature. He maintains that lack of understanding of scriptural content produces greater mesmerizing feel, verbal fascination and appreciation for mantras (magical words) such as Om, ek Aumkar, Kirtan Sohila, Gayatri, Al Fatihah and Yaseen (“Mantric Power” 75). Similar conclusion is provided in “Wanted: a son” and “Paradise” in which Hindu Janaki finds hymn-singing in gurdwara very pleasant than “the loud chanting of Sanskrit shlokas”, Sikh Baljit silently listens to Fateha and Christian Margaret Bloom finds repetition of Om very soothing; however none of them bother to comprehend the exact sense, purpose and meaning for reciting such powerful words (Singh 157). In *Truth, Love & a Little Malice*, Singh expresses his viewpoint in these words:

The less we understand their meaning [religious texts], the greater is the potency we ascribe to them. Those in ancient languages like Pali, Sanskrit,

Greek, Latin, Arabic or Santbhasha have a stronger appeal because few people know their meanings. Their translations into languages which we can comprehend, robs them of much of their potency. Read in translation, the Gayatri Mantra, the Psalms, verses from the Quran like the Ayat ul Kursee or Sura Yaseen, and the Sikh's Sohila seem to lose their vaunted powers of healing and dispelling fear. (376)

Irreverent treatment of the story disillusioned its readers from the positivity attributed to religious doctrines; for the writer poses a very sensitive question to his readers that, if religious disciples do not find religious ethics worthy of observance then why do they cling to it and what is the use of pseudo-subscription to such components? The narrative "Wanted: a son" highlights premarital relationship, extramarital affair, Baljit's infidelity, Raj-Baljit's alcoholic and tobacco consumption—every move stands as a testimony to anti-religious spirit of contemporary individuals. A serious evaluation shows that crime of adultery is completely prohibited in both Hindu-Sikh religions. And Sikh prohibition laws restrict Sikhs' indulgence into premarital affairs, extramarital relations, consumption of tobacco, hemp, opium, alcohol, beef and pork (Langley 25). On the whole, religious expectancy does not prick the consciences of Singh's Raj and Baljit.

Indian history cannot be evaluated without mentioning of 1947 partition tragedy. For, Pakistan and India are created in the name of two-nation theory that directly corresponds to different religious identities of both the parties. It is religion that is playing a crucial role in determining Indo-Pak policies. Since partition India has

witnessed challenging presence of fundamentalists taking advantage of every religious confrontation and openly waging warfare against other groups of non-believers. Recent statistics show that blind waves of fundamentalism are enveloping both Eastern and Western hemispheres into its tenacious tentacles. But mounting graph of religious propagandas are affecting Eastern parts more than European ones because West has already defeated orthodox clergy and church in the past. The writer has outright odium for fundamentalists whose religion is to abuse others by spreading intolerance, anarchy, violence and old prejudices among naive people. In *The End of India*, he expresses his fears that evil forces are weakening world's largest democracy that has been an emblem of peace in the Ashokan period. His stance is "the country will break up" one day if extremist "dogs" are not going to leave the land of Mahatma Gandhi (3-22). He also condemns religious fundamentalists by derisively calling them "fundoos" and hoping that "they will eventually be thrown into the garbage can of history, where they belong" (22).

The breadth of writer's objections also envelops believers' modes of prayer in his fiction, for instance, in "The Mulberry Tree", the writer's mouthpiece Vijay castigates backward practice of offering milk to gods, in "The Great Difference" Maulana's prayer and Swamiji's meditation are mocked, in "Paradise" and *Burial at Sea* (2005) yoga lessons are ridiculed, in "The Convert" so-called proselytizing mission is derided and in "Zora Singh" the protagonist is ridiculed for setting up a prayer room in which Granth Sahib is draped with an expensive silk. An utter sense of rejection, negation of scriptures, prophets, messengers and avatars make the writer's prose very critical.

However, there are many other liberal writers who have followed the same pattern of shunning religious beliefs. Singh however, has an advantage as he provides unique remedies for believers in his famous essay entitled “The Search for a New Religion for India”. Once again, he argues that all the religions have been “creatures of their own times and circumstances” so there is a dire need to evolve a new religious spirit that can meet modern standards (233). His affirmation that the existence of God is disputed and hence the questions remain unanswered; the founders of religions are mortals and therefore they must only be followed for their exemplary qualities; trends of worshipping holy scriptures must end; a home ought to be considered as the only legitimate place of worship; Hindu philosophy of ahimsa must be followed; population must be controlled; and for the preservation of natural world, dead bodies must be buried instead of burning and polluting rivers and sea. Singh’s credo that “work is worship, but worship is not work”, defines his confidence in the strong work-ethic that is needed for eradicating societal evils of poverty, crime rate, suicidal ratio and corruption in the country. Singh argues through this article a more humane approach towards fellow beings; their love for humanity can help in creating an egalitarian society which has the potential of rising above religious and ethnic divide as Juggat Singh; a Sikh, in *Train to Pakistan* (1956) saves thousands of people, who belong to Muslim community by sacrificing his own life in the end.

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Printed by: Leo Plus Communications

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