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Article:	Self-Othering in the novel Karachi You Are Killing Me
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ABSTRACT

The politics of binary opposition self/Other; colonialist language construes the dichotomy to sustain the dominancy over colonized. The same dichotomy is inscribed differently in post-colonial discourse. Lisa Lu named it re-orientalism (2009). Saba Imtiaz's *Karachi you are killing me* (2014) plays with the Orientalist formula by employing constructed colonialist ideology. This novel employs different layers of irony in an attempt to confirm the condition and stereotypes associated with Karachi in Particular and Pakistan in general. The present study discussed how the repacking of the Orient is processed in the novel for international consumption. Re-Orientalizing resulted in the exoticism of popular cultural values and the self othering, employing re-Orientalizing strategies. It is concluded that prevailing clichés about Orient are reinforced in the novel.

Keywords: Re-Orientalism, self-othering, Karachi, Pakistan

Introduction

During the 1960s the term orientalism fully emerged as the most vivacious word. The criticism of orientalism grew among the Asian educated, Malek (1962) set up the detail that the political independence of national liberation parties pushed the Orientalists into serious crisis as the West will no longer enjoy the rules over the resources of Asia. Asian civilization can only be understood through the past, and this progressive aspect of the past civilization is overlooked, this biasness on the part of Orientalists is conspicuous.

Tibawi (1965) was the second critic who pinpointed the hostility of the Christian world towards Islam. The influence of hostility of Christian missionaries resulted in the explanation of Islam as extremist and derogatory. In continuation of Tibawi (1979) displayed the failure of western scholars, who failed to incorporate the negative view of Islam into their students.

Edward Said (1978) appeared as the third critique of Orientalism. For Said Orient is “West’s eternal others” (Hubinette, p. 3). Said explains orientalism as a way used by the West to describe themselves in the binary opposition that is west-east and in the dichotomous image and always considers Asians as exotic, uncivilized, and unrefined. West rationalized colonization as the civilization of the barbarians.

Furthermore, politics has a great influence from the publication to the distribution of literature. The academic credibility of the author lay far behind unseen politics. Shashi Deshpande in his interview (2001) protested against “dollar imperialism”. As books are viewed by the amount they earned rather than what, or how they are saying it. Gosh (1998) identifies the main themes of English fiction to be less optimistic, which depicts the inability to resolve its social problems. “The Orient has helped to define Europe (or West) as its contrasting image, idea personality, experience” (Said, 2003, p. 1-2) constructing the culture and identity trajectory. The social institutions of culture and identity are still prevailing with the idea of orientalism. Another interesting direction is designated as re-Orientalism. “Re- Orientalism is based on how cultural producers with eastern affiliations come to terms with an orientalized East, whether by complying with perceived expectations of western readers, by playing (along) with them or by discarding them altogether” (Lau & Mendes, 2012, p. 1). How do the orient authors themselves practice exoticizing the orients to be a remarkable product?

Literature Review

Re-Orientalist discourse is the representation of the Orient through the lens of contemporary orient authors. According to Kwame “Comprador intelligentsia” (1995, 119), the selected elite class, most of them have a western educational background are representing the Orients. This new representation would cause more damage to the orients. West as the “center” maintains its position and the eastern representation largely frames keeping in mind the western audience. The English language has been shown to portray the elite class, with careful attention. The gatekeeper English is shaping the literature of the post-colonizer.

Lau (2011) adds that the practices of re-Orientalism seemed plain in its usage. It reviewed the South Asian works within their cultural contexts. It aimed to achieve the status of post-colonial literature. This notion accounts for the exploration of the Eastern world. The shift occurs in it when

it bothers to study the West from the eye of the oriental. It is a literary response to the occidentals. The writings of Indians in English opens a new look to the scholars of the West. They are compelled to study South Asian discourses to have an idea of foreign trends. Those trends are the tools to be studied by the west scholars. They are supposed to apply the lenses to enhance the literary productions of the East. Therefore, re-Orientalism seeks to achieve the purpose of the self and others. This change in ideas brings value to the identities of South Asian scholars.

According to Lau and Mendes (2018), Hamid's writing started at the time of 2000, and got completed and published in 2007. The work of Nair got known in 2012. Both writings are after the historical event of 9/11, 2001. These are framed in the post-colonial theory of re-Orientalism to have its purpose achieved. The researchers in this article state that still the minds of the West are courageous to negotiate the living styles of the East. They studied that Pakistan and India are viewed with the thought of non-developed nations. The existing state of Asia is observed as conservative. This is due to the writings of Asian scholars that write about these nations. They discursively prove that Pakistanis are availed of the boundaries of living their lives. They do not access authority to have pleasure.

Teti, A. (2014) adds to Foucault's studies, she reviews that those discourses that aim to bring justice in social norms of society form the bases of power. It is added that such confessional discourses are there to formulate the center for power. Those figures who write in a manner that there should be equality in the living ways of the East and the West actually formulates their own centrality. According to Teti, A. (2014), there are two levels of expression in the discourses of the West. The very first one is the surface level, where we find the statements of justice between the East and the West. In this case, it is mentioned that people from other states of the world have the right to be facilitated with general politics. This explains that they have to be given an opportunity to live their lives according to mentioned norms of society. This way claims their humanity to another world. The second one is a deep level of expression. It is their mode of expression to cover the centers of power. This is the way that foreign writers make their place in the market of discourses. The literature they produce has a central purpose to be placed in the center of power. Re-Orientalism theory investigates the process and working of Re-Orientalism in order to address why it occurs: for instance, "orient" perceiving that there is a demand for low quality, exotically flavored fare, deliberately pander to this demand and voluntarily self-other so as to provide an unsustaining diet which will leave the consumer ever hungry, ever insatiate (Lau & Mendes, 2012, p.5). In this process of re-Orientalism, orients are no more Othered by western powers but by themselves.

Ghose (1998) relates to the self-positioning of the re-Orientalist. As mentioned in Ghose's volume to legitimize the British own position at the top of the hierarchical order they synthesize the traditional hierarchical society in India.

According to Lau (2009) re-Orientalism can be traced in the writing of non-South Asian about the sub-continent. However, the process of orientalism still continued in the writing of *Orients* representing South Asian literature in English. The theory of re-Orientalism presented by

Lisa Lau (2012) is based on three interconnected features of Said's (1978) orientalism. This study has analyzed the novel *Karachi you are killing* through the lenses of the following features.

a) Re-orientalism theory focuses on the position of Orientals in the West, where the West is the center and orientals are placed as others. The process of othering involves self-Othering and demotes of other orientals b) how the process of deconstruction and construction occurs in the representation of comprador intelligentsia and the other orient c) re-Orientalists positioned them as witnesses to represent, validate and authenticate.

Analysis

The story of the novel *Karachi You Are Killing Me* moves around the female journalist Ayesha in her twenties, desperately looking for a good match and is trying to excel in her professional life. First half part of the book deals with Ayesha's excessive drinking, smoking, and partying, which from the very beginning is the ideology that does not belong to Islamic thought and Muslim teachings where women indulge in unethical lifestyles by following poor western trends, however, it seems like a long blog from the reporter with gets up every day with a hangover. Episodes in this part are not well connected, the novel lacks a narrative structure. It has been observed that the writer loses her focus on the real society of the country known as The Islamic Republic of Pakistan where women are the symbol of consciousness, love, care, responsibility sacrifice, and purity. Other characters are not fully presented to leave an emotional impact, whenever other characters set the ground comedy and humor of the novel quickly washed away in great haste as if the writer is in the state of a hurry to prove her loyalty to the ones who dominate the thought that Muslims as others are the terrorist, where there stands no life with fun, happiness and lightness. This piece of mind is fixed with any sort of contact with readers to the characters. Ayesha's character displays some routine in her life. She gets up tired with an aching head because of excessive drinking at night parties with friends. This common picture of western society which Ayesha portrays connects her thoughts with the West. She puts her efforts to prove her own people's cultural values and the reality of social Islamic life and pours emotion by replacing them with the negativity which exists nowhere in the religious circle of the Pakistani Muslim nation. She lives with her father who also works for an advertising company. Ayesha, who despises the elite in Pakistan, is living a lifestyle that is not common for the middle class. The deficient infrastructure, issue of safety, the reporter's life, and terrorism is the main issues discussed in the novel. It is not a simple story of a journalist more fascinating thing about the story is its setting in the city of Karachi. Ayesha's nature of her job allows the writer to introduce certain episodes from real life, such as her reporting of the protest rally of Sipah-e-Sahaba, Ayesha's immediate connection with Jamie, a handsome correspondent of CNN, Pakistan fashion show week, her visit to Larkana, and Karachi Literary Festival. The end of the story reminds one of the Bollywood movies, where the hero stands at the airport and the heroine rushes to him before he departs for Dubai, the two old friends confess their love and live happily ever after.

To read this novel one would perceive the idea that Pakistan is a nation that is excessively involved in drinking and smoking with essential issues of terrorism. Consumption of alcohol is so frequent among characters as if alcohol is not prohibited in Pakistan. The writer intends to press

the positivity of her own people and beloved nation under the cruelty of terrorism, spaceless life activities, and unpleasant circumstances all the time. The narrative involves the inscribing of orientalist codification loaded with degrading and ironical remarks on the Pakistani Nation. The main focus of the authors is to present the dark picture of poverty, corruption, and inequalities.

“None of our friends are on time, which is typical for Karachiites”, (24).

“Books not bomb at Pakistan literature festival” (47).

These lines present Pakistanis as the most irresponsible and careless citizens along with the concept that they are involved in activities that are far away from the intellect of positive educational purposes. The image of Karachi and karachitties is often described in this way which is somehow assumed as dignified information about the city but this ironically represents the Orient’s undignified garb. Constant criticism of Karachi and the use of “this side of the bridge” describes the class division between the upper and middle classes. Contrast and comparison between the cities is the most displeasing part of the novel “One of the dullest, most out of touch places” is referred to as Islamabad. This horrible division by the writer focuses on the image the country is decent for the outer world from Islamabad which is the capital city and deals with the world and its inquires but is completely negative from the inside.

Here, the words play a significant role in stating the differences among the citizens of Karachi. The manner the writer use bridge leads the researcher to the point of differentiation and comparison between the cities and their inhabitants. This creates a division between the mentioned places and their people. The right to speak for the city of Karachi ironically as stated in the novel requires the author to share her own experiences. Consequently, the ironical statements assert ambiguity in the minds of the readers.

Each heading of the chapter starts with the violence in Karachi as if activities in Karachi are only surrounded by violence killing and bombing. Orientalism is enacted through the incidents and narration in the novel, the negative filter that has been imposed on the orients. It seems as if the writer offers to the western audience, you want violence in Pakistan (Asia) we will give you all you want, but detached from the contextual referent, which may cause rationale to it or may arouse a sense of discomfort among westerns (Shivani, 2006).

The discourse exhibits no link to any social, political, historical, or economic sense. Characters are only engaged in helpless activities devoid of any practical purpose and striving aimlessly without any sense. Mishra observes (2002) that national literature holds the mirror in which a nation would be able to recognize its mirror, in contrast, this novel makes known to the world the vagueness of the circumstances.

The hybrid nature of the novel fulfills the market demand of western readers. They are conscious of Pakistan in its specific theme of terrorism. On the other hand, it has been observed that they are very active to ignore the positivity of the nation that participates in social welfare, human right, and creative and fun activities which are the most essential part of any cultured society and the moral value of the nation. The general use of wine in the specific mentioned city Karachi of Pakistan is really unclear to its experienced figures. It mentions that there would be no law in its prohibitions for the drinkers of Karachi city.

"By turns a comedy of manners, an incisive look at the journalistic life, an examination of a city with a dangerous edge, and an attempt to stand checklist on its head, *Karachi, You're Killing Me!* is, quite simply, a very good read." - Hindustan Times.

"The satire is pitched perfectly and may hit those of us who live in the subcontinent harder than the rest. Refreshingly devoid of glosses and translations, Imtiaz's novel is unapologetically faithful to the cultural nuances from which it emerges." - Mint

This is a story only an insider could tell – in the way that only Indians can speak badly about India and how dare foreigners attempt to do so. She allows her audience a window into the world of Karachi, women, and journalism with a smart wit. This novel doesn't attempt to be a critique of society as much as just describing how things are.- Story South Asia

So in this way, national literature holds a mirror to the audience and represents the nation. As Shivani (2002) said this new writing is a kind of 'miniaturist' (p. 4) representation of the exoticism. In post colonial text narrative cater the desire of exoticism in particular discourse and make it marketable by marginalizing the Others and criticizing the system (Huggan, 2001; Lau, 2009). There are some genuine examples of counter discourses from the literary productions of the Third world. The title of 'I argue' by Cavafy's poem itself depicts resistance towards the literary portrayal of western authors. The stated stereotypical assumptions are now deconstructed by scholars of the Orient (Neimneh, 2013).

"MQM sends haleem and nihari to the prime minister," "City wears anti-dengue look," "Big black ghost lands many factory workers in the hospital," and the best, "Taliban accuse Pakistani government of using sorcery and black magic."

Since western audiences can best relate Pakistan with terrorism, *Karachi You Are Killing Me* exhibits bloodshed, and bomb blasts as if Karachi city have nothing better to relate to except violence.

'oh I LOVE your work. That piece you did, about the bloodstained roads and how the gangs were dragging around the corpses and playing football with severed heads....' (241).

The self-defining of the East with the western yardstick, the writer performs otherness hence "despite continuing to re-Orientalize, writers are able to reclaim the functional and discursive value of the commonly marketed exoticisms, such as the Muslim other as terrorist" (Lau & Mendes, 2018, p. 80).

In the novel, we find instances where the author wants to repack the cultural implication for western consumption as pointed out by Kapur (2001) that indigenous reality is represented sometimes in a good deal or in a diminutive manner to reconcile with the western lens. Desai (2008) discussed the new pressure in literary society. If a writer writes to earn so, he will have to re-Orientalize the text to make it familiar to the audience (West). To get a market advantage the author has to abridge the cultural gap and make it decipher for both ends of the globe (Dalrymple, 2005).

'he's such a good reporter,' says Sara, a 24-years old liberal arts graduate who's under the impression that Imran Kahn is going to save the country because she and her friends thinks he looks good in footage from the old cricket matches. (22)

The computers are perpetually being shipped off to IT for repairs, except IT's approach to fixing them is to ask us 'have you tried rebooting it? Or hitting the CPU with the back of a shoe. That last tactic worked twice on my own computer. (69)

"I'd asked for the cup of tea before the presser started, only to be told that the political party's policy was not to serve tea before press conferences because reporters tended to leave right after drinking tea". (71).

Ayesha's tone in representing Pakistani perspective remains orientalist "Thank goodness protests, like everything else in Pakistan, don't start on time" (73).

Narrator guide to unfamiliar Pakistani culture to the western readers destabilized it, "underlining the dangerous situation of orientalism's asymmetrical knowledge, where the other is well informed about the self, while the centre knows relatively little about the periphery" (Lau & Mendes, 2018, p. 84).

The idea to give voice to women and under privilege inherently best serves the purpose of re Orientalizing Pakistan (Mishra, 2002). In the novel the women's representation is multi-faceted. The narrator of the novel is a female character though an independent journalist very courageous in contrast to the other woman of Asia, yet underprivileged in the patriarchal society. The leader of Sipah e sahaba is unwilling to talk to her or look at her while talking to a female, and called her late at night to talk to her. Ayesha is chased by the motorcyclist in Larkana.

'Exactly,' Safdar says, 'Now what girl from a good home goes to sea view?' I am still trying to formulate a comeback when the door opens and a horde of politician advisors to the chief minister stomp out. The reporters rushed away to interview them. "The girl seems very disturbed.....her story really doesn't add up,' offers Nadia Baig, who advises the chief minister on human rights. 'I believe she is lying. We have police officers on the road at 3 a.m., so how could a girl get raped(44).

...thousands of girls are raped every day, and we care about this one girl? (45).

In the light of these moments and many others one may conclude the brutality and inhumanity of the Pakistan and Karachitties. Through the fashionable alterity Saba Imtiaz is presenting the naïve perpetuation of the western images of the Orient (Brouillette, 2012).

"Sure. What are you doing here?" I ask. Every other cop on the scene is gathered around the Karachi police head hoping they will be noticed and fast-tracked for a promotion" (22).

The image of culture and exoticized details are devoid of political and historical particularities. (Chandra, 2000; Chaudhuri, 2006).

Andrea's character proves "fairy news mother" (237) to Ayesha. Andrea's professionalism is explicitly compared to Kamran, Sonia, Ali, and Jamie. Andrea did not only help Ayesha with her civilized western manner but also provided opportunities to her. Being Pakistani Kamran, Sania, and Ali with exception of Jamie who is a "Gora" exhibited non-professional, unethical, uncivilized, and vulgar banal particularities. Kamran doesn't pay salaries on time, is impolite, and overladen the employees. Ali whose "entire career is built on quid pro quo favors for politicians" (19) usurps opportunities from others. Sania the chief political correspondent "flipping her hair and laughing coquettishly at the anchor" (70) is showy and brassy. Jamie being gora deceits

Ayesha fired by CNN on reporting plagiarized contention the other hand Kamran for not paying the employee's salary Ali, a sycophant is not charged for wrongdoings. The West and East society is compared in how accountability is quick and the system is authentic in the West whereas the East lacks moral courage. Here, Imtiaz uses the binaries as constructed by the West to defend their act of colonization on the East. The novel by its name portrays its ideology of the negative approach as the writer named it as "Karachi You Are Killing Me" It seems as if someone calls his own mother the villain because the country and the motherland as the city are as dear as a mother who gives birth and country gives identity and honor.

Conclusion

Bhabha (1994) relates the strategy of re-Orientalism as an ambivalent and anxious representation of stereotypes. In the post-colonial text, the Otherness is presented as the menace to self and recognized as negative repulsion but in the colonial Gothic possibility of transcendence among Others is also possible (Khair, 2012; Levinas, 1999). As *Karachi you are killing me* opportunistically utilizing terrorism to attract western readers. This product is exotic in the cultural market and harmless for the remote spectacle, because this problem is at a comfortable distance from the West, in this case, "marginality is chic" (Mukherjee, 2010).

Thus, with the help of a mono-phonic tone, the constant use of ironic and satirical statements leads toward the abstract use of colonialism. The West still aims to have power over the generation of other countries of the world as mentioned by the author of the novel. This is the way to create otherness between the East and the West. This happens by preferring the vague discourses produced by the East itself. The mixture of citizens along with their hybrid activities leads to the construct of the idea of division. Finally, this novel fulfills the requirements of foreign readers by stating the ambiguous nature of circumstances.

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