

Resistance in Post-9/11 Pakistani Fiction: A Discursive StudyGohar Munir Mukhi¹, Saadia Ameer², Aqsa Ashraf³**Original Article**

1. PhD Scholar, Department of English Language and Literature, The University of Faisalabad. Corresponding author Email: goharmukhi@gmail.com
2. PhD Scholar, Department of English Language and Literature, The University of Faisalabad.
3. PhD Scholar, Department of English Language and Literature, The University of Faisalabad.

Abstract

The discourse of terrorism appears to have taken centre stage in American writing since the tragic events of 9/11 and their aftermath. Following the September 11 attacks, several books were written that either directly or tangentially address how the incident affected people within and beyond the vicinity of United States of America. Western authors often employ Orientalist stereotypes in their works, even when ostensibly addressing the post-traumatic aftermath of assaults. Following 9/11, this negative attitude towards Muslims seems to have solidified and intensified the pre-existing Orientalist rhetoric, portraying all Muslims as terrorists. This thesis asserts that, in response to this post-9/11 rhetoric, the authors of "The Reluctant Fundamentalist" and "Burnt Shadows" actively embrace decolonization from the Pakistani perspective (the East) and challenge the narrative of colonialism. This aligns with Edward Said's concept that "the East writes back." This study's academic framework is Orientalism by Edward Said. The thesis investigates how current English-language Pakistani literature has been received. The contemporary Pakistani writer has been significantly influenced by factors such as tyranny, martial law, bloodshed, militant extremism, and the colonial occupation of Afghanistan. These elements have played a crucial role in shaping the writer's response to issues like terrorism, fanaticism, violence, and suicide bombings. Alongside fellow citizens, writers find themselves on the margins, where they now raise their voices and grapple with challenges. This includes navigating the complex political and social environment that poses unique obstacles for Pakistani writers. How these writers question and challenge the post-September 11 Western worldview, marked by bigotry against Muslims, and disrupt the existing status quo is a central focus. Additionally, it highlights the writers' fight against post-9/11 preconceptions of Muslims as zealots and radicals in their religion as well as the label of "terrorist" that is assigned to them.

Keywords: Resistance, Reluctant fundamentalist, Pakistani fiction, Discursive study

1. Introduction

Pakistan has grappled with severe upheavals and frequent episodes of violence and terrorism since the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, coinciding with global concerns about extremism and terrorism. These challenges represent the country's most significant observational difficulties since 1971, particularly concerning the risk of disintegration (Rumi). In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, both the state and society in Pakistan have witnessed an escalating sense of hostility, marked by acts of violence commonly categorized as terrorism. Pakistan is a key ally of America in the war on terror (Rumi). As a result of deliberate, planned, and organized acts of violence,

Pakistan has assumed a crucial role in discussions of regional collaboration and peace, not just in South Asia but also globally (Rumi). In addition to the party-political and geographic set-up of the world experiencing a vicissitude after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the idea of having been Muslim, the European and American Muslim ethnicity and identity suffered a dramatic transformation when placed in a world of chaos, uncertainty, and ingrained dread. When the Muslim self was examined by Americans, it led to the labelling of Muslims as terrorists and extremists. Religious identity and ethnicity became a hotly contested subject. As a result of the violence, insecurity, and acrimony in this situation, there has been a rise in militarism, chaos, poverty, unemployment, injustice and inequality. The fact that all of this is taking place in Pakistan is a great tragedy because globalization is constantly affecting the social, economic and cultural systems of the world, and Pakistan urgently needs to build a positive reputation abroad for her political stability and economic advancement.

2. Literature Review

Since the focus of my research is on the central characters of three novels—Changez, Raza, and Chuck—and their struggles with identity, I will be referencing the work of several psychologists and anthropologist whose theories address the concept of identity even if they do so against vastly different backgrounds.

"The Reluctant Fundamentalist" (2007), the novel, by Mohsin Hamid offers a nuanced exploration of identity, belonging, and radicalization in the aftermath of 9/11. The protagonist's journey reflects the tensions between Eastern and Western cultures and highlights the complexities of Pakistani identity in a globalized world.

The theories of Edward Said, Bhabha and Fanon vis-à-vis causes of the shift in the Oriental identity are among the most influential. Edward Said claims that Westerners have always had a fascination with the Orient because of its allure as a source of mystery and intrigue. The Orient is not merely geographically close to Europe; it is also home to some of the continent's oldest, largest, and most prosperous colonies as well as the origin of many of Europe's most influential languages and cultures. As a counterpoint to Europe and the West, the Orient has contributed to shaping the both (Orientalism 1–5).

"The Wasted Vigil" (2004) by Nadeem Aslam delves into the consequences of war, examining the intersecting lives of characters affected by the conflict in Afghanistan. Through richly woven narratives, Aslam explores themes of violence, love, and redemption, offering a profound critique of the post-9/11 global order.

Identity creation, despite being a psychological process, happens in a society as a result of a person's contact, communication, and relationship with the other community members, as Peter J. Burke and Jan E. Stets point out in their book "Identity Theory" (2009). Thus, the process of coming into one's own identity is a social one. The formation of one's identity is a dynamic process that can foster identification with or alienation from one's cultural or ethnic group. Identity crises are common outcomes of the experience of alienation. According to Erik Erikson, an identity crisis occurs when a person is experiencing the adolescent stage and is struggling with the conflict between role confusion and his or her own unique identity. The conceit of developing a robust identity may symbolize an inward liberation from a more dominating individuality, such as of "compact majority," (p. 21) as Erikson puts it in his book *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. One group's or person's identity may be related to the other.

The Power of Identity, the significant book by Manuel Castells, addresses the "conflicting trends of globalization and identity" (The Power of Identity 1). He describes the complex course regarding identity construction as well as the part opposition voices play in it. These opposing viewpoints span interpersonal interactions and human propensities for globalization, which give rise to many religious and racial movements which altered contemporary life. "Identity" is defined as "the construction of meaning on the basis of a cultural attribute, or related set of cultural attributes, that is/are given over other sources of meaning" (Castells, The Power of Identity 6). Castells suggests that among these chosen cultural elements, religious values and religious fundamentalism take on a specific significance in some contexts. In this citation, Castells mentions two exceptional cases: Islamic fundamentalism and US Christian fundamentalistic movements. By basing analysis on the study of Castells given two varieties of theological fundamentalism, one can readily reveal the function that religion and its beliefs play in "Information Age" apart from the present networking of logics in organization. Amongst the most obvious criteria of this unchangeable networking logic is a permanent penchant, i.e., an individual must either remain inside or outside of the "Net". The inevitable of choice is becoming more authoritarian day by day as it leaves no room for combination or reconciliation due to the world's ongoing incorporation into global links of power and wealth besides the advancement of information technology, or, as Castells conceives it, "of advanced technology and spirituality" (The Rise of the Network Society, 23).

The satirical novel "A Case of Exploding Mangoes" (2008) by Mohammed Hanif presents a darkly humorous critique of military dictatorships and political intrigues in Pakistan. Set in the 1980s and intersecting with the post-9/11 period, the novel blends historical events with fictional elements to expose power dynamics and state surveillance.

In "A God in Every Stone" (2014) by Kamila Shamsie explores the themes of history, nationhood, and personal narratives against the backdrop of World War I and the post-9/11 era. The novel delves into the complexities of identity, memory, and the quest for self-discovery, portraying the impact of historical events on individual lives.

Uzma Aslam Khan's novel "The Geometry of God" (2012) investigates into the intersections of faith, politics, and gender in post-9/11 Pakistan. Through the story of a female architect grappling with personal and political challenges, Khan explores themes of resistance, cultural heritage, and the power of human connection.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis as Methodology

Language's critical theory asserts that use of language is a kind of social exercise that gives rise to critical discourse analysis (CDA). Since all social practices imitate unique historical contexts, language as a social practice serves both specific interests and develops or challenges the social relations that are already in place. It also raises interest-related queries, such as How the text is situated? This situatedness serves the interests of whom, exactly? whose rights are being ignored? What result does this situatedness produce? These queries link discourse to power interactions involving hegemony, dominance, and so forth. Analysis that aims to understand how discourse interacts with power structures is known as CDA.

The CDA framework developed by Norman Fairclough is a comprehensive method that considers the multi-dimensional, multi-functional, critical, and past dimensions of societal conversation.

According to Norman Fairclough's (1992) CDA approach, discourse is analysed from triangular interconnected angles.

- i. Discussion as per text
- ii. Discourse's discursive implementations
- iii. Discourse as a social practice (Discourse and Social Change, pp. 62–100)

Each one of these viewpoints, according to Fairclough, leads to a particular sort of analysis, such as text analysis, dispensation analysis, and social analysis respectively as description, interpretation and explanation.

Hence, discourse as a text is understood by Fairclough (Discourse and Social Change, pp. 62–100) as containing a juxtaposition of lingual features inside its inner structure to have communication according to a specific meaning and to propagate a specific effect on the readers, who serve as the discourse's recipients. Thus, discourse transforms into a vehicle for conveying meaning by modifying the linguistic components that are prevalent in the text. As a result, understanding the formal aspects of the text—such as its syntax, lexicon, textual organization, and coherence—helps disclose the meaning that the discourse is trying to convey.

Fairclough's (1992) thesis in "Discourse and Social Change" posits that discursive practice encompasses not only the creation of discourse but also its diffusion and consumption. By focusing on the production of discourse by the text's author (producer) and its interpretation by readers (consumers), this approach helps identify the participants in the discursive experience. It centers on the role of the producer, who is also the author of the text.

Fairclough (1992) advances the concept of discourse as a social practice by emphasizing the role of speech in shaping and reforming society. He provides a specific theory expressed in discourse, shedding light on power dynamics, dominance, submission, and acquiescence as norms within society. These elements are understood as both perpetually sustaining and questioning discourse.

The approach's multifunctional quality focuses on the role that language plays in achieving particular objectives. Thus, the manipulation of linguistic aspects in discourse serves as an illustration of the multiple features of language as a function. Therefore, involvement in discourse can be seen as the fundamental requirement for individuals to achieve specific goals through manipulating linguistic components. For instance, a writer who creates a discourse could persuade the discourse's audience—the readers—to share his or her perspective on particular subjects by carefully manipulating certain linguistic elements to suit the writer's purposes. These multifunctional discourse elements that are addressed through this aspect draw inspiration from the theory presented by Halliday (1985) in his Systemic Grammar methodology used to clarify the purpose of language rudiments.

The researcher thinks that this framework is best suited for examining the relationship between narrative discourse and society because, within the context of CDA as they appear in narrative discourse can be highlighted by concentrating on how events as well as characters are constructed in the narrative discourse. Because it offers several analytic entry points, Fairclough's direction to CDA has proven to be quite beneficial. These overlaps and connections provide the analyst locations to look for striking patterns and discrepancies that require describing, analyzing,

and explaining. With the help of CDA, a reader may analyze a text on one level, then on a secondary level, and finally on a higher level. This process of understanding the book completely entails interaction with it.

4. Resistance in Pakistani Fiction Following 9/11: A Discursive Analysis

The portrayal of the aftermath of 9/11 in works by Muslim authors provides insight into the marginalization and mistreatment of Muslims in America while also exposing the biased perspectives of Americans. Although 9/11 has been addressed by American and British authors, their portrayals often denigrate Islam, violating and insulting its fundamental tenets. In the first year following the 9/11 attacks, over 20 books were produced, conveying a message associating Islam with danger, terrorism, and destruction (Watanabe). Notably, two of these anti-Islamic books, "American Jihad: The Terrorists Among Us" by Steven Emerson and "Militant Islam Reaches America" by Daniel Pipes, topped the bestselling rankings on Amazon.com (Watanabe).

In response to this creative production, Muslim writers vehemently criticized terrorism in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. Novels like "The Reluctant Fundamentalist" by Mohsin Hamid, Kamila Shamsie's "Burnt Shadows," and M. Naqvi's "Home Boy" challenged false preconceptions about Islam and Muslims. These works delve into crucial subjects such as resistance, extremism, hatred, violence, fear, and the quest for a free and enlightened society (Rumi). The authors not only reshape the existing status quo through their characters but also actively question and criticize it.

There is the acute need for modern Pakistani fiction authors not only to recover but also redefine their distinctiveness in light of the current terrorism and disarray. Formerly colonial countries, such as Pakistan, are usually grouped together under the rubric of the Third World. H. Kamila Shamsie, Mohsin Hamid, and H. M. challenges Western hegemony and the established quo by doing so. By means of their artistic production, Naqvi is battling to restore their identity. Three of the main problems that Pakistan and practically all Third World countries face are the crisis of illustration, exclusion, and being categorized as the Other. In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the current wave of terrorism has further alienated and misrepresented Muslims and Pakistanis. Muslims in America are pressured to view themselves through a Western perspective, especially those with Pakistani ancestry that has long occupied the forefront. By protesting their portrayal, Pakistani authors have responded to the critical necessity to express the hitherto unheard and silent Pakistani society. They want to learn how to overcome colonialism and establish a society where people cherish and respect one another, which goes beyond simply regaining lost cultures and traditions. These authors highlight that the previously colonized ones will stay hybrid with a pitifully identity if the question is not put and opposed the Western hegemony. As previously colonial and oppressed viewpoints become increasingly visible, the discourse's focal point is moving once more.

A problematic love story is set against a backdrop of rising suspicion and skepticism between the West, represented by America, and the East, represented by Pakistan, in Mohsin Hamid's novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. The story's main character, Changez, is shown delivering his account to an unknown foreign agent that he met at a eatery before finally coming under attack from a tense crowd as he travels to the Pearl Continental Hotel in Lahore. America viewed Changez as an outsider in New York in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, forced to deal with hostility and jealousy from his coworkers whose jobs were in jeopardy in his estimation. The phrase "Pearl" alludes to Daniel Pearl, who was captured and beheaded by Muslim extremists in Pakistan after attempting to contact the Taliban. As the narrative develops, Changez's identity alters. He asserts

that he worked at Underwood Samson, a New York company that specialized in the evaluation of failing businesses that were expected to be acquired, and that he was "a modern-day janitor," "a servant of the American empire at a time when it was invading a country with a kinship to mine" (Hamid, 2007, p. 91).

When Changez discovered he was the American janitor, he took a serious hit and began to question his individuality. And the Ottomans employed were referred to as "janissaries" because, after deleting their own civilization, they had nowhere to go. This identity also encompasses an internal shift that started when he admitted that, in some ways, he had really liked the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. His profession, his religious beliefs, and even his desire to marry the troubled but gorgeous Erica are all affected by this epiphany, which also forces him to reconsider his Muslim identity. He eventually travels back to Lahore to restore his original identity. When the beard Changez meets him in Lahore, a foreign spy who was an American is seated at a café in the Old Anarkali market. Changez diverts him with his life story, which includes his time in America prior to and during 9/11 as well as his last journey back to Lahore.

According to Lasdun in his review of the book that appeared in *The Guardian*, Hamid's perspective on fundamentalism is the novel's greatest representation. Further investigation reveals that it is expected that Changez will reveal that he has, albeit unintentionally, transitioned to the darker and more sinister phase of Islamic fundamentalism and is possibly plotting the execution of his listeners, the Americans, even as he speaks — perhaps in a way that is similar to but different from Daniel Pearl's execution. The storyline occasionally succeeds in a nice way with a well-placed symbolic representation or concise remark. For instance, Changez perfectly captures the sensation of homecoming that each immigrant has in New York with the words: "I was, in four and a half years, never an American; I was immediately a New Yorker" (Hamid, 2007, p. 20). Lasdun demonstrates how Changez's opinion of New York City has altered since the September 11 terrorist attacks: "I wondered what manner of host would sally forth from such grand a castle." (Hamid, 2007, p. 47). This artwork not only enhances the novel's primary premise of *sic transit gloria mundi* (thus passes the glory of the world), in which American militarism is repeatedly placed against the fading majesty of the ancient Mughal empire, but it also creates a stunning visual portrayal. But this propensity for aphorism also lends the narrative an ethereal, even intangible quality. Similar to this, the relationship between Changez and Erica is both mysterious and symbolic. After the 9/11 attacks, when the Muslim identity and Islam were being connected with terrorism and extremism, there was actually a challenging connection between a young Muslim and America. Erica, a devoted aristocrat, was devastated when Chris, her childhood sweetheart, passed away when he was only a teenager. In an effort to maintain Chris in her life and heart, Erica must reject all of her suitors, despite Changez's efforts. Erica is unable to completely remove Chris from her memories. In the pandemonium that followed September 11, Erica's obsession with Chris' haunting recollections turns into a crippling madness; "she was disappearing into a powerful nostalgia" (Hamid, 2007, p. 68). As a result, Erica has a nervous breakdown, is admitted to a mental hospital, and may possibly kill herself. Ironically, Chris, one of the rivals, is dead yet still has influence over Erica's emotions. This complicated and tragic love triangle breaks the reader's heart, but Hamid pulls them back into the story by giving them a little nudge or jolt every now and then, as he says: "it seemed to me that America, too, was increasingly giving itself over to a dangerous nostalgia" (Hamid, 2007, p. 68). The narrator represents America's later unwillingness to view Changez as a true American and embrace him with his Muslim identity, while Chris depicts

America's complicated connection with her time of European invasion. People often think of Erica as a representation of America since she represents Am-Erica (Lasdun).

The three main characters in "H." share lifestyles akin to that of Changez. For one of them, referred to as 'M,' the terrorist attacks of 9/11 played a crucial role. "Home Boy" by H. M. Naqvi (2010) delves into and sheds light on the experiences of Muslims in New York City in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks. The plot centers on three young men called Chuck, Jimbo, and AC who like to live in the present rather than worry about the future. Their easygoing demeanor, however, reveals their uncertainty and lack of understanding regarding the purpose of their life. Additionally, they are having a hard time realizing that they are essentially a part of two different worlds: one is the modern, continually evolving United States, and the other is the ostensibly traditional but antiquated Pakistan. When the three individuals are searching for Mohammad Shah, also known as Shaman, and just so happen to find his flat unoccupied, the critical event that propels the story's plot—the fall of the Twin Towers—occurs. They plan to spend the night at Shaman's home. Shaman is reported to the FBI by the neighbors because they believe he is involved in some mysterious business; this is because it is soon after the 9/11 attacks. Home Boy is a hip-hop song that represents the young, immature kid trying to adapt into a world that is very different from the one in Karachi. The opening phrase of the narrative, "We'd become Japs, Jews, Niggers," was written immediately following the 9/11 terrorist strikes. We weren't before. I thought Jimbo, AC, and I were Renaissance men, raconteurs, and boulevardiers. Since most of us were self-made and inventors, we thought we had the major global dialectic under control (Naqvi, 2010, p. 1).

President George W. Bush once said, "As long as the United States of America is determined and strong, this will not be an age of terror; this will be an age of liberty, here and across the world." Naqvi (2010) compares the incidents and sufferings in the lives of these young men, who repeatedly learn that both the color of their skin and the fact that they were given Muslim names are working against them. It focuses mostly on depicting the maturation of a young immigrant as he fights to maintain his footing in his new home.

The commencement of the novel *Burnt Shadows*, which spans continents, historical periods, and decades, is the atomic bombing of Nagasaki on August 9, 1945. It concludes in 2002 when Raza Konrad Ashraf is about to be detained at Guantanamo Bay at an American detention facility. This expertly written book reacts to the magnitude of the problem as it pertains to a Guantánamo inmate in unexpected and surprising ways (Jaggi). A long narrative is pieced together by Shamsie that starts with a young Japanese woman who witnessed the 1945 bombing of Nagasaki and concludes with a Pakistani prisoner who is now being imprisoned at Guantanamo Bay. The Burtons-Weiss, who by nationality are German, British, and finally American, are the first family in the narrative. The Ashraf-Tanakas are the other family and, before to India and Pakistan's division, they were both Japanese and Indian citizens who eventually became Pakistanis. Without accounting for minute changes, their achievements and failures cover five distinct countries and three major historical eras. Hiroko Tanaka, a Japanese woman, and Konrad Weiss, a German guy, are shortly to be wed. Hiroko Tanaka and her German boyfriend Konrad Weiss had a blissful marriage until the tragic atomic bombing of Nagasaki unexpectedly ended it. When Hiroko Tanaka first appears, she is a bride-to-be with three black cranes jumping across her back on her kimono. She only has burns on her back in the shape of birds to show for this damage and loss. In honor of Konrad Weiss, Hiroko flies to Delhi to see Elizabeth, who is his half-sister. She meets Sajjad

Ashraf there, who gives her life—which had been pointless and devoid of love—a purpose. After their marriage, Hiroko Tanaka changes her name to Hiroko Sajjad.

Hiroko's adventure doesn't end here; after India and Pakistan were split apart and Pakistan was established, she was uprooted once more and now finds herself in Pakistan. Before the September 11 terrorist attacks, Hiroko is moved from Pakistan to New York City and then, in an astounding turn of events, to Afghanistan. She is entangled in fresh conflicts—internal and external—and shrouded in the shadows of her personal and political past. The Pakistani Ashrafs endure the effects of the American Burtons' treachery and chauvinism, putting to the test the continuing love and dedication between the Burton-Weiss and Ashraf-Tanaka families. The death of Hiroko Tanaka as an individual becomes the loss of humanity as a whole, which does not wish for a paradise but rather a world free of colonialism, where people are not sacrificed to further the goals of states and individuals or bargained for in the name of security.

A highly particular network of links to the academic community and the topic of study is required to be a scholar and intimately affiliated with academia. These relationships are founded on a number of moral principles that support the prosperity and wellbeing of the person, the community, and society at large. These problems demonstrate that a lot of academic research is, or at least should be, a constant and continuing process of meaning construction. Additionally, they point out that the researcher is a critical thinker and that the study serves as a site of resistance, representation, and the voicing of oppressed groups that had not before been heard. Following this, a paraxial engagement is developed out of the inquiry. In light of the fact that, I feel it is important to investigate how authors are reacting to and related to the contemporary reality of terrorism, violent behavior, extremism, and suicide terrorist activities. This admirable vision of liberty, enlightenment, and empowerment was linked with research into modern Pakistani literature that was published in English (Rumi). I want to examine the difficulties that the current social and political climate in Pakistan has presented for writers, as well as the ways in which despotism, martial law, violence, extremism, and the invasion of Afghanistan have pushed Pakistani writers, along with their fellows to reclaim their national identity and shape their unique identifications (Rumi). In addition to disturbing the established quo, how have the authors contested and questioned the western hegemony over the Eastern, specifically Pakistani literary output?

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study explores the representation of resistance in Pakistani literature produced in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. The research examines many novels and short tales to see how Pakistani authors interact with and address the socio-political concerns that developed in the wake of 9/11.

The research's findings emphasize the complexity of resistance in Pakistani fiction written after 9/11. To express forms of resistance against prevailing discourses and power systems, the authors make use of a variety of literary techniques and narrative techniques. These kinds of resistance include dispelling misconceptions, examining current power structures, highlighting the effects of governmental regulations, and emphasizing the struggles and agency of oppressed people and groups.

The study's investigation of individual and group identity in the face of cultural and political pressures is one important finding. Pakistani writers utilize their stories to counter popular narratives that often paint their country and its people in a stereotypical and basic light. These

writings refute essentialist ideas and give a more complex vision of Pakistani culture by giving voice to many viewpoints and experiences.

The study also reveals that post-9/11 Pakistani literature frequently addresses issues of social justice, human rights, and the effects of international geopolitics. The authors question how the "war on terror" has affected Pakistani society, looking at issues including the spread of extremism, government monitoring, and the diminution of human freedoms. They hope to raise awareness and encourage conversation about these important problems via their storytelling.

The significance of literature as a tool for resistance and social change is also emphasized in the study piece. In order to question prevailing narratives, encourage empathy, and promote discourse, Pakistani authors are viewed as social change agents. Their stories give a forum for critical thinking and present different viewpoints that can help create a society that is more inclusive and just.

The study piece concludes by highlighting the enormous contribution made by post-9/11 Pakistani fiction to challenging prevailing ideologies and dealing with social and political concerns. These literary works help us grasp the intricacies and difficulties Pakistani society faces by examining topics of identity, social justice, and the effects of geopolitical events. The piece also emphasizes the value of literature in fostering discourse, empathy, and resistance in the pursuit of constructive social change.

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