

**‘ORIENTAL OTHER-WITHIN’: READING
‘INTELLECTUAL COLONIALISM’ IN
SELECTED SOUTH ASIAN ANGLOPHONE
FICTION OF TAHMIMA ANAM AND
NADEEM ASLAM**

BY

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NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES

ISLAMABAD

JANUARY, 2021

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BS English, NUML, 2017

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

In English

To

FACULTY OF ENGLISH STUDIES



NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES, ISLAMABAD

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Thesis Title: 'Oriental Other-within': Reading 'Intellectual Colonialism' in selected South Asian Anglophone fiction of Tahmima Anam and Nadeem Aslam

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Candidate of **Master of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis submitted **'Oriental Other-within': Reading 'Intellectual Colonialism' in selected South Asian Anglophone fiction of Tahmima Anam and Nadeem Aslam** by me in partial fulfillment of MPhil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

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ABSTRACT

Title: ‘Oriental Other-within’: Reading ‘Intellectual Colonialism’ in selected South Asian Anglophone fiction of Tahmima Anam and Nadeem Aslam

This qualitative study explores the aspects of postcolonial intellectual colonialism in the selected South Asian fiction by Tahmima Anam and Nadeem Aslam. The study discusses how both South Asian writers in their works, *The Good Muslim* (2011) and *The Blindman’s Garden* (2013) respectively, may be seen as embodiments of what Lau defines as re-Orientalism. This research explores how these two writers, as Oriental Other-within, seem to subscribe to the stereotyping of the Orient by misrepresenting their culture. The present research is based on the theoretical underpinnings of Lau’s concept of *re-Orientalism*, according to which the representation of the Orient is distorted by the Oriental Other-within. These Orientals Other-within opt to play around the shortcomings of the orient by negotiating the indigenous culture to address the western desire to consume the exotic image of this orient. This study aims at how cultural producers, with eastern affiliations, like Anam and Aslam compromise the East by using the orient as a spectacle for repeating and reinforcing stereotypes. This explorative study also examines how the eastern culture is shown in crisis by reducing the native to a negative entity. Moreover, this study explores the reasons for re-Orientalism as adopted by Anam and Aslam, in their narratives. Additionally, this research investigates how the writers, negotiating their Orient’s rich culture, give in to the pressures of global merchandising the eastern culture as exotic and stereotypical Orient either it be Anam’s Maya or Aslam’s Mikal. The research concludes with the findings, that by mapping out their orient with their natively authentic approach, both, Anam and Aslam subscribe to the stereotyping of the Orient by presenting distorted, skewed, and dogmatically overly generalized representation of South Asian culture to the western world.

(283 words)

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

TBG *The Blindman's Garden* (2013)

TGM *The Good Muslim* (2011)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All praises to Allah and His blessing for the completion of this thesis. I thank God for all the opportunities, trials, and strength that have been showered on me to finish writing the thesis. It has been a tremendously challenging learning process, not only from the academic aspect but also from the aspect of personality grooming.

First and foremost, I would like to sincerely thank my supervisor Ms. Rabia Aamir for her guidance, understanding, and patience. Most importantly, she has provided positive encouragement and a warm spirit to finish this thesis. It has been a great pleasure and honour to have her as my supervisor who loves and scolds like a mother.

My deepest gratitude goes to all of my family members. It would not be possible to write this thesis without the support from them.

I would sincerely like to thank all my beloved friends who were with me and support me through thick and thin.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research work to my most beloved parents whose love, affection, support, and guidance facilitated me throughout my life and always paved the way for all my successes. They stood by me at each step of my life and fulfilled every desire of mine. Words are not enough to thank them for all that they gave me. I am very lucky to have very kind, co-operative, friendly, loving, caring, and devoted parents who always do all in their reach to bless me with the best. May ALLAH reward them throughout their lives. Aameen!

CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

The contemporary South Asian Anglophone fictional writers are considered as cultural ambassadors of their native societies, irrespective of their cosmopolitan viewpoint. The selected writers for this study i.e., Tahmima Anam and Nadeem Aslam are generally perceived as representing their native culture with assimilationist mindset. Both the selected writers are diasporic and, at present, are not living in their respective native lands. They have hardly interacted with the local people residing in their lands depicted as characters in their works. However, they are the cultural ambassadors of their native cultures since they talk about, explain, and write about their cultures from where they originally belong. Therefore, in this particular manner they are considered as natives even though currently, they are not residing in their respective homelands. Therefore, they are the natives of their homelands depicting the local culture with their respective point of view.

Their works seem to be incorporating a number of cultural signifiers in local flair. This may be regarded as what critics like Rachel Tudor state as “Postcolonial Intellectual Colonialism” (84), hence my phrase ‘Intellectual Colonialism’. The purpose of my study is, therefore, to explore the aspects of intellectual colonialism in the works of the two writers which Lisa Lau term as “Oriental Other-within” (Lau and Mendes 2). Both Tahmima Anam’s *The Good Muslim* (2011) and Nadeem Aslam’s *The Blindman’s Garden* (2013), have features of ‘Oriental-Other within’ and ‘Intellectual Colonialism’ as depicted through their characters /narratives. Therefore, they are selected together for this exploratory study.

Tudor coined the term “Postcolonial Intellectual Colonialism” (84) while discussing Sara Suleri’s selected texts in her article “Sara Suleri: A Study in the Idioms of Dubiety and Migrancy in *Boys Will be Boys* and *Meatless Days*” (2011).

She highlights why such texts are needed by the West. In her argument, she holds the same view as Mary Louise Pratt and notices the “obsessive need [of the West] to present and represent its peripheries and its Other to itself” (qtd. in Tudor 84). This may explain why such reductionist texts in nature are not only valued but are needed by the West. Moreover, she emphasizes on the role a native writer upholds to keep up with the tradition of binaries. She adds that the ‘native’ is producing sufficient and reassuring product to be consumed by the dominant culture i.e., the West (84).

For Mukherjee, such technique when gets into practice may result in pruning literature. As a result, such literature cannot be considered as an authentic mouthpiece of vibrant native society. Aforesaid fractured realities result in wiping out local culture unless it is brought forward as “planned authenticity” (9 & 11). She holds the view that the South Asian Anglophone writers try to achieve fame and recognition abroad owing to their ability to find new approaches to represent the complex reality of their own culture.

In doing so, these re-Orientalists do reduce the East to just a Timeless Orient, the ruthless, and the barbaric, as Said has argued in *Orientalism* (1978). However, in the wake of 9/11, this concept of timeless orient has metamorphosed in the debates of Terrorism, as evident in Mohsin Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) and Omar Shahid Hamid’s *The Prisoner* (2015), to name a few. Like many other writers, their writings instead of blaming the west for stereotypical situated-ness of the orient, are aware, that their comprador attitude is upholding the internal consistency of Orientalism (Lau and Mendes 5). This allegation of involvement is not something unique, as there are possibilities that this burden of deliberate willingness, on the part of the writer, might lead to the category of reductionist reasoning on the part of the researcher. The logic behind such kind of reasoning pattern may limit the aesthetic and the universal appeal of a literary fiction as cultivated exhibitionism, and emphasizing what Mukherjee calls, “otherness and exoticism” (9). This study, therefore, aims not to yield to the lures of limiting a literary piece of writing to a sheer information- gathering narrative. This succumbing facet of their writings of behaving as puppets of the global capitalist market creates serious doubt about their intentions in their works fashioned on native themes.

At present, undoubtedly, more and more voices are being heard on the global

arena as the east is also speaking for itself. However, if some writers are still subscribing to the west, they come out more pronouncedly. This makes a reader more aware about the matter of Self-othering. S/he is able to understand the dynamic of serving the profit margins in presenting selected and highly edited details of their culture. It appears as “the western reader can safely dip their toes into the exotic mystical waters of the East and not to worry about being drowned” (Shivani qtd. in Lau “Introducing re-Orientalism” 35). Thus, such texts essentially, in one way, lead the native reader to decipher the reasons of such depiction of the east, and at the same time, serving comfortably to a western reader.

Lau and Mendes point out a “re-routing” of Orientalist discourse laid by South Asian Anglophone writers who apparently seem to challenge the metanarratives set by Orientalism, but in reality do not pose sufficient challenge. Re-Orientalism considers that Orientals Other-within see only a skewed aspect of South Asian culture to build a holistic view about their society. Therefore, re-Orientalism is a critical concept, according to Lau, which invite inquiring questions about the resurfacing of Orientalism in a way which discusses Other, as “negative alter ego” (29) and “based on special and unique placement in the Western tradition” (6).

Awan (2007), through the incorporation of certain eminent scholarships on Said’s seminal work *Orientalism* (1978), argues that Said’s treatment of Western representations of Islam or about the orient is highly-biased. As for him, there exists only one orient and that is, China, Southeast Asia, and India. He argues and upholds the same view as that of Sardar’s “Said’s reduction of this diversity and heterogeneity actually amounts to Occidentalism- a stereotyping in reverse” (qtd. in Awan 96). Furthermore, he argues that Said, while playing with the binaries of East and West, Civilized/Uncivilized etc., he himself gets trapped into the structuralist trap of understanding the world through binarism. Thereby, instead of dissolving the binaries, Said himself, acquired the world through binarism. In a way re-Orientalism continues to add new modes to Orientalism. Re-orientalists are thereby presenting distorted and fractured representations of the East by overgeneralizations about its unavoidable negative cultural products.

Salgado validates the same, in *The New Cartographies of Re-Orientalism* (2011), where she writes the ‘Oriental’ is [...] held in suspension in the fabricated and

constructed myth of authenticity of the ‘orient’. While discussing *Running in the Family* (1982) and *The Man-Eater of Punanai* (1992) by Michael Ondaatje and Christopher Ondaatje respective. She suggests that, in these diasporic texts, re- Orientalism is an act of re-implanting the differences generated by the hegemonic discursive practices of Said’s Orientalism. Therefore, the works seem to reinforce what it must dismantle, and the writers, in doing so, are seen by Salgado as ‘un witting perpetrators’ of the Orientalism (Salgado 201). Hence, Salgado holds the view that the diasporic subject acts as an agent of Orientalism to underpin the internal instabilities and inconsistencies of orient’s cultural values when placed in a culturally- disputed discursive land. Moreover, the western audience instantaneously consumes the Orientalist cultural products as a passive consumer. She is of the view that diasporic writers have the agentive power to re-address imbalance representation of Orientalized Other. However, they re-address the imbalance equation of Orientalized Other by promoting cultural binarism. Hence, re-cycling their orient in such a manner which attests to the cultural differences.

As Lau argues, the comprador attitude of re-Orientalists uphold the internal consistency of Orientalism (5). Therefore, the theory of re-Orientalism investigates the working of an Oriental Other- within to address why it occurs; how it is positioned and perceived by the cultural producers and the consumers. Since, these writers are considered as metonymic representatives of their culture in the marketplace, their narratives are valued for the difference they generate in cultural practices of the orient. This hints why re-Orientalists’ fictions have gained academic spotlight in the recent years. They do so by exploiting the concept of postcolonialism and Orientalism with careerist mindset and brandishing the East by adjusting it to the western cuisine of literary hub rather than portraying a clear picture of the native.

To a definite extent, the fictions from Pakistan, like J. Ahmed’s *The Wandering Falcon* (2011) and Qaisra Shahraz’s *The Holy Woman* (2001) to name a few, have taken up migration, religion, and ethnicity as their thematic concerns, which thereby, result in a reductionist portrayal of troubled residents with writer’s implicit agenda to represent east as wicked. Same is evident in Aslam’s writings, one of the selected authors for the present study, where females are stereotypically pictured to adhere to the mediocre east. Such accounts are acknowledged and acclaimed by the western readership, as demonstrated from the prizes attained, the tremendous fame, and success in the west.

Regrettably, such texts are helpless in terms of dealing with the eastern subject matter and have come up with readymade stereotypes to highlight their orient. These authors with careerist mindset are acknowledged worldwide since they are re-strengthening the foundation of binarism as highlighted by Said in his *Orientalism* (1978).

As per Lau, the Anglophone fiction is overloaded with a representation of stereotypes which results in “a deliberate process of self-othering” (13); one of its exact manifestations is validated in Karim’s *The Skunk Girl* (2009) when Nina’s (the protagonist) parents are portrayed as stereotypical figures since eastern mode of parenting is different to the one in west. The western readership does not consider this mode of parenting as different. For them, it is painted as inferior other- primitive and conservative. This process of self-othering is valid in case of Anam and Aslam as they present the aforementioned process through their characters.

Moreover, the highly marketable terms, South Asian literature and exoticism go hand in hand by providing content for west’s supremacy. This literature delves into, what Huggan explains as, the “trafficking of culturally ‘othered’ artifacts in the world’s economic, not cultural centres” (15). Huggan classifies upshots of exoticization as, ‘mystification [...] of historical experience; [imaginary] access to the cultural and [ethnic] other through the process of consumption” (19). All such practices are to be seen in the works of many South Asian writers. The selected authors for this study are likewise writing with implicit agenda and for fame. Huggan also elaborates that the notion of exoticism can be intricated as the one which fluctuates between the poles of ‘strangeness’ and ‘familiarity’ (13). It plays the task to domesticate the extraordinarily alien and culturally different orient with the intention to reduce the land and people in the storylines to make it a marketable commodity. This also indicates author’s motive to enjoy the delights of being in the western limelight. As evident through the primary texts selected for this study, they enroot the culture to get the appraisal from the western production houses by propagating the perpetual poverty and meagerness of the orient. Lisa Lau proposes the same. She believes that the Third World authors themselves are describing the exoticization of Third World culture by representing the details which are a mere exploitation, and misrepresentation of the cultural codes. This practice increases the curiosity value, henceforth, the need of postcolonial texts.

These writers are, in Ahmed’s words, “A Plague from the West” (1) trying to infect their people by misrepresenting and misappropriating their histories and cultures

by putting archive of suffering and exploitation in the frontline. They hold fast to the handouts of the west and have nothing to do with what goes in orient's world, in this corner of the east, in context of the present research-particularly Pakistan and Bangladesh.

It is fairly prominent that South Asian literature in English is mainly written on the themes which get phenomenal success. The writer makes amends for the lack of cultural liaison by resorting to 'simulated authenticity' (Nayar 23), particularly the diasporic one. M.Shamsie also discusses, that initially, the Pakistani Literature in English, challenges the narrative of Colonial master since pre-partition Era as Tariq Ali's novels explored little-known details to challenge western stereotypical representations of Muslims as "alien Other" by inquiring the encounter between Christianity and Islam (Shamsie 4). The literary works grew tremendously after 9/11 and the writings contesting the stereotypical image of Muslims echoes the 'impassable divide between "Islam" and "West" (Morey and Yaqin qtd. in Shamsie 1).

The idea of cultural misunderstanding and misrepresentation is another fact which adds to the paradigm of re-Orientalism. It is perceptible through the misrepresented orient's cultural truth by Orientals Other-within. Writers like Qaisra Shahraz, Uzma Aslam Khan represent and reduce the culture of home to a mere showpiece. Qaisra Shahraz through her protagonist, ZariBano, represents the downtrodden personalities of old people of her family, whom she writes as 'Bazarug[s].' These bazarugs are shown to feel comfortable in getting their daughters married to Quran, a license to secure family property. My argument, over here, is not based on the representation of girls like ZariBano but it is the over-emphasis on misleading details. In doing so, she presents Pakistan, "as a place of barbarism" (Allen 34). This handful representations of characters are not sufficient to label the east as barbaric and crude. Their representations present a sketch of an extremely miserable life where women are essentially othered. As put up by Shivani, such portrayals provide the snippets of authenticity of native culture to the western reader. S/he is shown eastern details without direct engagement "into the mystical waters of the East" (5).

Being from an eastern background myself, I know that not every girl in Sindh is living or has lived a miserable life like Bano. However, for the western concept of "Knight in the shining armour," such representations are as an epitome of patriarchal

system (Rehman n.pag). For critics like Rehman, it is the authentic briefing of the exotic land. The writers like Shahraz assume the role of native informants giving the detailed portrayal of exotic locale in an inexperienced manner. Thereby, appeal to the western appetite. Parallel approach is visible in the work of Khan's *Trespassing* (2003) where she portrays misuse of power when Baba Siraj Din ruins Naghmana's life without any regret. Keeping up with the tradition of self-orientalism and focusing on the Orientals' role in perpetrating Orientalism, authors of *Typhoon* (2003) and *Trespassing* (2003) act as a tourist guide by giving mundane and trivial details of the rustic land and people. Such details are helpful for the west to re-strengthen the notion of orient being inferior people. The west considers the orient as having barbaric culture, terrific traditions, and overall uncivilized.

Cultural hybridity, in South Asian Anglophone fiction, plays a significant role in re-Orientalism. The influx of Anglophone fiction in South Asia began with migration. Writers write about their culture with a technique, explained by Ashcroft as "the appropriation of reconstitution of the language of the centre [English]" (37). Orientals Other-within appropriate this technique owing to their implicit agenda. They do not write to mark "separation from the site of colonial privilege" (37). Their usage of appropriated language aids their works to be regarded as more reliable and appropriate guides about the alien land. Therefore, it keeps on haunting the natives. They submit to the approach of keeping up with tradition of re-Orientalism by sprinkling local language. This sprinkle is done to give authentic image of the east. Resultantly, it adds to the native flavour, readily accepted by the west.

These writers visit their homeland quite infrequently and are trapped in the popular narratives about the east. Therefore, their work may hardly be considered as an authentic tale. They write as square shooters who aim to validate their own suppression. However, in their narratives, there is an overemphasis of being South Asian and nearly inflexible representation of South Asian characters. Presenting its tradition in this manner their authority as South Asian writers is considered as a given and the occasion to challenge their authenticity does not arise. Lau clarifies the similar talk, through Amulya Mulladi's *The Mango Season* (2003) and Nair's *Ladies Coupe* (2001) where the latter is about a protagonist's train journey in which she meets women from multiple backgrounds and status. Nair bombards her readers with a variety of women and a prism

of experiences faced by them. The fact of being Indian is highlighted by reducing them to a mere housewife with no liberty and their identity is coloured by the vast experiences they had. As contrary to Nair, Mulladi in her *Mango Season* (2003) writes, “I was raised in a society where arranged marriage was a norm...” (1). It is revealing that Mulladi, on the very first page, considers it essential to convey the idea of arranged marriage being a norm and does not give the reader the liberty to think a South Asian existence as anything otherwise. It may or may not be a norm, but it is a non-issue which is portrayed only in the negative light. This extensively deliberate effort of mentioning the local culture, according to Lau, is one of the signature features of diasporic writings which make it a hot seller. Apparently, *The Mango Season* (2003) is centered on displaying all the flamboyant Indian behavioural mannerisms as of being absolutely intolerant when it comes to getting a daughter married out of the family. According to Lau, the continuous reuse of a nuisance of stereotypes apparently resonate with the anticipated representations of the Indians. It is part of damaging operation i.e., re-Orientalism as followed by South Asian diasporic women authors and in general South Asian authors. *The Mango Season* (2003) has taken the Indian culture as a bone of contention by placing it at the centre; a definitive and rigid one, which serves as a symbol of over-dogmatic generalizations. Henceforth, such investments of South Asian Anglophone writers in the representations of colourful trappings of exotic, for fame, are interpreted by the West as exotic which reduces cultural diversity to weariness.

South Asian Anglophone fiction, instead of a clean-out of the entire clutter of distorted portrayal and stereotypes, highlights self-orientalization. It does so, by bringing to centre damaging stereotypical notions of class, gender, and sexuality. Through incorporation of colonizing attitudes, the writers are representing and authenticating their works. They support, what Joanne Sharp in his book *Geographies of Postcolonialism* (2008) says: “Europeans were always seen as the reference point, Europeans always represented what was right” (14). Therefore, the desire for authenticity in literary representation forms a double-bind for the non-White authors in the west as they are perceived as ethnic informants and cultural representatives for the western readership. These writers seem to give a genuine flair in order to inform and guide the reader to have appropriate understanding of this marginalized subject.

1.2 Locating *The Blindman's Garden* and *The Good Muslim* in the trajectory of re-Orientalism

Lau is of the belief that present day South Asian Anglophone fiction alters the representation of Orient, snatching the platform and voice, once again placing the Orient to a position if the 'Other' (8). So, now Orientalism is not propagated by Orientals anymore. The fictions are marked suspiciously since they lack knowledge about the actualities of orient's land, tribal as well as non-tribal. Such fictions highlight what Lau states as, "sins of representation" (20). Huggan terms it as "strategic exoticism" (13) because these fictions disassociate the intrinsic sense of familiarity and adjust it with elements of strangeness. This merchandised approach of portraying essential cliché is, as identified by Spivak, an epistemic violence done to achieve exclusive positions in the west. For her, when the writer fetches the platform to make himself/ herself heard, s/he starts advocating the western narratives and stops representing his own orient (24).

Writers like Tahmima Anam and Nadeem Aslam are considered as well-known literary figures of South Asian Anglophone fiction. They appear to commodify worn-out themes of political turmoil, raging terrorism, seething corruption, and the helplessness of natives particularly women. Quite skillfully, both Anam and Aslam, in the texts, selected for the study, sketch the political, religious, and social conventions that beset each class of the society. The discussion of social maladies of Pakistan in *The Blindman's Garden* (2013) contains clear resemblance to the works of authors like Uzma Aslam Khan, Omar Shahid Hamid, Jamil Ahmed, and Kamila Shamsie. It seems as if the contemporary writers are following the trend of satiating the West "tourist appetite" (Shivani 5) since their writings contain a bit of everything which appears to be an intriguing element for Western mind.

While representing the other, the selected writers seem to get engaged in the act of giving in to the desires of the west by mediating as a globe trotter. It can hardly be denied that while speaking for its orient, the author will merely mirror the orient in some mirroring fashion. If a South Asian author is portraying his orient with savagery then it will encompass the identity of the author as well, which, in re-Orientalism's diction, is known as *self-othering*. The representations by the Orientals Other-within are considered authentic by the western readers.

One of the most argued themes in the South Asian fiction is its preoccupation with turmoil and chaos either it be in the works of Anam, a Bangladeshi-born author, or Aslam, a Pakistani-born. Both the novels selected for the present research incorporate the turmoil either political, religious, social, or ethnical to claim more validity and authenticity. In other words, the immensity of the teething problems discussed on the pages is like an effort just for the sake of giving a faithful portrayal regarding the affair. It is visible quite explicitly that the stereotypical portrayal is a sign of the extreme filth that makes western reader flinches and winces at such unpleasant glimpse. For Duncan and Korte, such descriptive narratives are employing ‘armchair tourism’, ‘ghetto picturesque’, and ‘slum tourism’ (5).

In the case of Tahmima Anam and Nadeem Aslam, the tags of ‘postcolonial’ and ‘diaspora’ become their gateway to success which Khair regards as “evil twins,” the “privileged migrant aesthetic” (vii). It is quite visible that Anam’s *The Good Muslim* (2011) and Aslam’s *The Blindman’s Garden* (2013) get promoted at the expense of those who are having authentic knowledge of the Subcontinent. The same is argued by Mukherjee that Anglophone South Asian writers, Anam and Aslam, who reside abroad are getting success in the international market for their relationship and motifs; a symbol of their native homeland’s depiction. She criticizes the South Asian authors “write more for the international audience and less for their Indian or South Asian readers” (3). For her, in South Asian authors’ works, “exoticism is often the outcome of their anxiety to be viewed as authentic” (8). Eventually, this selling of one’s indigenous culture out of anxiety results in commodification which is termed as re-Orientalism where these compradors write not only in the lingua of the colonizers but also translate native culture as exotic and othered for the tourist west. By underscoring the artistic style, they portray their culture, to a certain extent, alien and disturbingly inferior. As contrary to the past where the game of dominance was circulated by the civilized Whites who view their inferior other as a subaltern who cannot speak. However, in the present-day situation, this game of dominance as manipulators, exploiters, and plunderers is no longer played by the outsiders but “this role appears to have been taken over, in parts at least, by the Orientals themselves”(Lau “Introducing re- Orientalism” 11).

This study explores the construction of a stereotyped orient as these authors are seem as strengthening the shallowest of the stereotypes, what Lau calls “Introducing re-

Orientalism” (5). The purpose of this study is to study re-orientalist attitudes of Anam and Aslam in detail. They apparently uncover socio-political scenarios of Bangladesh and Pakistan respectively. They, by presenting scenarios of war and poverty-stricken characters and political scenarios, in both the texts, cater to the global capitalist market where exoticism was and is still a hot-seller.

This research holds up with Lau’s remark that South Asian writers of Subcontinent have started to give a picture of pseudo-Indianism- a below average term for the locals. As for Lau, the catalogue outlined by these Orientals takes into consideration, “stereotyping, exoticizing, pandering to western tastes [...], playing to the gallery, [...] essentializing, subalternism, marginalizing, and most recently of all, re-Orientalizing. (Lau 30). Therefore, Present-day writers are using the technique of binarism, which was prevalent during colonial times, is deepening and widening day by day. East and West are like two poles, where one is still dependent on the other.

West’s superiority is maintained by the downtrodden state of the east as in *The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas* (1973) where the well-being of the people is dependent upon on miserable state of the child. The people know that:

[The child] has to be there. Some of them understand why, and some do not, but they all understand that their happiness, the beauty of their city, the tenderness of their friendships, the health of their children, the wisdom of their scholars, the skill of their makers, even the abundance of their harvest and the kindly weathers of their skies, depend wholly on this child's abominable misery. (Guin n.pag)

Appropriating it in the context of present study, the West knows, as Omelas’ residents knew their happiness, their wisdom, and their skills are dependent wholly on this child's terrible misery. With respect to this, abominable miseries of East resulted in the understanding and well-being of the West, since both operate as binaries, just as people of the Omelas thought that their happiness and prosperity is due to the miserable state of the child. Thereby, west’s demands for third-class details of the East resonates with their conscious demands to see the East as stagnant and barbaric to re-strengthen the divides; of knowledge and ignorance, civilization and savagery, prosperity and backwardness, power and impotence, wealth and hunger. The ascending beat of progress in the West is because of the pulse of stagnation in East.

Similarly, Anam in her *The Good Muslim* (2011) portrays the east as savage. Moreover, she puts to display Islam as shallowly stereotyped when it comes to the path which Sohail starts to follow who has sent his own son in the hands of the maddarasa-extremists. As pointed out by Shivani, the western reader is desperate to have scraps of authenticity of Oriental culture which are least taxing to his intellect as he wants to learn about the east without any direct engagement (qtd. in Lau “Introducing re-Orientalism” 5).

Moreover, this Bangladeshi Anglophone novelist, in *The Good Muslim* (2011), highlights the rise of Islamic radicalism in the newly independent Bangladesh, visible through the approach of different members of Haque family towards life. According to Lau this is a ‘skewed representation’ considered as ‘truth claim’ by the western audience.

In *The Good Muslim* (2011), the clash of ideas between Maya and Sohail on sending Sohail’s son, Zaid, to madrasa highlights the strong hold of Islamic fundamentalism in Bangladesh. Anam seems to speak for South Asia, as she appears to have insider knowledge about Bangladesh.

All the concerns of Anam, either it be Maya’s struggle to save Zaid from becoming an extremist or Sohail’s struggle to get adjusted in the new world, add to the generalized information present in the western readership circle. Such portrayals are quite debatable since Anam is living abroad and hardly visits the place which she is describing with an authentic flair. This is what Lau writes as “in circulating stereotypes, pandering to clichés, carelessly totalizing, writers [...] play role in skewed and/ or misleading information on South Asian, re-orientalizing in damaging ways” Lau (584).

Nonetheless, western audience comprehend the “real” eastern society by viewing the east through the postcolonial intellectuals like Tahmima Anam and Nadeem Aslam. They try to resemble what colonizers did in colonial times. They are like the South Asian Anglophone colonialists mimicking the western colonialists. They come up with orient’s culture as heaps of distorted tradition with minute gradient of transformation.

The Blindman’s Garden (2011) through the tale of two brothers, Jeo and Mikal, portrays the lives of those survivors who are impacted by war and provides a candid

picture of their plight to the world. Nevertheless, the brothers end up as Taliban captives and are liable to all the experiences of trauma, horror, and agony of war. Set in Afghanistan and Pakistan after 9/11, this novel is about the narratives of family craving their loved ones, a narrative of war, and narrative of tribes where hopelessness burns the brightest. The novel depicts the consequences of ethnic in-fighting, incessant warfare, and sociopolitical conflict on both the local population and the landscape. The present narrative uncovers the seething corruption, greed, and spiritual ruptures within the region as re-orientalists claim to know all the secrets of east and act as a translator or a guide of South Asian tradition by offering their services to a western readership with the motif to gain a credible status by assigning their loyalties, to the west.

The similarities between narratives of Anam and Aslam exist in their dealings with east and west, its themes, the standpoint of leading characters, and characters' characteristics. The details of Islamic legacy as a keynote are used by both the writers, and in doing so, they reduce their characters to a mere-puppet available for global consumption. The comprehensive portrayal of the small families as in *Maps for Lost Lover* (2004) is a close representation of troubled lives. Aslam, in an interview defends his stance in this novel by saying that it post-mortems into lives of the rather marginal group with utmost honesty like 'England is not absent from my novel – only the WHITE England is absent' (Aslam: Interview with O'Connor).

However, when the dichotomy of binaries is deconstructed, it reveals the existence of Oriental(s) Other-within who writes about the orient to make it more marketable for the western audience. The only difference is the appropriated role of a colonizer being performed by the Oriental other-within who has only a limited knowledge and understanding which may only show relevance to his/her native land with an authentic voice. Western audience while reading the narratives, either constructed or narrated, considers voice of the author as authentic as it serves their purpose; their purpose of seeing east as exotic, barbaric, full of ruins and filth. These western readers and markets consume such thematic concerns at a faster pace as compared to others. Hence, their portrait of East is being packaged and consumed as a commodity. For Chetty, such portrait is defined by its capacity to be consumed by an anxiously awaiting culturally uninformed reader (152).

These writers seem to be perpetrating the role of a re-Orientalizing writers as, "postcolonial critic and writers as native informant to a demanding and needy

metropolitan audience” (Bahri 19). However, such details result in creating a desire in the western market to know about the difference to authenticate its own superiority. The focus of postcolonial intellectuals, then, shifts from the aestheticism to political themes, one of the major sources for capitalization. Shivani bluntly states that reason for the tremendous success and ‘exuberant reception’ sets in their authors’ status as “reliable native informants” for the West (21). Re-Orientalism is a discourse generated from Orientalism but it comes out of a postcolonial bequest and thus looks through various lenses: through the west lenses, western perspectives, western reference points. Through their works, it seems as that they are internalizing the west-east dichotomy. Both the writers selected for this research are in a better position to re- Orientalize the East as they have easy access to the promotion, distribution and marketing of their writings as compared to a home author. Not only this, their works can be receiving more expert handling which is quite essential to the quality of a writing. As Huggan calls, “exotic” the most fitting term to describe the domesticating process through which a product can be taken from the margins and easily gets absorbed into the superior culture. (22). Thus, exotic gets recolonized now by his owns.

The tags of marketing, packaging, production and selling of poor exotica is a deliberate act, in most of the cases. Huggan believes that “mainstream culture is always altered by its contact with the margins...Exoticism helps in maintain this pretense” (Huggan 21). For universal and wider appeal, a writer may provide exotica in a shabby and poor manner to satisfy mainstream expectations of the Western readers. As a researcher, I support what Brouillette says that market is aware of their Third World status and it knows that such writers will provide sufficient depiction of voyeuristic details of native’s underbelly since they are deliberate with their choice of representation by contributing to the “blockbuster phenomenon” (54). Re- Orientalising practice is still in the process as native informants are still addressing the needs of western audience by serving native culture either it be Pakistani, Indian, or Bangladeshi as commodities for consumption by moderating the process of othering.

A number of critics put forth their dissent with fixation of Pakistani Anglophone with the details of strikes, lockouts, lack of security, chaos and detailed landscape of riots. For Shivani, such details are misinterpreted by the reviewers as an authentic tale. He believes that “reviewers repeatedly mislabel the desultory, superficial cataloguing

of alien cultural facts as finely detailed writing” (25).

The texts selected for this study savor to the flavor of the Orientalist perspective by incarnating mundane realities as per the demands of west i.e., publication house by colouring their orient as a subaltern devoid of speech. For Lau, the voices and presence of diasporic voices is quite over-arching in terms of constructing SouthAsian identity and setting it in opposition with ‘The West’ resulting in continuous stereotypical representation of the Other by the Other within which further results into what Lau writes, “skewed, distorted and dogmatically generalized representation of South Asia, its culture” (590). It appears as re-Orientalists show their world as poverty-stricken as compared to dazzling and glittery world of the west which present a more generalized picture of affair of life else what an actual life has in store. Such author mutated account results in destroying the local culture and are bringing forward, what Mukherjee calls, “planned authenticity” (11).

The present research analyses re-Orientalist strategies and tools used in these writings that have earned them fame as very popular tools to commodify the native culture. Moreover, this study will examine the link between the oriental other-within and commodification aspects of these writings.

1.2.1 The Sun never sets on the English [Language]

All the selected corpus for this study use English as a medium of communication, which is quite noteworthy as it is not the mother tongue of place where both Tahmima Anam, A Bangladeshi-born British writer, and Nadeem Aslam, A Pakistani-born British writer are brandishing their native. One tends to ask a quite obvious question as to why they have chosen English to communicate the events. What does it mean to write in the language of the Master about the subordinates? Why have they approached, one of the tools of the Master, i.e, English language to address the indigenous concerns? Answers for such questions lie in the fact of English being an internationally- universal language; A language capable of earning respect and fame; capable of transcending the borders. Bill Ashcroft is right to highlight the persistent debate in postcolonial studies over the use of the colonial language because language provides a platform within which power circulates and can be appropriated and consumed as cultural capital. Yet what postcolonial writing validates is that language itself is a zone of difference, struggle, and transformation, and also a zone of identity

(Ashcroft 119-120). For Lisa Lau “re-Oriental writers set themselves up as ‘translators’, translating one culture to/for the other, have the dual role of opening the channels of communication, but also of holding the two sides separate because it is this very separation which lends heightened significance to their role” (585).

Broadly speaking, the contemporary post-colonial writings indicate a continuous dependency of the author and the phenomena behind penned-down to be appreciated by the Western alien who is unable to acquaint himself with the progression of Eastern history in eastern narrative. In doing so, such writers incorporate *self-representation* where instead of escaping from the binaries of *us vs them* fall prey to the same system of binaries which they were supposed to oppose, hence, one of the tools to incorporate re-Orientalism. It would not be wrong to state that the process of *self-representation*, in actual, has re-strengthened the power imbalance, particularly the way knowledge about the East is constructed, authorized, legitimated, and disseminated.

According to Ashcroft & Griffith (2002), a writer consider one of the two forms, either appropriation or abrogation. The abrogation entails a denunciation of the supremacy of English. The present-day writers are seen as transforming it to suit their purpose. Anam and Aslam, by writing in English unveil their comprador attitude as their works speak more to the west rather than focusing on the east. Their comprador attitude brings in the question what Mukherjee puts as, ‘convey in a language that is not one’s own the spirit that is one’s own’ by bringing in the question of intended audience(v).

Ashcroft highlights the ways in which language has become a mean of self-representation. For him, “In the end, language is the perfect model for the cultural engagements that occur in globalization.” (43). Hence, the desire of Orientals Other-within to represent the orient is fulfilled by using English which suits their agendas.

This study aims to investigate how re-Orientalism validates, uses, and implements the discourse of established literary trends in the global literary market. A native reader tends to feel somewhat betrayed by both writers for apparently exoticizing, mocking, and even maltreating cultural affinities. Thus Re-Orientalism/oriental other-within/ postcolonial intellectual colonialism is a persistent mode of expressing the reality in the narratives of the novels.

1.3 Thesis Statement

This research investigates the role of selected South Asian Anglophone writers like Tahmima Anam and Nadeem Aslam as ‘Oriental[s]-Other within’ who have exoticized the native culture with the assimilationist approach. Accommodating themselves with the global capitalist market by aiming for the western consumers the selected writers seem to authenticate their works as re-Orientalists.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How do the narratives of the selected South Asian Anglophone writers subscribe to the stereotyping of the Orient and fall prey to the re-Orientalist paradigm?
2. To what extent these South Asian Anglophone writers market/negotiate their indigenous cultural representation(s) for the intended market?

1.5 Significance of the study

This study generates a discussion on the concept of re-Orientalism presented by Lau & Mendes in their work, “Introducing re-Orientalism- A new manifestation of Orientalism” (2011), which will be fruitful for such social actors who want to investigate diasporic South Asian Anglophone fictional works with a critical insight. It offers a complex comprehension of the representations being represented by the postcolonial intellectual and as a consequence got conventionally labeled as Re-orientalists. The purpose of the study is to trace their comprador/ re-Orientalist attitude in the two specified diasporic Anglophone South Asian writers.

This research redounds for all those who are intrigued to locate other worth-finding features of re-Orientalism in such fictions. The research holds significance in terms of its expected findings leading to the disclosing of reasons and consequences of such works.

1.6 Rationale of the Study

The rationale for this study is to see selected South Asian Anglophone writers as Orientals Other-within. However, other such studies have been conducted in this paradigm, I am extending the canvass of my research and in addition to studying re-Orientalism by a Pakistani-born writer, I have included a Bangladeshi perspective as well. In both the works an oversimplification of historical knowledge through

generalization is seen, which is considered as a faithful representation of a South Asia. This seems more like a cultural mockery where culture and tradition is used to address the demands of the west of a monolithic truth of the inferior Orient by depicting instability with least engagement.

1.7 Delimitation

The study is narrowed down to Tahmima Anam's *The Good Muslim* (2011) and Nadeem Aslam's *The Blind Man's Garden* (2013).

1.8 Research Plan

This research is divided into six chapters.

Chapter One outlines the parameters of my research by highlighting my intents and objectives that I have to address through this research. It consists of the research questions and thesis statement.

In Chapter Two contextualizes my study by justifying its aims. It presents a review of existing literature. Moreover, it gives a sight of other researches that have been concluded before this study. This chapter aims to locate the gap and to correlate my research with the works, already done.

Chapter Three delineates the research methodology and theoretical framework that I have adopted to conduct textual analysis of the primary texts selected for this study.

Chapter Four consists of a thorough analysis of *The Good Muslim* (2011). I have examined the text in the light of my theory which talks of turning the East into a merchandised commodity.

In Chapter Five, I, comprehensively, analyze *The Blindman's Garden* (2013) using Lau's theoretical lens. The research undergoes a comprehensive study which carefully shadowed the theoretical framework to find out the answers of my research questions. I have explained how he has subscribed to the myth of stereotypical representation of the Orient which is considered as authentic and is highly demanded by the Western readership circle.

In Chapter Six, I conclude my study on re-Orientalism by encapsulating the entire discussion. Moreover, it broadens the research area by allowing reading of contemporary diasporic South Asian Anglophone fiction. The research will eventually

concludes on the findings along with the recommendations in the similar research paradigm.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Outline

This chapter presents a critical analysis of secondary sources to locate the present research within the existing scholarship. Moreover, it assists the researcher to find out gaps in the contemporary evaluative and interpretative scheme of literary studies. I have reviewed some of the works of literary significance to carry out my literature review. Since the present research explores the traces of what Lau explains as, “resurfacing of new manifestations of Orientalism albeit at times most willing(ly)” (Lau “Introducing re-Orientalism” 8). My study focuses on the writing strategies adopted by writers to present an ‘authentic’ picture which is highly marketable.

The praise of South Asian authors by the West as Lau writes, “coexists with a mixed response back home” and their works “receive some critical praise but are also treated with a dose of suspicion” (9). She argues, “the native writers might not be met with outright hostility by local critics...but serious questions are raised regarding this body of work and what makes it commercially and critically successful, especially in the West” (5). The current research, therefore, takes into account the theory of re-Orientalism to review the existing literature.

2.2 Review of the selected sources

The present literature review integrates the outlooks of various scholars who have their say on the topics related to re-Orientalist’s strategies. Moreover, it also includes a limited number of the researches done on the primary texts under the heading ‘minor sources’.

2.2.1 Major Sources

This section of the study brings forth the view of scholars who presents a critical view on the topics related to the process of re-Orientalism and the strategies of re-Orientalists. Re-Orientalism is a widely discussed term in the modern theoretical trends. Many theorists like Huggan and Mukherjee consider re-Orientalism as a mirror to the West while depicting the East. They believe that such narratives have an essential desire to narrate otherness, which will, as a result, leads to a benefitting colonial bridge. In doing so, they bring in “narratives of Otherness” (Lau “Re-Orientalism 8), a re-use of Orientalism i.e., re-Orientalism. Lisa Lau in one of her phenomenal works on re-Orientalism, entitled “Re-Orientalism: The Perpetration and Development of Orientals” sees re-Orientalism as about cultural consumption and commodification. Other elements which are a part of this re-Orientalism, such as the question of authenticity and exoticism, will be discussed shortly in the coming review of Mukherjee and Huggan. Lau is of the opinion that all the above-mentioned features are mainly observed in diasporic writers and in native writers too who have strong inclinations towards international capitalist market.

Lau defines re-Orientalism as, “How, South Asian Anglophone, writers’ Eastern affiliations have come to term with the idea of an Orientalized East... by playing along with them, western perceived expectations, or by discarding them altogether. (3). She holds that Anglophone writers are seen as guilty of selling out their nativeness by portraying authentic and exotic South Asia. At present, Orientalism is not circulated by Orientals any longer but is consigned to the ‘Oriental within the Orient’ who writes for the West by representing his Orient as exotic to serve the demands of the market to serve their personal agendas. In short, she tries to highlight that writers are instead of striking back this new type of ‘misrepresenting of bad faith’ (Shivani qtd. in 19) goes out of their way which does not create any sense of discomfort in its western consumer.

She attempts to provide a detailed analysis of the applications of re-Orientalism by the Orientals Other within or what Appiah says, ‘comprador intelligentsia’ (qtd. in Huggan 18). These handful of authors appear to be gaining a lot by distributing the social and cultural identities of their Orient as they are, as suggested by Lau, “translators between East and West” (26). Their works are based more on commodification instead

of artistic excellence and appeal. This is quite relevant to the present research as this research intends to look for the traces of re-Orientalism in contemporary South Asian Anglophone fiction. The above mentioned are mostly read under exotic light since these works along with the “sins of representations” (20) present a factual knowledge regarding native land annoy the local critics and readers.

I have not discussed Lau’s view in detail in my literature review as she is the driving theorist for this study. A thorough discussion of what Lau holds under the concept of re-Orientalism is presented in my research theory and analysis.

Similarly, the aspects of commodification, exoticization, and hot promotion of South Asian Anglophone writers who deliberately maintain East as a separate and inferior identity make a marketable commodity out by incorporating a deliberate procedure of self-Othering. *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margin* (2001) by Graham Huggan relates those postcolonial narratives are conceived as well-defined as those writings in English which have emerged from ex-colonies of the Empire, the term ‘postcolonial’ evidently has taken full advantage owing to its semantic vagueness. At one point, it refers to a constant process of ‘cultural embattlement’ (Suleri qtd. in Huggan ix) and claims it as an ‘index of resistance’ which indicates the capacity of resistance being shown by culture broker by adding to the persistent imperial hegemony. At another place, it ‘serves as a sales-tag in the context of today’s globalized commodity culture’ (ix). Being persistent with this idea, Huggan argues, postcolonial text as a token of cultural value that functions as a sales-tag in the framework of present-day’s globalized commodity as it helps to keep people in their professions. He writes that postcolonial studies appears to be a ‘wayward eclecticism’

(2) incorporating either a cross-cultural compare-contrast technique but with negligible cultural baggage or claiming historical method having minimal grasp of historical facts which results into its increasing commodification as a marketable academic field. He believes that no work in present-day is written for circulation in a highly interconnected globalizing capital market where everything has a price tag. As he defines postcolonial exotic as, “a site of discursive conflict between a local assemblage of more or less related oppositional practices and a global apparatus of assimilative institutional/commercial codes” (28).

To earn more capital, the pre-determined exoticism is nurtured and fed to the

metropolitan publication houses anchored according to the needs and demands of the international literary market. Surely, Postcolonialism exists in the margins and the well-accomplished handful of writers and thinking brains are undoubtedly the carriers of this exoticism trade in the Western commercial market-the main stream. For him, these handful of writers are quite aware of their position as spokesperson(s) from the periphery and regulated iconic cultural representative figure(s). It would be an inappropriate study to view them as pundits of their traditional home authentically exotic culture.

Keeping up with what Appiah has maintained, Huggan postulates that these west-authentic minds are ‘mediating the global trade in exotic. The exotic-centered is negotiated from the margins but makes more sense to the one residing at the center (qtd. in Huggan 26).

Huggan writes that, critiques of postcolonialism add to the currency of postcolonial discourse as the field grows rich on its accumulated cultural capital, it is acknowledged by a growing number of its opponents as intellectually bankrupt. He quotes Mitchell who writes that it would be a reductionist critique to assume that cultural “raw materials” are approaching from the colonies to be turned into “finished products” by the critical industries of empire’ (qtd. in Huggan 4). This globalisation of cultural production argues against such simple formulae of cosmopolitan exploitation. There appears to be no doubt in the fact that English is the language of this critical industry. It underpins the view that postcolonialism is a dissertation of translation, redirecting cultural products regarded as originating from the peripheries toward audiences who considers themselves as coming from the centre. The location of the major publishing houses promotes strength to this view, as does the growing number of foreign-language texts from the ‘non-West’ available in translation. The question is why is this postcolonial industry turning out translated products for metropolitan consumers in places like London and New York? And why does this industry seem to privilege a handful of well-known writers? Not only this but why is it directing so much attention towards its well-known critics? According to Huggan, Postcolonial writers see themselves as agents of legitimizing the products of others by playing the roles of mediators and translators in terms of representing their exotic cultures. In this sense, it is seen as a trade negotiated from the margins. He believes that such exoticism when

exercised puts forth a control tool of cultural translation by integrating it into unexciting everyday routine. He states that exoticism in South Asian fiction is found in the everyday commodification of the artifacts of 'others' labelled as exotic. He observes that if a cultural artefact is consumed out of his surroundings, it will sound foreign as it gets disassociated from its belongingness and, thereby, it witnesses the conversion to an object of awe. He termed it as 'aesthetics of decontextualisation' (16). It functions as a cultural dislocator, using deemed more authentic and exotic mainly by the economically and politically dominant societies.

Huggan sustains that authenticity comes out both as a 'consumer-oriented strategy' and 'self-validating identitary category' and to synthesize Western power by alleviating white-liberal guilt. (xiv). He talks about the inclination of writers, from ex-colonies, towards cultivated exhibition with the works loaded with "boutique" exoticism trying to satisfy the appetite of an international market loaded with cultural symbols and motifs, traditional markers and more specifically religion in abundance. Thus, Huggan considers that these highly rewarding prizes are one of the reasons why writers, all the times, turn to native people, their tradition and culture as their main theme in order to earn more from this culturally-rooted merchandise of strangeness and familiarity.

Huggan talks about the bent of western literary market that is taking advantage of the "otherness" which contributes to, what Huggan calls as, "intellectual tourism" (27). The present-day literature has characteristic label of Oriental attached to it, one of the particulars, for those who have a taste for a definite foreignness. They (the western readers) hunt for something distinctive in the sense of being unfamiliar, something which reiterates their superiority over the retrograde East. He criticizes this as an unhurried evoking of cultural difference by successfully manipulating the subordinate status for consumption in the Western market in accordance with the demands.

He argues that the approach of writers from the ex-colonies of the Raj through prominence of their intention(s) do not write with the aim of writing a piece of fiction but their representations are marked either consciously or subconsciously with the purpose of selling it to the Western International market as a cultural commodity. He believes that in the contemporary postcolonial time, there is no work which is strictly written for its locals rather it is written to get circulated in a highly globalized capitalist

platform where writers are more affected by the foreign demands that are in trend. On such representations, it is argued, that the writers “has capitalized on its perceived marginality while turning marginality itself into a valuable intellectual commodity” (Huggan 13), he holds that such marginality would be more valuable for the global market as a “cultivated exhibition” of the other’s culture. As Appiah suggested that best known among such body of writers are “mediating the international trade in cultural commodities of world capitalism at the periphery” (Appiah qtd. in Huggan viii).

For western readers, the tales of their own lands have become predictably normal and mundane so now they have developed a flavor for something alien, something unusual, quite foreign, shocking, and exotic and this yearning of the West for the exotic has encouraged the South Asian writers to satisfy the appetite of an international reader which in return will satisfy their fortune. Such works, then, produced are “loaded with boutique exoticism” in Huggan’s jargon.

Graham Huggan, in his pioneer and impactful *The Postcolonial Exotic* (1994) explores multiple frame of references that are used by ‘Orientals Other within’ through their fictional works. By presenting their local culture as a commodity by putting a tag of strange-ness and foreign-ness and such ‘cultivated exhibition’ will earn a lot of fame and fortune. Views of Huggan seconds what my theorist selected for this study since the exoticization of the East is done by writers from the East for intrinsic motifs. The primary texts chosen for the study have not been discussed under the light of what Huggan has penned down. Therefore, a re-Orientalist study of *The Blindman’s Garden* and *The Good Muslim* will add to the existing corpus of South Asian Literary Studies.

The notion of authenticity and its burden has made authors a prey to the Orientalist’s trap. Writers do so by presenting an outworn image of their respective native land. This image makes their orient a highly demanded and sellable commodity in the international market. Mukherjee in her essay “The Anxiety of Indianness; Our Novels in English (1993)” aptly explores the notion of ‘authenticity’ particularly in the works of author emerging from South Asia. According to this trend of authenticity, she asserts that in order to accommodate the artistically driven desires and needs of the Anglophone cosmopolitan reader, the South Asian author will try to make efforts to translate local culture through culturally alienated Queen’s language in a slavish manner. According to her, a well-known writer, “writes more for international

audience” (Mukherjee 5). She clarifies that her concept of ‘anxiety of Indianness’ is different from the that of Narayan, Anand and Rao than that of younger generation of writers to name a few like Sashi Tharoor Vikram Seth. The older generation attempted to come out of their rooted Indianness through their effort to place the indigenous culture on the global platform, it is an another debate whether they got successful in doing that or got in to a trap, having a new individuality which all together differs from the the colonialist obligations. Whereas, the latter aims more to sound authentic about their Indianness accompanying their sight to cater the pressure of international global literary economy. This, therefore, give birth to the notion that English is the only language in India which is capable of carrying the burden of literature, intellect and thereby, forcefully puts all the indigenous and culturally-rooted mode of communications to a backseat and hence snatched their importance.

Nevertheless, she sums up the stimulating question relevant to cultural identity; Should a writer start writing in his vernacular language to show his disguise towards colonial language or should he write in the Queen’s language or to form english or englishes capable of bearing native ethnicity and culture that for Mukherjee is Indian culture. Mukherjee, by mentioning Raja Rao’s Foreword in *Kanthapur*, discusses his problem to deal with conflict between language and culture as for Rao, English language is incompetent when it comes to carry the burden of indigenous myths in Indian culture. It would not be unbecoming to state that, English suits the intellect but emotions are at the fullest conveyed through indigenous language since it is capable of carrying the baggage of tradition, culture and ethnics. Thereby, aiming to convey indigenous flair in colonizers language would become herculean task as it is useless to convey figurative meaning attached to any of the local myth or tradition incorporated by the writer to sound ‘authentic’. Resultantly, she stresses that beauty of a language is carried by its culture as culture of any language possesses uniqueness. A language can be translated but translating culture can be arduous. Mukherjee argues that translating an alienated aura is sensed everywhere as a lot of effort is required to comprehend the delicate symmetry of culturally-rooted diction. Mukherjee holds that the aura of Whites is still directing our intellects even after 50 years of their departure from the subcontinent.

As per this critic, in order to make their work highly consumable, the authors have blatantly loaded their narrative with far-fetched indigenous themes in Indian

culture to accommodate the need of international market along with their own desire to earn fortune and fame in the international platform. If at one place, these SouthAsian aim to direct their writings engrossed with native flair then on the other side of the fence, they also have their motive of becoming a renowned figure in the global market.

She maintains that all the writers who are fascinated by the process of pleasing the western audience by portraying their native culture as aimlessly disturbed and somewhat chaotic. According to her, South Asian writers in doing so, exoticized their native culture in a way which is devoid of cultural aesthetic style. An indigenous reader while reading the work in English would undoubtedly sense a peculiar impulse of vagueness. This vagueness, in Mukherjee's view is a result of the burden, they experience, is an outcome of the anxiety they feel interiorly which "leads to self-consciousness and it eventually leads to an evident sense of anxiety in the native writer work" (Mukherjee 3). She says that the use of English in the narratives and its inferred supremacy is an impression built by West and she holds that the plight of South Asians is due to the fact that they still consider western code of conduct and its language as superior. For her, a native writer circulate the same notion in the literature, of contemporary age.

She brings to limelight the easily-traceable anxiety of cosmopolitan writers who get aspired by the privileges and elitism by proving their *Indianized* Indianness in their native works. It seems as if these writers are trying to authenticate their intrinsic Indianness and *Indianized* subject through their reductionist lens which ironically more native than any of the indigenous knows. This eventually increases the burden of authenticity on the part of the author and take him under the trap of keep writing, entertaining, and enthralling the global market by getting rewards. She expresses grief and discontent on the process through which the Diasporic SouthAsian Anglophones are thriving to gain fame and popularity by representing their land as stereotypically dark and gloomy with no hope of a new dawn.

Most importantly, she discusses that English novels by Indian authors have attained more prominence than the past in the quick period of our interaction with English language. For her, the upsetting factor is English as it is the language of power and privilege and is no more restricted as a language of our white colonizers. She maintains that language is a matter of choice and it is writers' deliberate decision to

write in English which ensures access to global market along with yielding “royalties in foreign exchange” (169). Differing from this belief, not all of the writers writing in English about their home achieve fame abroad. This highly depends on the cultural implications of the novel being or been written in English.

At large, Meenakshi Mukherjee, especially in the works of South Asian authors, explores the notion of “authenticity” since it is quite obvious in their works. She asserts that in order to address the desires of western markets, the writers get into the booming business of translating their native culture for an alien audience. The views of Mukherjee intends to further explain the idea presented by Lau of how South Asian authors are “selling out” and pander to Western desires to consume “real” narratives about South Asia and from South Asia to sound more authentic and native.

Anglophone writers having Muslim background are treated as representative of their faith, in the West, and back home, they are judged. *Writing Islam from a South Asian Muslim Perspective; Rushdie, Hamid, Aslam, Shamsie* (2015) by Madeline Clements discusses the same by investigating how Islam is represented in the workings of South Asian Anglophone fiction writers. According to Clements, there is a lot of malicious oversimplifications about Islam with an insider’s insight but none the less, at present, this statement points to a reductive inclination when it comes to the discussion of Islam as a foreign culture in the West.

She explores the assumption that transnational works of Nadeem Aslam, Hamid and few more names to the list can be read as a modern knowledge of the Islamic world particularly after New York 9/11 as it seems that such works have presented Islam by using internationally dispersed literature to reframe Muslim’s prospective to connect with the rest of the world. Their works try to provide an in depth examination of inter and intra-cultural affiliations the characters follow in the texts.

Writing Islam targets to explore how these authors in their works through their interpretation are taken up by the dominant culture and politics as ‘authentic and hence authoritative spokespeople’ (3). Clements advocates that authors like Shamsie, Aslam, Hamid try to negotiate their characteristics and the problematizing tension of being seen as mouth piece of Muslims along the complicated global context in which they colour their texts. They are considered as a bearer or an agent of a particular culture, according to the present study, Islam.

The post 9/11 era has witnessed a visible growth of Muslim interventions in to-date debates regarding Islam and its followers, not only through non-fictional work or memoirs but also through broadcasting media. Such growth of Muslim interventions gave birth to a novel wave of Anglophone writers in South Asia which was naturally accompanied by an advancement in the analysis of tactics for portraying Muslims in Academia in particular the West. Muneeza Shamsie, quite unsurprisingly observed, in her annual survey of Pakistani Anglophone literature that, ‘in the wake of 9/11, few Pakistani writers decided to explore the relationship between Muslims and the West (Shamsie qtd. in Clements 8). This is intrinsically done by touching the ideas of religion, otherness and identity offered as a well-timely stimulus to geopolitical occurring. Shamsie in *And the World Changed: Contemporary Stories by Pakistani Women* (2005) noticeably puts that in the recently past decade, Pakistan has been deeply affected by political upheavals in the adjoining Muslim lands, including the advancements made by Al-Qaeda and Taliban in Afghanistan as witnessed in Aslam’s fiction intensified by Western rhetoric of clash of civilization. Hence, she claims that such narratives produced are a ‘part of a new world literature in English that gives voices to experiences beyond traditional canons of Anglo-American literature’ (9). In ‘Re-culturing Islam’, she writes that there is a manifestation of mystic and ancient South Asian cultural heritage. According to her, post 9/11 fiction appears less aesthetically pleasing narratives and more of anthropological accounts. She suggests that contemporary Pakistani fiction is perceived as an autobiographical diary full of fascinating insights about a Pakistani culture and faith and for a western reader, their works are like windows through which he can have an insight into Pakistani society. She believes that present-day Anglophone Pakistani narratives have seemingly come up as one of the trickiest engaging reads around the global since it serves multi functions; not only an aesthetically appealing piece of fiction but also an autobiographical work with deep political, social, and religious acknowledgements which to a certain extent further prompt to a prejudicial read on the part of international reader. It can be a writer’s considered attempt to present diverse native culture but somehow takes the narrative to a divergently regressive strategy to promote his/her tales on the global platform.

Studying and analyzing *The Blindman’s Garden* from the view point of Clements will add to the on-going debate about Pakistani Anglophone fiction which are viewed as anthropological tales not just a mere piece of fiction by their intended

audience and market. Even analyzing *The Good Muslim* from this point renders same cultural and religious representations regardless of being a Bangladeshi text. Both the novels are not evaluated in the same sense of curiosity to unveil identity politics and aesthetics. We will come to realize that such tales are taken as writer's confessions about his land and it paves way for the work to be read under judgmental flair. The present research examines in detail the selected texts which according to play on the writer's vague individual affiliations. Thereby, makes such writings are liable to be judged by the international readership.

South Asian writers who are earning prizes or living abroad or are having any contract with international publication centers are considered as less-Indian since they lack regional knowledge so their narratives are unfair. "The Cult of Authenticity" (2000) by Vikram Chandra presents a mocking attack on the assimilationist attitude of South Asian critics, who proclaim their role as demigods of aesthetically beautiful wasteland and are inclined towards ill-founded notion of depicting "pure Indianness". For Chandra, money and fame is not the criteria to find out authentic elements in South Asian writings.

Chandra, by addressing the native writers, tells that "As you work, don't fear the God of authenticity, for he is weak god, a fraud" (19). To this fake god the most repeatedly asked question is about the people for whom they write for since according to Chandra, beautiful literature thrives in societies that celebrate works for their intrinsic value instead of putting them under the cult of authenticity. He holds that this cult does not exist, neither does there is any kind of superior or mystical entity to decide about the authenticity of any work. He says that 'art exists for its own sake' so it art must not be divided into compartments known as 'authentic' and 'non-authentic' as it is restriction on the role played by literature to just political interpretations which will be deprived of aestheticism and diversity along with the intrinsic expression of experience as tactics of authenticity are a blockage to literary freedom. He maintains in his essay that the South Asian critics have constructed a 'cult of authenticity' for themselves and who so ever tries to diverge from their formula of authentic representation forcefully comes under the category of non-authentic by accusing writers like himself of wicked deed of selling their nativeness just for the sake of fame and fortune. Moreover, he objects to the approach of adopting an unrealistic and superior moral grounds and expecting others

to do the same. He observes that “test of Indianness” and the acceptance or rejection of any work is highly dependent on this arbitrary calculation. Throughout his work, Chandra maintains that a literary writing should be kept at length from this kind of distorted and caricatured ‘authentic moralism’

The followers of the god of authenticity were singing: ‘Be pure in location...Be pure in intent’...I saw that the offerings were books... I cried out, ‘who is this terrible god you worship with these living sacrifices? And the Leftist and the Righties answered in one voice, This is our God of Authenticity. Pay homage or you will suffer. (17)

The notions presented by Chandra in his essay present a striking contrast to the present research as it intend to analyze the primary texts from the angle of re-Orientalism. Since this essay is one of the to-date sources on South Asian writings which make it relatable for this study. Conflicting opinions keep and aid a researcher to be aware of the pitfalls that a research may fall into. In addition to this, such contradictory opinions keep a researcher aware not to take his researcher into labelled form but rather a more encompassing view point.

It is a well-established fact that literature can never stand in isolation and is affected by the personal and political aspiration(s) of the writers. “East as a Career” (2000) by Amit Chaudhari substantiates that literature in contemporary age is confused with the inquires of political orientation, as for whom do these native writers write by using the language of Raj and for whom do “these South Asian writers, exoticize the presentation of their native culture for” (Mukherjee 3).that writers in the ‘post Saidian era’ in their writings present an ‘immigrant nostalgia’ by playing the ‘Indian card’ wherever and whenever it suits the purpose of selling their work well in the international market.

His ideas of accusing writers with exoticizing the native culture resonates with Vikram’s cult of authenticity. For Chaudhuri and Chandra, the concept of exoticism and authenticity, respectfully, are false and unrealistic. Chaudhuri says that charges of exoticization and indian-card, with marketability strategies, on the writers are devoid of any merit of certainty. He writes that critics who are obsessed with this new but inaccurate views of marketability of a particular work are unable to appreciate the sheer

pleasure and beauty in a piece of fiction. He considers that critics, living abroad, have made a career by cashing their *Indianized* self by playing the victim card of Orientalism. He maintains that a piece of fiction must not be compartmentalized and by compartmentalizing the piece of fiction into the aura of exoticism will not result in a meaningful appreciation of piece of fiction. It will just be inferences of useless alphabets and point-scoring narratives regarding identity. This compartmentalization results in depiction of “shallowest of stereotypes” (Shivani 3). For these critics, narratives of native writers must be capable of evoking sentiments, it must be aesthetically appealing instead of dehumanizing and othering their native traditional heritage.

The contributions of these writers are helpful in locating the gap by contextualizing it. The present research attempts to see how the primary texts pay homage to human experiences and expression and to which extent these experiences are consumed as cultural commodities by bringing to limelight Huggan’s notion of ‘cultivated exhibition’ to earn more from the culturally rooted merchandise.

In the modern era, the pressures of the contemporary capitalist market trap a writer into appealing snares of more economic benefits by convincing the writer into the bargain of highlighting exotic and authentic tales from Orient’s land. If s/he supports the master’s narrative only then publication contracts is signed. Therefore, Niveta Majumdar in “Commodifying Culture: Language and Exoticism in Indian Writings in English” in *Indian Writing in English and The Global Literary Market* edited by Om Prakash and Lisa Lau (2014) considers that writers from South Asia in order to get fame start presenting exotic South Asia. In doing so, writers “emphasizing and bent on displaying a shame and rarely emphasize (s) with it” (13). The critic highlights the plight of present-day South Asian authors and their state of being stuck between the compulsion of present-day world and the boundaries of unsaid compulsions in which they have got themselves in-trapped. She mentions that multiple allegations are considered against South Asian writers through two school of thoughts, where one upholds that these writers are contributing genuinely to English literature as a wholesome field particularly in South Asian Literature, the other school holds the view that these writers are writing or rather acting as tourist guide for the West. The pressure of the present-day capitalist market lures a writer into attractive traps of capitals and

reductionism by maintaining the master's narrative of painting the under commands in gloomy shades, only then he can only be able to stay at his place. This bargain revolves around 'authentic and exotic tales from a far off land' by incorporating multi-faceted and versatile Indian real societies. South Asian writers are inspired from their native lands but rarely present an all-inclusive picture of their culture and society. They seem to be more interested in bringing forth a marginalized segment of their society which can be fed to the international literary market.

By describing the details which the author wants to capitalize, Lau holds the view that an unreliable narrator devolves re-Orientalism. The author displays a spectrum ranging from charm to masterful authority and to insider knowledge. A native reader while reading the details presented by an unreliable narrator feels at pain and s/he is pushed out of his/her comfort zone while receiving so-called facts with readiness about his native land. Lau in 'The Re-Orientalising Strategy of the Unreliable Narrator' in *Re-Orientalism and Indian Writings in English* by Om Prakash and Lisa Lau (2014) says that the technique of unreliable narrator is new to South Asian writers. For Lau, an unreliable narrator is unconventional and discomfiting since, he is calling to question the entire idea of authenticity as a result of his unreliable narration. He permits his creator, a greater freedom to be inconsistent. According to Lau, in such kinds of works, readers have to exercise judgment not only on the characters or plots but also on the narrator as he is the spokesperson of his creator, author.

The present texts merely address the idea of unreliable narrator but they are sufficient enough to shape and influence South Asian fiction as a whole. It might not be a mere coincident that such texts, 'with some degree of diasporic context' (Lau "Introducing re-Orientalism" 31) get nominated for awards and prizes. To borrow Tew's grounds, "[T]he most one can claim is a series of snapshots of cultural and literary currents, or a cartography of salient co-ordinates" (qtd. in Lau "Re-Orientalism" 32). Such texts definitely permit their authors enough space to be inconsistent since they are living simultaneously in the West and the East but spends extended span of their lives outside the Subcontinent. Unfortunately, the rise of South Asian literature is addressing the colonial logic by newer agents by incorporating newer modes. For Lau and Mendes, such newer agents are "elite group of Orientals" taking advantage of their position Like Hamid and Adiga did. (Lau and Mendes 4).

Even a cursory glance of the South Asian shelves of Western markets reveals a restricted scope of voices that are considered as authentic representatives of the Orient in the West. The underlying tension is that these handful of elite representatives are among the few chosen by the West and are positioning themselves as representatives of muted subaltern community of the South Asia. They are taking part in the process of re-Orientalism. It is a well-established fact in re-Orientalism that works of South Asian authors is measured by the yardstick of authenticity in the global capital market. As for the West, they play the role of native informant providing snippets of their Orient's life. Writers, particularly the diasporic, to some extent are fully aware of their role and are enjoying the enchanting role, of being a native informant with a lot of capital.

It seems as both the authors of primary texts; Anam and Aslam, have certainly set out to depict a non-shining and glowing Subcontinent which is considered as a faithful representation of an exotic and extravagant Orient by the West. Apparently, they are giving vocals to the otherwise vocal-less Orient who is badly represented during colonial times. The quite intriguing element is that they represent an every-native in disparaging images.

In literature, particularly from the ex-colonies, Colonialism is considered as a form of suffering and people continue to tell and retell the same experiences of colonial-painful story. "Aura of Authenticity" (2000) by Mufti presents a two-dimensional critique on colonial discourse. He holds the view that at one place, this discourse aims to interrupt the style in which something is labelled as the West describes itself and its Others, but on the other side, it is a red-alert against the possibilities that Orientalist portrayals begin to have an effect within the societies that they consider as their objects. For him. He supports, what he argues by mentioning, Guha's stance on colonial experience who in "A Conquest of Foretold" puts forth the pain which he felt whenever he heard of colonialism era. For him, it has left 'a trace of the original pain' symbolic of the memories and sentiments of the colonized (qtd. in Mufti 87).

Guha re-addresses the question of politics of colonial world by hinting out that its chief aim is the desire to narrate and renarrate such experiences through the canvas of the subjugation and defeat of the Orient. Mufti builds his argument by directing the discussion towards the recovery of self which continued to appear and reappear frequently in the post-colonial discourse.

Mufti, directs his criticism towards the identification of pervasive language dealing with the inauthenticity of postcolonial community and culture where authenticity is all concerned with the concept of cultural practices as a kind of aura to overcome the forms of alienation—a cursed gift of colonial encounter. (Mufti 87-88). For him, such critique of the particular modes of colonialism is collectively referred as *auratic criticism* where he explores the contours of authenticity not from the formulated Western history but from the *Other* of the colonial divide. Mufti maintains that the means of adjustment to the modern variation in cultural practices have been mediated through the subjugated colonial experience. This highlights the inability of colonial [O]ther to produce tales of cultural continuousness capable of absorbing the displacement of modernity where tradition is murdered if not dead. This, in Spivak's Jorgan, is 'inappropriately and insufficiently mourned' (qtd. in Mufti 88). Tradition once considered as a realm in which cultures were nourished and its aura was maintained, whereas, in contemporary world, it has become alien and threatened fragments of life; the fragments out of whose contour one may attempt to recollect what once life was.

One of the primary aims of Mufti was to explore the features of self-destructiveness in the context of postcoloniality and the variations the narratives of its emergence in Europe must go through when transported to a non-European setting. Same goes for Ashis Nandy who in his book *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* (1983) repeatedly referred to the figure of Gandhi as the most tangible representation of Hinduism as Indianness, conceiving of him as “the representative of traditional India” and referring to his incontrovertible “authenticity as an Indian”. Over here, the representation will speak to the native audience but if the same ideology of Hinduism and Indianness is fed to a non-Indian he will not be able to grasp the true essence of what is presented in front of him.

Mufti holds that the perception of considering modernism as “fragmentedness”, of modern subjective experience, allows the critics to begin the work of the recovery of self through tradition. The efforts to recall an auratic consciousness of the pre-colonial past and to revive it in the present must be an alarming force. It will result in the plurality of the present to the continued survival of our tradition which can only be observed by working through this (colonized) condition. Any attempt to resolve the

crisis of post-colonial culture can either be taken in terms of “Hindu” and “Muslim” crisis. The central question about how these traditions are located within the cultural space cannot even be put to vocals. Mufti does not attempt to settle this conflict but is more focused on the possibilities of living with this crisis and developing the capacity to understand the equation of West and non-West with to settle the question of tradition and authenticity.

Aamir Mufti is accurate in concluding that the criticism on colonial culture is not one-dimensional. If, at one end, it is intended to interrupt the process in which West writes itself and its Other then it is also a cautionary act against the possibility that Orientalist portrayals start to have an impact in the societies. They take it as their commodity. The Orient is now perpetuated and epitomized by those who think they are “authentic” in their representation. Lau is not the only one to vocalize the dissatisfaction with the descriptions of Orient in literature. Even Mufti cannot ignore the fact that representation are, sometimes, not a true depiction of the tradition in front of the modern West. Since anything which is a stark contradiction to the West is inferior and strange. The primary texts selected for this research are a portrayal of representation of tradition and culture but the texts, too, have element of re-Orientalism.

Terms like authenticity, exoticism, and marketability go hand in hand in this new theoretical domain of re-Orientalism by bringing in factors which uphold its internal consistency. For instance, “Dress as Metaphor in Diasporic Fiction”, a doctoral dissertation, by Yasmin Begum (2018) examines the concept of authenticity and impact of culture through the mode of dressing in literary constructions of gender, particularly woman, diasporic characteristics and examines manner of getting dressed as a stratagem which is open for engagement with a imposing narrative which takes into notice politics and history delineated through dress either during or in the post era of colonialism.

Primarily, she kept her foci on the engagement of writers to get their women dressed in the literary and cultural discourses. As preserved through literature, it reflects social constructions in South Asian and its diasporic groups in the present-day context of transnational identities. Her research tried to contribute to a world of literature the efforts to transcend the enduring colonial legacy of societal and historical construction of a society across time. She illustrates that how the notion of authentic culture is

problematized by the understanding of hybrid forms of colonial encounters. Her work in harmony with cultural studies has added to a variety of outlooks in which dressing patterns were symbolic of British presence in India and its endowment. For her, in context of gender, a divide within indigene practices was evident as she referred to Spivak and her idea that ‘white men are saving brown women from brown men’ in relation to the practice of sati (widow burning) in ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ (198). In doing so, the term ‘postcolonial’ is under examination and terms such as diaspora and transnational, are widening the field for postcolonial studies along with imposing a challenge to the binary concepts of the colonizer and colonized.

Begum contributed to an overall perspective on how dressing patterns, and more broadly the metaphor of dress, helps the construction of identity. Dress is a vital constituent in the construction of national identities, either strategically and willfully or by imposed rules. She has outspokenly exemplified it through one of the passages from *Burnt Shadows*, through the character of Raza, at the end of the narrative (which forms the prologue) is shackled and stripped naked. ‘When he is dressed again, he suspects, he will be wearing an orange jumpsuit’ [...] *How did it come to this*, he wonders’. The passage for Raza raises his physical, psychological and emotional conflict and raises timeless questions of *raison d’être* and ‘Who or What am I’?

Throughout her dissertation, she strived hard to bring forth the social inequalities that women were exposed to through backing the demise of practices such as purdah (which included how women were dressing), as well as polygamy, sati and child marriages, and is regarded as a positive. For indigene Indians, the appropriation of particular styles of dressings came to reflect the political conflicts that were taking hold in the country and the attempts being made to impose the segregation of Colonial India which the British had forced through their ‘divide and rule’ principle as part of the colonial administration.

It is also an era in which dressing patterns established hierarchies between the Whites and the Browns in the colonies and a number of adoption took place such as the blouse and petticoat validate items of dress that were British imports and yet adopted and standardized to be worn with the sari. If women were dressed self-effacingly (according to British, and lately Indian, standards) then they could get more prominence in society outside of the home, even if only to accompany male figures in society, in tentative steps towards their emancipation. (Begum 261).

The anxieties and fears are transferred regardless of geographical abode, and ultimately the narratives are individual stories of struggle and survival where the notion of dress and dressing patterns is linked to the political landscape, historical trauma and gender relations within communities as that of Surya in *Maps for Lost Lovers*. This can be located in the way in which dressing patterns have advanced for the diaspora across generations and their varying first-hand experiences and recollections of them. The factual ground of English language being the only medium of communication in some respects appear problematically, universal in its reach, and the course of history has undoubtedly contributed to the eminence of English language and then aspects of its culture in both social and political traditions.

The purpose of adding the following scholarship in my literature review is to bring to light how dresses put forth an aspect of obscurity by providing a lot of detail regarding the way a native woman dresses herself up; As a native, I, know how a woman dresses herself up in a society. It is a known detail for a native to know that a female will dress herself in a burka if she is in a tribal land. The analysis of dresses and its details are mainly unnecessary. It seems as a deliberate attempt on the part of researcher to highlight the element which is explicitly evident since Begum has drawn out a mutual feature - that the writers studied were, and are, influenced by the European canon to a certain degree and that rather than trying to distinguish a separate category, they are blending their own culture with the West which will snatch individual representation from them.

Fictional works having South Asian thematic concerns are perceived to be dealing with the Eastern culture and customs to satisfy the Western thirst for something alien yet exotic and inferior. “Marketing Otherness; A re-Orientalist gaze into Pakistani fiction with focus on *Trespassing* and *Typhoon*” (2017) depicts Pakistani land as corrupt, backward, engulfed in poverty, and conservatism which is pre-supposed by the West as monolithic picture of the far-off land which is perceived as somewhat authentic as it comes from the resident (or who once lived there as a native) of the far-off land. This article incorporates theoretical positioning of Huggan and Lau, to scrutinize the working of essentialized, reduced and skewed representations of the exotic East in the selected Pakistani fictional works i.e, *Typhoon* (2003) and *Trespassing* (2005) which has substantiated the Western impression of East-being conserved, backward and unfathomable. Both of the theorists have shared the same pitch against the assertive

boom of South Asian authors to make a marketable product by representing Orient as an exotic entity. There is an implied understanding enrooted between “Western Market pundits and indigenous writers” (Saleem 141) whereof, the second chooses to focus on quite reductive representation of their native culture.

Shahraz’s *Typhoon* and Khan’s *Trespassing* have been analyzed by Saleem using interpretive qualitative research method. Both of these fictions were written in the same period; however, *Typhoon* is written against the backdrop of Pakistani rural population whereas *Trespassing* takes more of amalgamation of both urban and rural side of Pakistan. Point of attention is that both the novel have taken up different issues but a solid correspondence among the characteristics was observed. What fascinates the readers more is the thrilling relativeness in thematic representation. Such as, benighted rural Pakistan, clichéd presentation of womenfolk, and the in-detail portrayal of pertinent customs which a local already knows.

At the heart, the tales of betrayal and sufferings. About her novels, Shahraz herself mentioned that the village life she created in *Typhoon* is far distant from that of Manchester, my home city. She, herself, said “This ‘other’ world simply enchanted me and I drank it all in...I am an outsider, peeping into this serene world.” (Shahraz n.pag). She adds that the class separations are quite visible. As the landowners controlled the rest of the villagers. This is a domain of male domination and patriarchal tyranny with rigid control over other people's lives particularly relationships among men and women.

Such axiom, coming from the author’s own mouth carries intense significance. She is confessing her role as a foreigner, having a glimpse into a culture she might not have any in-depth fellow feeling with. It is just the inquisitiveness of an outsider who is trying to acquaint herself as well as her readers, with a culture that brings remoteness. The society represented in her works gives a glimpse of backward native who make their womenfolk wed to Holy Quran, and some kills them insensitively in the name of honor. Her works sketch a marginalized woman who is Othered as Orientals by her western counterparts. The author pictures women as voice-less marginalized figures. However, the west upholds a static image of third world female living a very despondent life. The Oriental woman wants to be “freed” from the restraints of male domination. Not only this, the representation of Baba Siraj Din is the personification of patriarchal system which thrives scheduled strictly to maintain the class difference. He is the “bazarug” a narrow-minded character with no mercy for female voice. His character is

a kind of restatement of the rigid notion regarding eastern men. As per Anis Shivani so neatly remarks, “You can safely dip your toes into the exotic mystical water Typhoon offers us with many minor, dull specifics of the rural way of life. The specifics are given on the grounds of instituting the novel firmly in home-grown colour, nevertheless there is another, more clandestine goal, to compete for the much wanted authenticity.

In one of the interviews, Uzma Aslam Khan gave to Dawn Newspaper, she rejected any giving in to Western ideals for the sake of successful promotion of her works, “My books in the West have found very different homes and taken different periods of time to find them. Also, because my books take four to six years to write, by the time a new one is submitted, the market has changed” (par. 5 interview)

The characters are living in everlasting phenomenon of either being kidnapped or, worst even, of losing their lives. Strikes and lockouts asserts a tall order from its citizens. Dia has to think twice before risking her life going out when it has been a call for strike by the opposition party. The characters, main or minor, cannot have themselves free from the special effects of politics.

A typical case of stereotypical representation is a sight of the extreme shabbiness that makes western reader enjoy this sight. This kind of depiction is severely criticized for glamourizing the slime in order to make it sell termed it as slum poverty and slum tourism (Duncan and Korte 5).

The argument directly above proves the topic that Both Qaisra Shahraz and Uzma Aslam Khan have at many places, knowingly or otherwise, fall back to techniques which come under the topic of re-Orientalism. Their purpose appears to introduce the indigenous picture to the foreign audience, but in so doing she has surrendered to the trap of satisfying western ideals. As Lau puts it, “re-Oriental writers set themselves up as ‘translators’, translating one culture to/for the other, have the dual role of opening the channels of communication, but also of holding the two sides separate because it is this very separation which lends heightened significance to their role”

A constant contrast is present between the East and the West as evident through the arrival of Danish from “Amreeka” as he was unable to find himself at ease when he has to interact with his Pakistani relatives at the death of his father. In Pakistan, his privacy was constantly interfered with no sense of guilt; a tradition unknown to the West. A clear-cut covert compare situation was visible when Pakistani- typical girl was

described, “Sweeping dupattas... hair in salan, salan in nails” (Saleem 156) as western woman has no first-hand exposure to all such described things. Coming to an end, Saleem has tried to highlight the element of re-orientalizing the already othered by addressing both the selected writers as Lau calls them, ‘re-Oriental writers set themselves up as ‘translators’ (Lau qtd. in Saleem 158). The paper, thereby, re-confirms that Pakistani Anglophone writers, either deliberately or otherwise, incorporate the techniques of re-Orientalizing the exotic by making it a consumable commodity for the Western Market through the projection of local as underprivileged which coincides with the Forster’s *A Passage to India* where East is unsophisticated, and its disorderliness does not stand in comparison with the Western flair.

Keeping in mind the abovementioned reviews, the present research explores the selected texts to study the part played by these two writers in order to establish themselves in the role of South Asian Anglophone Oriental other-within supporting intellectual colonialism as evaluated against Lau’s take on re-Orientalism in her work.

2.2.2 Minor Sources

The present section deals with local scholarship by reviewing few selected researches conducted on the primary texts. It aims to present a brief insight on the works being done on *The Good Muslim* (2011) and *The Blindman’s Garden* (2013) respectively.

The present dissertation is aimed at looking at how the two selected texts of fiction subscribe to the stereotyping of the Orient and how do they negotiate their cultural representation for the intended audience. A number of theoretical lenses have been applied on both of the texts. For instance, the pre and post war psychological state of the characters is skillfully discussed by Liza Nanda in her paper. She discusses the novel *The Good Muslim* (2011) by Tahmima Anam in the context of post-War and the unavoidable psychological changes faced by Bengalis. The paper explores the pre and post war scenarios of a Bengali Muslim and how such scenarios shape his psychological and ideological state. This encompasses both Maya and Sohail since they suffer a lot during the war. Resultantly, the transformation of Maya and Sohail displays two sides of the impacts of war. She holds the view that war does not leave any constructive impression on its survivors. History is a bystander to the fact that the war survivors endure a mental conversion which is a result of the happenings they frequently

encounter. Nanda in *The Good Muslim* brings to light the post-War Bangladesh. However, she does not touch the angle which the present dissertation aims to analyze i.e., of presenting east as a commodity with marketable agendas. *The Good Muslim* (2011) presents a striking contrast between the secular and religious ideologies which are represented by the two major characters in the novel. Amrah A. Majid in her research articles brings to view the relationship between the ideologies of the secular and religious in the process of nation-building as presented by Anam in *The Good Muslim* (2011). She does so by underpinning Talal Asad's stance of the secular as an ideology which brings dissimilar concepts which are neither a break nor a continuity of it. For Majid, Anam centers her narrative on the ideological conflict between Maya and Sohail. Majid discusses how Sohail's submission to extreme inflexibility led him to neglect his own son, Zaid. She also highlights Maya's inflexibility to tolerate Sohail's transformation from a freedom fighter to an extremist. She suggests that the "skirmish" between Maya and Sohail is a metaphorical representation of a conflict between the religious and secular efforts towards nation-building. Majid portrays that these siblings view each other in the prism of the other as they bitterly disappoint each other at the same time.

To conclude, Majid in her paper, talks more about the ideological conflict between Maya and Sohail. This conflict in the broader perspective signals the efforts towards building a nation after 1971 war. This article adds to the larger canvass of the literary scholarship. However, both the articles focus on the metonymies of Sohail and Maya but there seems to be no point which serves as a repetitive pattern to this dissertation on re-Orientalism.

The upcoming articles take into consideration *The Blindman's Garden* (2013). These articles analyze the novel from multiple aspects presented in the novel either explicitly or implicitly.

Limiting *The Blindman's Garden* (2013) to the theoretical constraints set by re-Orientalism would be quite unfair as a number of other aspects are present which, too, serve as a merit. For instance, environmental othering and topographies of fear which are a direct result of the war which Aslam discusses in his novel. Saba Pirzadeh's paper analyses environmental othering which refers to the strategies of war i.e., transformation and codification of the Other's land into military zones. In doing so, she highlights how vigilant description of land addresses the reductive normalization of land and presents it as hostile and a threatening place.

Pirzadeh in her paper, discusses *The Blindman's Garden* (2013) by considering topographies of fear. These topographies, according to her, are due to war and

environmental othering. Through comparative analysis of *The Blindman's Garden* (2013) and *The Collaborator* (2011), she establishes the intensification of dual processes of restructuring and codification- within war contexts.. *The Collaborator* (2011) highlights how the Indian army has adjusted the valley of Kashmir to serve their purpose, Whereas, in *The Blindman's Garden* (2013) depicts the voyage of local commanders in transforming mountainous areas into zones suitable for conducting military operations. In doing so, one must keep the allegation of the process in mind in which environmental othering authenticates hostile manipulation of natural sites as this venomous approach to land has become a prelude to the ruining and erasing both human and non-human inhabitants. In outlining the repercussions of this phenomenon, this essay suggests the aggressive transformation of natural spaces into deathscapes in *The Collaborator* (2011) and military bases in *The Blind Man's Garden* (2013).

Saba Pirzadeh sees *The Blindman's Garden* (2013) with underpinnings of war discourse where environmental othering refers to the strategies of war, whereas, Misha sees Aslam's more for his aesthetic ability to present a fiction which resembles a fairy tale and his ability to blend sympathy and brutality.

Pankaj Mishra in his review of *The Blind Man's Garden* (2013), he writes that this narrative is about the communal nature of war. For him, this novel serves resemblance to a fairy tale. Stories of betrayal, dramatic reunions and partings, exile, rescue, rumours, Islamic folklore: the novel serves resemblance with the Intezar Husain's *Hamnzanama*. Husain's characters embark on long journeys, endure pains and loss, and fall in love. For the reviewer, Aslam is just one more writer serving up postcolonial tragedy with the spices of realism.

As per Mishra, the novel is marked with the alternation of compassion and brutality. Moreover, it is a deep-rooted view of the evolution of Islamic societies and the modern West. Now in *The Blindman's Garden* (2013), he does not offer any explanation for the sympathy felt by Jeo and Mikal for their Afghan brother which alters with brutality. Aslam seems more interested in the way propaganda and ideology work among highly cultured and affluent elites.

The aspect which present paper explores is not explored by any researcher so far. Instead of Aslam's artistic ability, he adds to the western agenda of seeing the east as an inferior. Aslam does this quite skillfully by subscribing to the demands of the western readership.

2.3 Conclusion

The review has discussed the scholarships related to re-Orientalism, authenticity, and marketability of present-day South Asian Anglophone fiction. Moreover, it does include selected local scholarship on the primary texts selected for this study. The review enables me to understand the theory in detail. It further helps me comprehend how works with literary values present. Studying these works closely has offered me an insight to the point that cultural norms are commercial commodifications to develop an aura of authenticity since Anglophone writers seem to negotiate the struggle between authenticity and expediency.

In view of the literature review in the preceding pages, I have discussed writers who have their say on South Asian writers, and on re-Orientalism. The reason behind adding the scholars' observations are likely to present a vast interpretation literature can accommodate. The next chapter discusses the theoretical framework and methodology.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Review of the existing literature on re-Orientalist theory has assisted me to decide my theoretical framework for the current study. The theoretical perception that I have selected to apply on the primary texts is re-orientalism as taken by Lisa Lau. This chapter discusses Lau's theoretical observations in detail. Also, in this chapter, I discuss the research methodology as employed in the forthcoming analysis chapters.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

The present theoretical framework is built on the position Lisa Lau and Ana Cristina Mendes take in the work "Introducing re-Orientalism- A new manifestation of Orientalism" (2011). This work contributes in locating evidences of "negative self-representation of Orientals" (Lau "Introducing re-Orientalism" 35). Her purpose behind the study to observe how re-Orientalism is applied and disseminated "by cultural producers and consumers within the specific context of South Asian identity politics" (3)

As mentioned by Lau, the works of, so to say Comprador Intelligentsia, are "having cowardly, mercenary, western-approval-seeking motives" (17) as they are penetrating "unreliability and instability" (3) with eastern affiliation and are coming to term with an Orientalized East, either by becoming a prey or by transcending the stereotypical representations altogether, followed by Saidian Orientalism. Controlled by European strategies of presenting a positive image of the Western-self, which automatically paints the East as its 'negative alter ego' with prominent features of mysteriousness and exoticism (Lau 3).

Lau asserts, that Orientalism is still having its persistence in both the institutional and popular construction of identity and culture but has developed in a curious trajectory over the last few years where, 'Orientals' are seen to be enacting

Orientalisms no less than ‘non-Oriental’. They distort the representation of orient, reduce the orient to the silence and once again “consigning the Oriental with in the orient to a position of ‘The Other’ (12).

Lau’s re-Orientalism or ‘reverse orientalism’ to borrow Tony Mitchell’s phrase, operates on the principle of ‘profiteering of a fashionable alterity’ as a marketing strategy that repackages the Orient by the Orientals, which seizes the attention of global market by adjusting to the demands of international markets (qtd. in Lau 4).

Lau highlights the attitude of postcolonial Orientals, by incorporating the observation of Anis Shivani, especially authors of South Asian-origin, who are maintaining the internal consistency of Orientalism by promoting only the selected aspects of the orient at the expense of creating a holistic representation of the orient. As noticed by Shivani, these Orientals are subscribing to the West’s need for a low quality, exotically flavored flair, which leaves the consumer “ever hungry, ever insatiate” (qtd. in Lau “Introducing re-Orientalism” 5). In the process of doing so, these Orientals are reinforcing the shallowest of stereotypes. These writers, by “representing the Indian sub-continent and its people” (11) as gloomy place with mysterious culture, proclaims the superiority of the West.

She identifies issues with the methods used by few diaspora and even indigenous authors who seem to further intensify the harmful and damaging effects of re-Orientalism. The first issue is writing in a way, while knowing it is coming from South Asian authors either native or diasporic, is that it is based on generalization and the fact that it is written by those who had been, or is still, a native or local while claiming the authenticity of this cunningly unfaithful kind of truth. Therefore, re- Orientalism fails the subaltern or native as a means for ‘speaking’ in an authentic voice. It considers the voice of the writer, writing about South Asian, as authentic which is an over generalization.

The theory of re-Orientalism is, in part, based on three inter-related aspects of *Orientalism* (1978), which it, not only, draws but also extends upon.

Firstly, Said speaks of Orientalism as a path of coming to term with the ‘Orient’ owing to its special place in European western tradition. Lau drawing on the same point extends it with a special focus on the Oriental’s role in executing Orientalism. She

observes that the Comprador elite group will still refer to West as Centre and Places themselves as other, so to say, Self-Othering, where the orient is not only othered by the western powers but also by their own.

Secondly, Said points out that Orientalism has less to do with the Orient, and more to do with the West, meaning how the West decides to Orientalize, speaks more about the superiority of West than about the 'Orient'. Likewise, the re-Orientalist theory seeks to consider the positionalities of re-Orientalists, particularly of South Asian- origin and the direction in which they are driving their orientalisms, and how they are trading a pseudo-culture for the sake of acquiring an easy-profit. Re- Orientalism also brings to limelight the question of 'how', instead of turning the tables and streamlining the Self as may be expected, these re-Orientalists have maintained the East as 'World-as-exhibition' (qtd. in Lau "Introducing re-Orientalism" 7). This exhibition is perceived as an authentic representation of the native land by the native informant, in this case the Oriental, and thereby claiming the cultural and truth and authority in the representation by serving the East as the spectacle.

Thirdly, Said has highlighted the 'curious internal coherence' in itself and its perception about the idea of the Orient. For Said, "the phenomenon of Orientalism deals principally, not with the correspondence between Orientalism and the Orient, but with the internal consistency of Orientalism and its idea about the Orient" (qtd. in Lau 7). Re- Orientalist theory thus takes into account the radical instability of representation when these compradors are perpetrating the new forms of Orientalisms, thereby, giving air to the problematic issue of accuracy and realism of representation, so to say authenticity. Re-Orientalism concentrates on the backwardness and brutality of the "Other" by the "Oriental Other-within" by presenting the cultural ethics as exotically-authentic.

Undoubtedly, it is built upon the assumption presented by Said in his seminal work *Orientalism* (1978) but it does depart from Said' positioning in *Orientalism* (1978) as Said highlights in his book the process of Orientalism as "relationship of power and dominance, where the Oriental was submitted to being made the Oriental" (Lau 7). He did not speak for himself but for the foreign culture but in present-day fiction this process of Orientalism is seen in the works of native or diasporic writers instead of foreign writers. Now, Orientalism is no longer concerned with power,

dominance and the representation of the Orient by the non-Oriental, but this role is taken by the Orientals.

Mitchell, as quoted by Lau, critiques the time-restricted misconception of Orientalism by restricting it and its characteristics. He argues that Orientalism is not just a 19th century phenomenon as reducing it to just colonial supremacy or dominance. He considers it to be a reductionist critique. It is a method essential to the peculiar nature of the modern world, which if true, would imply that re-Orientalism is the natural heir to Orientalism (qtd. in Lau 8).

For critics like Lisa Lau, these Orientals play an active role of sustaining Orientalisms no less than non-Orientals (Lau 3). Lau depicts East as a spectacle for consumption (Lau 13) and borrows the image of a “Timeless Orient” (Said on Orientalism n.pag.) from Edward Said. It may, therefore be inferred that their writings are using exoticism of East as a marketing strategy for careerist opportunities through profiteering of a fashionable alterity. This brings re-Orientalism theory to look for its self-constructed system of beliefs to justify their “sins of representation” (Lau 20). Such shady intentions are evident through their works which trigger a thinking mind like, what as a whole such representations are contributing? Since, they are repositioning us by presenting a very calculated facts and figures of Orient’s land and overrules a number of other significant points in the highly profitable industry of commodifying the indigene.

Some significant factors that are responsible for adding exotic flair in the native works include the acceptance proportion of such works by these Oriental Other- within in the international market, the reception of such writing among the international audience.

Lau believes that re-Orientalist method of writing has become a way to advance one’s career as a writer and to get the attention of the western academy more readily. Not only their writings seem to be catering to the necessities and demands of global capitalist market but also are charged with misrepresenting their culture in bad faith (Shivani qtd. in Lau 18,19). Marketing the stories about the far-flung land with its grey customs and bizarre tradition give birth to a win-win negotiation for all the shareholders in this business of commodification. As foregrounded by Mukherjee upon a

critical commentary on Indian writing in English about western readership. As per her, Indian English writers capitalize, by riding high on standards set by the West, on the ethnic values in technique which pulls in images which are removed from reality and immigrant nostalgia.

Re-Orientalism theory puts forth a critique on the relationship present between East and West, where the only purpose of the West is to visit the East as a tourist with lack of engagement, or engaging superficially only. These well-positioned members of the East in the present case i.e, re- Orientalists, act as tourist guides rather than clearly denying such skewed representations. Instead of repudiating in a straight- forward manner to trade in such arenas they subscribe to the re-orientalist positions.

Re-Orientalism is the outcome of many factors, dominated by the class system which played and still continue to play a very essential role in culture and society, along with the dominance of English and the monopoly of the Western publishing house. With material conditions of the production and consumption of contemporary South Asian fictions in this manner, they are depicting the underbelly of the East in- order to reinforce Western, almost Victorian, stereotypes of India as dirty, dangerous, exciting in a sordid way, full of criminals, and corruption.

Lau argued that, Orientalism has been prevailing in the literary texts written about South Asia since the colonial era, which began with non-South Asians writing and representing the Indian Sub-Continent and its people. However, even in present- day Anglophone South Asian Literature by South Asians, this phenomenon of Orientalism can be seen to be still materializing. This out of the ordinary blossoming over these few years is that Orientalism is no longer only the bond of the representation and dominance of the Oriental by the non-Oriental or Occidental, but that this role appears to have been taken over (in part at least) by other Orientals” (Lau 18).

This theoretical framework incorporates the commodification, the problems of authorial branding. It also highlights how celebrity culture has dominated SouthAsian-origin as a result of commercialization and marketing strategies by re-representing the East in the authentic flair of exoticism by reinforcing the shallowest of the stereotypes.

My research explores how these Oriental Other-within problematize their native culture by subscribing to the stereotyping of the Orient and to what extent they have

negotiated their native culture for the intended market in the selected works of selected Anglophone writers. Their narratives are illustrative of the factor that the writers exhibit their works still referring to the West as the Centre through their writings of the selected texts.

3.3 Research Methodology

Elizabeth Jackson describes research methodology as “the approach taken to the research design as a whole in relation to reaching answers to the research question(s)” (55). It, therefore, is a comprehensive design which the researchers follow throughout the research in order to carry out the analysis of the chosen texts.

It basically defines the plan made by the research scholar for the purpose of finding answers to the research questions modeled in the beginning of research.

In other words, it gives the researcher freedom to work out the meanings of the text according to his/her subjective interpretation of it while making use of the selected theoretical framework. As I have chosen the re-Orientalist perspective as my theoretical lens in the study, it enables me as I attempt to construct the meaning of selected texts according to my understanding of it.

Relying on the subjective comprehension of a text, however, is challenging since human ‘subjectivity’ itself may not be viewed as a fixed phenomenon and is something continuously influenced by the historical context of individual and historical existence. Heidegger, in his *Being and Time* argues the absence of fixity of human existence and how time creates an inseparable part of its being forms. Eagleton explains Heidegger’s concept of subjectivity that human existence is all about ‘being-in-the-world’ and we are bound with others. For him, the world must not be considered as an object to be rationally analyzed, “we emerge as subjects from the inside reality which we can never fully objectify, which encompasses both ‘subject’ and ‘object’, which is inexhaustible in its meaning and which constitutes us quite as much as we constitute it. (5)

In order to get a subjective understanding of the texts, selected for this study, which means to take into concern various effects that are likely to affect my interpretation. The subjective study of the selected texts does not suggest their biased and stiff interpretation by the researcher but instead involves an active inquiry into the meaning of the texts while treating them ‘phenomenon’. As Eagleton points out that

“human existence is a dialogue with the world, and the more reverent activity is to listen rather than to speak” (54). I have not tried to impose my subjectivity upon the meaning of the works; I, instead, attempt to look at the works according to the theory of re-Orientalism while investigating the meaning Tahmima Anam and Nadeem Aslam has presented in his novels regarding their role as “Orientals Other-within”

3.4 Research Method

The study is reflective in nature. The method of the study is exploratory in purpose, marked by a text-oriented mode of analysis. As textual analysis empowers the researcher to take full responsibility for the research so it suits best for this study. Since textual analysis incorporates many subsequent modes of analyses like deconstruction, ethnography, and many other methods of analyses, textual analysis is meant to uncover some new meanings, as it enables the researchers to come up with various and multi-faceted meanings, inferences and interpretations. It neither requires the researcher to come up with final answers nor binds him/her to reach at any final conclusion.

In the present study qualitative approach is used to undergo analysis of the two selected novels in order to investigate, examine, and interpret the elements of re-Orientalism. Research method as defined by Gabriele Griffin, in her book *Research Methods for English Studies*, points out that “research methods are concerned with how you carry out your research” (3)

Catherine Belsey in her essay, “Textual Analysis as a Research Method” included in Gabriele Griffin’s Book, *Research Methods for English Studies* (2005) pens down that “there is no such thing as ‘pure’ reading; interpretation always involves extra-textual knowledge that constitutes a culture, some of it personal, a matter of one’s own interests or biography; and some of it is derived from secondary sources” (qtd. in Griffin 160). Therefore, I as a researcher agree with Belsey when she terms this process of interpreting a text as an understanding and “a relation between a reader and a text. There may be a dialogue within a text, but the text itself also engages a dialogue with the reader” (163).

3.5 Conclusion

Keeping in mind the theoretical framework and research methodology, the next chapter of the research provides the textual analysis of the two selected South Asian

fiction. This study tries to seek answers for my research questions in the chapter 1 of my research.

CHAPTER 4

TIME TO SELL-E-BRATE: TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF *THE GOOD MUSLIM*

4.1 Introduction

This chapter of the study presents an analysis on *The Good Muslim* (2011) from Tahmima Anam's trilogy. Undoubtedly, it may occur to one that she earns a lot of fame and success from each and every novel in this trilogy by presenting a stereotypical account encompassing all aspects of a society. Her narrative seems to 'sell-e-brate' (*TGM* 111) cultural disintegration, religious dislocation, societal degeneration, and identity crisis. Routine life experiences of a human are brought to limelight through microscopic representations.

Narratives of contemporary South Asian writers, both the native and diasporic, mostly revolve around the new trend of Orientalism i.e., re-Orientalism. This new trend is one of the reasons to quick nomination for prestigious awards. Both Tahmima Anam and Nadeem Aslam are award-winning authors. The text under analysis, so far, got shortlisted for the 2013 DSC Prize for South Asian Literature and longlisted for the Man Asian Literary Prize in 2011. The theory of re-Orientalism seeks how the authors, particularly diasporic, are trading a pseudo-culture for the sake of acquiring an easy profit. Anam and Aslam seem to exploit their local background and cultural knowledge in the global market to sound realistic about their native. The detailed discussion about this aspect comes in the subsequent headings of this analysis chapter.

Narratives of re-Orientalists serve as a symbol of indifference by putting forth a lack of awareness about the people being represented. These comprador intelligentsia try to get into the shrug of a native informant with cultivated authenticity based on their personal preferences. It may, therefore be inferred that their writings are using exoticism of east as a marketing strategy for careerist opportunities through profiteering of a fashionable alterity.

The present-day South Asian writings are getting a lot of appreciation from the renowned publication houses. These writers They do so by, what Lau writes as,

“totalisation or generalization” of values, attitudes, and culture of a selected minority as a representative of the diverse majority (3).

Writing on social issues and cultural disintegration is never prohibited but the problem lies in the way, these contemporary Anglophone writers are dealing with it. They deliberately pick and refine the instances as an assertive statement about the society and the culture being represented. Therefore, this exotic Orient is seen as a career.

The qualities, attributes, happiness, mental strength, sufferings, and choices of Bangladeshi women are brought to focus in *The Good Muslim* (2011). Women at margins, and religion are re-Orientalized to the extremes in the narrative. Therefore, bring in conservative and orthodox image of a Muslim country which is hard to bear. However, such images are quite consumable for the western audience. These directed representations, of religion, culture, and society are problematic and dogmatic. Her novel presents what Lau says as, “stereotyping, exoticizing, pandering to western tastes, demands and expectations, selling out...marginalizing and above all re- Orientalizing” (20)

4.2 *The Good Muslim*

Anam chooses Bangladesh as the background for the plot and characters. The characters are deeply enrooted in their native culture. She keep her focus on the specific details and issues to bring the aura of authentic and intriguingly exotic orient.

The Good Muslim (2011) deals with the aftermath of Bangladesh's independence period in 1971. Anam tries to present the problems faced by this newly liberated country through the siblings i.e., Maya and Sohail. Maya, who is a doctor by profession, is the dominant character of the novel. The novel opens when she returns to her home after serving many years in a village. Her brother Sohail, an ideal freedom fighter earlier, has now turned out to be a fundamentalist. Moreover, he is indifferent towards the needs of his ward, Zaid. Anam incorporates a lot of stereotypical representations by portraying Sohail as an extremist. Anam, through Sohail's description as an extremist, earns a lot of praise in the west. At the same time Maya is presented as a secular, she questions each and every act perfumed by Sohail. The writer made Maya appears to be a strong portrayal of strong females in the east. However, this strong portrayal does not occupy much space in the novel as she cannot overcome the patriarchal expectations from a woman in the east. Anam in her novel bring forth

activities regulated by handful of writers to address their aims behind writing.

Anam's portrayals appear to be quite successful in leaving an impact on the reader's mind, western reader, in particular. It seems as if her intention is not to write for a native audience since she uses English as a medium of communication. Instead of using one of the master's tools, she could have easily coloured her narrative in indigenous language to be more precise and accurate. Just like Aslam, she follows the exotic representation of the native to present authentic projection of East but as inferior *other* essentially dissimilar. For instance, according to critics, the character of Maya has received a lot of appraisal in terms of being a strong female. She stands against the unjust treatment received by women where she works as a doctor but she appears helpless in her own house when she is not able to convince Sohail over the matter of Zaid. Indeed, Anam presents a woman in a strong air but not women in general. It was just Maya who acts as a revolutionary but ends up in desolation and despair. Her desolated state implicitly highlights that the east should be left with regression and inaccessibility.

The exotic descriptions of the South Asian women by South Asian women writers seem to tailor, "to western fantasies of the exotic Third World woman" (Phukan 4). The way, Anam upholds the fact that suppression, sub-ordination, and unjust treatment towards women, have made them a subaltern in a patriarchal society like Bangladesh. Hence, she presents women as victim.

To convert a work into a sellable commodity is not a new practice and she is not the first one to do that. At one point, Lau mentions in her work that re-Orientalism depicts women, "as weak and a western reader would find such imploring images exotic and unique; something which he/she normally doesn't come across or get to see in his/her environment" (36). Prominent portrayals of females in the light of exoticism can be seen in the fictions of Lahiri and Karim, to name a few. It is an undeniable fact that Anam colours women as victors over the complexities of their lives. She portrays Maya in a way that she puts a challenge to the patriarchal society by breaking stereotypes and the taboos. She worked as a volunteer during war and went alone with Chottu, a male friend, to the party. However, Anam, through one of the old women in the novel labels, such strong-headed females, ugly spinsters in ugly saris or what Maya assumed that Shafaat will think for her as, "poor girl, still without a husband" (*TGM* 88) just as Nasrin presents in her *French Lover* (2002), where a woman is nothing without a male protector, she is just an object of sex. Therefore, all- powerful portrayals of Maya appear

aloof and baseless. In *The Good Muslim* (2011), their treatment and rejection by the society go hand in hand and their sacrifices are never appreciated. Anam crafts her fiction by giving vivid representations of communal and gendered violence (Ranasinha 23). Many critics consider her books as political in nature and few recognize them as historical. For instances, Mosarrap Hossain Khan in his article, writes that Anam captures the fear felt by war mothers and the grief that surrounds them. Rehana [is an] allegorical mother[], embracing political change (90). There stands no doubt that her works appear to be historicizing the liberation of Bangladesh. The history of War of Liberation which she presents in *The Good Muslim* (2011) is full of rapes, contradictions, male-dominance, and over-arching patriarchy. There is no denial in the inhumane treatment of Bengalis but Anam appears to present her orient as an inhumane object. This immediately takes her portrayals into the paradigm of what Lau states as “documenting and managing the Other through an objectifying discourse” (Lau “Introducing re-Orientalism” 5). She, herself, claims in an interview that she just wants people to be able to own this part of history, to remember it as theirs. She says that she wants people to own their history but there appears a confusion. The reader gets perplexed to own which history? To own the history or her story that Anam is writing? The one she presents in her novel or the one which is told to him/her through other modes of communication. Likewise, Anam in *The Good Muslim* (2011) is charged with the allegation of ‘self-stereotyping’. It seems as if she is capitalizing her novel’s take on religion and gender roles, in a very deliberate manner. Since both the factors are seen as decisive in chaining Bengalis to some confined roles.

4.2.1 [O]ut in the East, where it is darkest

Anam’s *The Good Muslim* (2011) reminds the readers of an embodiment of deliberate pandering to the pressure(s) imposed by global cultural producers. By giving in to the pressure, the writer sustains their representations as west-centric and holds east at the periphery as exhibition. It presents east as the darkest place, not during the dawn, as Aslam portrays in his *The Blindman’s Garden* (2013). The above-mentioned heading which maintains the east as the darkest builds on the idea that the east is represented as an embodiment of the dangerous stereotypes, and gross misappropriations anchored by what Lau writes as ‘negative alter ego’ with prominent features of mysteriousness and exoticism (Lau “Introducing re-Orientalism” 3). Family upheaval reflects the state of the newly formed nation as Hussein points out:

The family catastrophes mirror the state of the nation. A dictator is in power; war crimes are still unaccounted for, and offenders are on the loose. The stories of Women abused and raped during the war for an independent Bangladesh have been erased or marginalised in the search for a clean, linear history. Frantic forms of religiosity proliferate. (Hussien n.pag.)

The Good Muslim (2011) discusses family crisis where Maya was unable to bear with the transformation seen in the character of Sohail; from a freedom fighter to the one who encourages orthodox version of Islam. The transformation of Sohail from a freedom-fighter to a Muslim who embraces an orthodox version of Islam, reassures regressive and remoteness. Over here, religion is seen as to comply and reinforce remoteness. It is a view upheld by a number of critics that Haque's family in crisis mirrors the crisis faced by the nation.

The representation of orthodox version of Islam and women at margins, are some of the ways that highlight Anam's subscription to the western agenda. She endorses the instabilities in the east by giving Maya and Sohail in the hands of the west. These characters appear to be finding an escape from their violent past and present, to some extent, which is all barbaric and regressive. Likewise, in depicting the chaotic state of Maya and Sohail's life, Anam inculcates enormous details which are alien for a native reader through the way she chooses to play around "the shortcomings and constantly defining" the downtrodden situation of the homeland (Lau "Introducing re-Orientalism" 31). For example, the way she describes below par condition of Zaid with "No toys, No pocket money. No sandals. A rattle in his chest. Dirty scabs on his arms" (*TGM* 93) and the non-attentive nature of Sohail's towards his son, to name a few instances from the selected text. Nonetheless, this engages a western reader who finds such accounts intriguing and upholds these portrayals as a standard manifestation about the eastern society. Thereby, concludes in integrating re-Orientalizing techniques as the author keeps her focus on negative and exotic images. This is what Lau writes as, "safely oriental and thus tolerable to chiefly white audience" (Lau "Re-Orientalism:." 99).

As a writer, Anam highlights the social, political and cultural problems. However, the way she over-generalizes and brings out totalized notion of the mundane affair on the bigger literary canvass is where she comes under the highly-paid paradigm

of re-Orientalism. The selected theoretical paradigm investigates the role of a writer, the techniques s/he incorporates in his/her narrative, more than directly engaging with the narrative that talk about the issues related to a region. These re-Orientalists appear to emphasize more on the mundane and stereotypical portrayals, thereby, mainly ignore non-stereotypical portrayals of the east. However, it is concerned with the ways which a writer adopts to make his/ her work a sellable product by acting as Orientals who subscribe to the West's need for a low quality, exotically flavored flair, which leaves the consumer "ever hungry, ever insatiate" (Shivani qtd. in Lau "Introducing re-Orientalism" 5).

Anam, in one of her interviews, discusses that whatever she writes in *The Good Muslim* (2011) is based on her interviews with the Bengalis regarding the immediate situation after the war. This statement is quite debatable that how can one write with an authentic voice when one has not witnessed the event oneself. Moreover, when questioned regarding the transformation of Sohail, she answers that it was a tiresome task to write about his conversion. According to her, transformation of Sohail was something needed by the readers. She did not feel any need to specify her "the readers". For her, it is Maya who must be held accountable for Sohail's extremist nature as Maya is not ready to accept the change in the life of Sohail after the war. She is the only one who rejects his transformation quite rigidly. According to Anam, if Maya has taken a well-adjusted view of his transformation, he might have not taken things to the extremes. This observation of Anam makes her position quite suspicious since she seems fine with Sohail's rigid decisions particularly regarding Zaid and considers Maya responsible for his stiff behaviour.

Critics and readers do not criticize Anam on the fact that she highlights the tribulations and misfortunes present in the Bangladeshis' life. She is criticized for normalizing self-othering and over-generalizing the details with an assimilationist mindset, thereby, giving her narrative, a more authentic feel. Contrariwise, Anam should have been conscious enough while selling the issue of bringing to limelight the affairs of life of an orient which she does not bear herself. She appears to be using the socio-political evils as a metaphor of the only reality present. The ailing condition of Zaid with "No toys, No pocket money. No sandals. A rattle in his chest. Dirty scabs on his arms" (*TGM* 93) is cited over and over again with a new form worse than the expected. Over here, a measured pandering to the western demands is observed as Zaid is put to

display as someone whose body was a mess. He was just six in age but he was so weak and debilitated for he seems like four.

Sohail's non-attentiveness towards his son, Zaid touches the heart of the readers. Zaid is tinted as a character ignored by his parents. It is disheartening to view a father who had enjoyed pocket money and played all these games restricting his son from the same. Zaid serves as a metaphor for what Steven Salaita calls, "uncultured" (6). The enslaved condition of the east; first enchained by the colonial masters and now by those who are in the process of self othering. Anam is seen as exoticizing her native culture and native lives. She does so, in a way which appears to be empowering the binarism. This empowerment enhances her position, more appropriately, as a cultural translator to the western world presenting, "faithful representation of a South Asian" (Lau "Introducing re-Orientalism 22). By presenting an abundant account for the memories of war, Anam brings to notice the scenario and the ugly realities faced by innocent people just to get a free Bangladesh. As a consequence of this, she takes up the role of a re-Orientalist by putting pressure on the cons instead of highlighting pros. This act leaves reader in a perplexed state regarding her intended audience since a native knows what happened at the borders, with the women, with the infants, with the men. There seems to have a not-required information regarding this terrific account of war. It seems as Maya is mouth-piece of Anam especially the way through which she is explaining more about the ills of war when nobody demands any explanation. "She felt the urge to tell him more, to explain about the abortions she had done after the war...the war babies, the children of rape" (*TGM* 51). Over here, this 'him' can be taken as a reference to her intended readers who live at the other side of the binary. Apparently, there appears no need to put pressure on Sohail to explain his traumatic experience when he is not eased.

Anam materializes the demands of market by getting into the highly capitalizing business of "self-Othering" (Lau 6). Since she gives in by presenting bizarre images of native women as alluringly vulnerable and more appealing to the western audience. Resultantly, western society gets an overly sweeping view of the eastern society by applying the filth of a handful of citizen to the entire place. Western reader shall not be put to question regarding the oversimplification of the details since he/she does not have a first-hand experience. His/her view is fed and reinforced by those, who themselves, may have superficial knowledge about their culture, "[B]ut [have more knowledge] [...]"

about the representation of that [their] culture” (Lau 32).

The Good Muslim (2011) tends to emphasize the issue of modernity in Bengali’s society as indecent and vulgar if a woman, Maya, is befitting it. The society does not have any issue if any male does the same. The novel demonstrates it through the character of Chakko, Maya’s male friend, quite ironic that Anam does not present a single vocal who puts blame on Chakko for the friendship. It is Maya who is seen with a guilt of having a male friend. When Maya goes to a party with Chakko, she meets a woman who is on ‘a rishta hunt’. Over there, Maya finds herself enchained in the cultural expectations and cultural requirements to get married. The following lines highlight Maya as cruelly molested by the norms of an orthodox culture. The reply, she gives to the woman depicts her emotional molestation, “I don’t think so. I mean, I don’t know, I hadn’t thought about it [marriage]” when the woman asked “You don’t want to get married?” (TGM 56)

Maya is quite sound when she does not accept the proposal presented to her by that woman. However, the woman gets a tight hold on Maya since arranged marriages are cherished to the fullest and are considered as an institutionalized trade. The arranged marriage along with complete phase of looking for an appropriate girl, in most of the cases, a doctor daughter-in-law is readily accepted. This is one of the essential cultural ethos of an eastern society which is relatively interesting for the western readers.

Readers agree and own their tradition but what is not digestible is the conversion of a deeply rooted phenomenon in an eastern culture to a certain bizarre and inexplicable sort of spectacle. Anam does so to sound more unique and peculiar. This conversion is what re-Orientalism criticizes as Anam is trying to reveal with the knowledge of an insider to reveal to her intended audience, not necessarily the native as he already knows. Therefore, causes redundancy which may not be considered as creativity on the part of writer. The writer does what Wagner argues, “probing representation of a more complex mixture of shyness [...] is distorted and it becomes [...] a figure of fun” (qtd. in Lau “Introducing re-Orientalism” 9). For instance, at one place Anam writes: “The woman’s eyes bored into Maya. ‘Come with me,’ she said, taking Maya’s arm. ‘Meet my brother. Saadiq. He’s a chartered accountant.’” When Maya wants to free herself from this over-dominating woman, she writes: “The woman held fast. ‘He’s very, very eligible. All the girls like him” (TGM 56).

Anam seems to inculcate the process of “othering” just to get some value from

the global market by converting the cultural practices into a cultural commodity. Anam, 'others' herself by taking a superior position to reveal all that is mysterious, exotic and unknown "for the insatiable reading appetite of the occidental reader" (13) as Huggan points out. In keeping up with self-stereotypical representations, she mocks her own roots, norms, and traditions. Such tactics appear to be employed by the writer, in order to, cater the calls of the capitalist market of cultural commodification.

The existence of third world women's narratives, in itself, are not evident of decentering hegemonic histories and subjectivities. It is in fact, the way through which narratives are located, read, and understood institutionally which is of paramount importance. This seems like a challenge for literary critics to think beyond the boundaries of representations by examining the ways such literatures are consumed in the general and academic field of reception. The general stance regarding a South Asian is over determined by the Orientalist's mindset regarding woman as someone with no individual desire of her own.

Narratives representing the orient is all about domineering men, suppressing women, love-less marriages, unsophisticated, and crude manner. The society, at large, poses various threats for women both physically and psychologically. According to Lau, present-day South Asian (Anglophone) author tends to find the job of exploiting a woman in his/her work quite appealing owing to its status as an international commodity. Lau writes that this overly dogmatic phenomenon or act of applying experience of a handful of native women to the entire women entity is what re-Orientalism critiques. A writer gets women trapped in multiple chains and does not give them enough freedom to break these chains. If a woman tries to break, she will be bestowed with severe backlashes.

The tale of war of Bengalis' desh and its impact on people's lives bring objectivity of women and brutality of the east. This is done by bringing to the frontline the event when soldiers from the enemy side strive to control Bangladesh by conducting mass rapes and looting the houses. Abduction of women is quite a common theme in the South Asian narratives. Anam portrays women at the margins denied of any independent life. This is a re-affirmation of beliefs held by the west. They get a transparent picture of the stubborn, hostile, and violent society when it comes to the miserable lives of women.

In *The Good Muslim* (2011), Anam gives readers an insight into people thoughts

regarding marriage in a patriarchal society where women are confined to limited roles i.e., household tasks. In re-Orientalism's canvass, the contemporary writers, therefore, seem to be mere stereotyping their own culture to the extent of self-orientalism as they themselves are included among those who are being stereotyped and victimized.

In order to sound authentic, Anam colours the east with her motive to please the west. In the train journey, an old woman offers food "'Eat,' she said, pinching Maya's cheek; 'you're too skinny. Who's going to marry you?' (*TGM* 10). Such portrayals get inculcated into a girl's mind, from her birth, by her society; behave properly, talk appropriately, walk elegantly, and so on as if being a female is only to get married, nothing else. It seems as women, in this plundered land, have no choice of their own. The only goal for them is to get married. Anyone who is not having this ultimate goal is seen as ugly spinster in saree. The character of old woman is a pun-intended and caricatured creature who depicts the 'assimilationist mindset' of Anam. She appears to please the west by giving such a character in the dominion of the west. In South Asia, societies cherish and highly adhere to the phenomenon of marriage since it is an integral part of it. Reasonably apparent in this novel too. In a train, Maya sees a woman with gold bangles; an identification marker of a married woman in an eastern country. Nevertheless South Asian societies are modern enough but still marriage is not as convenient and handy as it seems.

When a common cultural aspect converts into a bizarre sort of spectacle just to bring out uniqueness for the Anglophone. It is then taken as re-Orientalizing the particular notion to get praise by the capitalist market, "as an authentic story teller from the previously colonized Oriental world" (Huggan 13). Not only western capitalist market but also the western reader considers such portrayals as authentic accounts. These texts carry weightage as coming from one of native writers by stressing on the element of othering in their works. These writers are educated in the west and are in a better position in terms of exposure. They can speak from a vantage point as compared to a native writer writing in the native language. Regrettably, their tales uncover and appear to be normalizing the process of re-Orientalism as they give broad populous generalizations. The west is all concerned about the shallowest of the stereotypes about the orient's land which is an example of west's superiority since the east is self-proclaiming the superior status of the west in every possible term.

Woman has always been the subject of argument in South Asian fiction. She is

marginalized, exploited, suppressed and oppressed in a culturally-defined patriarchy. In other words, she is governed by societal norms set by patriarchs. Her access to modernization is denied in the name of honor. There is no effective mechanism for her to raise voice and share her opinion or narrative. She undergoes the loss of her identity and self-esteem when her domestic labor is not appreciated by her family. Similarly, she is a victim of rape, sexual assaults, and other abuses which offend her respect and dignity. She is described in fiction as an oppressed and objectified object. Woman is targeted, maltreated, and dominated by society and her family alike and simultaneously. In *The Good Muslim* (2011), she portrays Maya as a freedom fighter, working as a doctor in a village, where Nazia is rudely abused and suppressed by her husband since she gave birth to an abnormal child. The logic represented for the abuse, by the husband, 'was protecting the village and the name' (*TGM* 99)

The woman in plundered land often faces unusual situations while travelling alone as she is portrayed as fragile being who is quite unconfident while travelling alone. In the similar manner, Maya felt uncomfortable and most importantly, unconfident, and faced several problems when she searches for a hotel to spend a night since it is dark and she cannot travel further to rescue Zaid. Her mind is occupied with questions while she searches for a hotel to seek shelter "it would be difficult to find a hotel here, and they would ask her questions: why she was travelling alone, why she didn't have a man with her, a husband, a father." (*TGM* 12)

Not only this, such hesitant nature of third world women is mentioned repeatedly even at the event when Maya goes to Chandpur to locate Zaid. By the time Maya reaches, the darkness spreads all around and she is teased by a boatman there. Such type of teasing represents the male-dominated society where women are mistreated since mistreatment is considered as a symbol of male-dominance. It seems like violence is a consciously used tool to punish a woman when she steps out of gender-specified boundaries defined by a society. It appears as it is an unusual strategy to maintain women's subordination to men. In representing such details, Anam does, what Lau holds as "the commodification of exoticised Orientalism in global capitalist exchange" ("Re-Orientalism" 5). Anam observes a situation in the village where Maya is staying with Masud and Nazia. Since Nazia is expecting a baby, she is meant to follow the rules set for pregnant women in the village. Maya and Nazia receive a lot of criticism since one hot day, Maya and Nazia go for a swim in the pond. This result in raising a lot

of problems for Nazia “A pregnant woman in the pond? It was too much” (*TGM* 18). The writer shows woman in quite miserable state since she is trapped in gender biased roles that society forced her to follow. Anam presents the phenomena of pregnancy as a taboo and the one who is in a family way is not allowed to leave the house. Not only the western but also the native reader feels alienated since this is not all and all picture of the life of a pregnant woman. Anam, being a Bengali, depicts her Bengali females in biased, archaic, and low light. She shows that in rural areas, woman’s life is considered as an equal to or even worse than the animal. It is represented on the global level in a way which adheres to barbarism as one of the defining factors of the rural life. Not only this, but Anam exposes the inability of Orient male i.e, Masud to understand that his child from Nazia was different from others since the child is suffering from Down’s syndrome but Masud being the one who is strictly abiding the moral boundaries, unlike his wife who according to him bore an illegitimate child, and maintaining the honour and name of the village. The decrees of spitting the words at Nazia, ‘One hundred and one (lashes), he said. ‘That’s what you deserve’ (*TGM* 23). Anam displays such accounts in a manner which gives snippets of authenticity of oriental culture as the western reader wants to learn about the stereotypical men of the east without direct engagement. Anam stereotypes her local cultural system and the treatment which it upholds for a woman and the way it treats a male. After the event of taking Nazia to a nearby pond and being noticed by the men, people demand Maya’s departure from the place and when she leaves nobody was there to bid her farewell. This is a usual thought of Bengali’s patriarchy where women are held responsible for only for everything that is inappropriate as Maya holds Silvi responsible for the change in Sohail’s character.

The portrayal of women as marginalized figures denied of any voice, or independent life is a reaffirmation of western beliefs. They, the westerns have a pretty fixed image of third world female living an extremely miserable life. The Oriental woman needs to be “freed” from the constraints of male domination, and none other than the liberated West can play this role of “knight in shining armor. (Rahman n.p.)

Over here, Anam appears to adhere to the patriarchal colonial discourse where women are marginalized by male dominance. Such production of narrative is absorbed and recycled by the west as authentic representation of the Orient by the Oriental who is ‘having authority over the Orient’ (Said qtd. in Lau “Re-Orientalism” 6). Since Anam

seems to act as an agent of the privileged west where she renegotiates the notion of self versus other by deliberately designing the orient only in a negative flair for western consumption.

Anam's say on fundamentalism, Islam and Muslims, highlights that how a cultural producer with an eastern affiliation addresses the East by subscribing to the expectations of the west. Resultantly, this exposes the instability which provides opportunities for questioning their continuation of Orientalist practices in the contemporary era. Lau, therefore, states her opine that how the controlling demands of international market, "in a derogatory manner feed on the negative self (re)presentation of Orientals" (Lau "Introducing re-Orientalism" 7). Therefore, a handful of diasporic writers who do not have much know-how of their culture oblige to western consumers' appetite. Thus, overwhelms the works of home authors in the literary arena.

Anam presents a society where no one listens and agrees with one another just to convey a picture of utter confusion. Moreover, to escape the harsh memories of war, Sohail takes refuge in religion which is quite unbearable for Maya. He starts following the things which are not a representative of Islam in the truest of spirit. He was all concerned about himself and his ijtema but not about his own son who is his prime responsibilities. He becomes extremist to the extent that he shuns his library books aside and keeps one book i.e., Holy Quran. He starts sending his son to a madrassa and does not allow him to get a formal education and devotes himself for the Tablighi Jamaat. He starts spending a major portion of his time delivering sermons and staying ignorant to the needs of his growing son, Zaid. Maya, his sister, refuses to admit that he finds peace in the religion as she witnesses Sohail's irresponsible attitude towards his motherless son.

The way Anam treats Zaid is enough to grasp the attention of the western reader since he is portrayed as an object to be consumed by putting on tags of marketing in the global capitalist market. *The Good Muslim* (2011) is likely an example of what Pramod K. Nayar calls "global commodification of cultural difference" (22). She tries to bring out the element of otherness in her work to add zest to the tale which is considered authentic by the western readers since he lacks actual knowledge about the native and consumes the negative image quite readily. It seems as if Anam deliberately shows Zaid as a stereotypical figure with an apparent physical abnormality. Thus, it is intriguing and interesting for a western reader when Anam describes Zaid as a metaphor of filth

and disgust. He is so poorly dressed that everything about him was suggestive of poverty, “the way he treated his lips, rubbing them roughly with the back of his hand” (*TGM* 34). Even his utterances are considered as strings of gibberish, therefore, it appears as if the selected contemporary South Asian author is completely aware of the increasing demands of the global capitalist market to see the Orient as uncivilized and alluring. The writers from former colonies are either unconsciously or consciously involved in the process of “resurfacing of new manifestations of Orientalism most of the times willingly” (Lau “Introducing re-Orientalism” 9) in their narratives. It wouldn’t be off beam to say that Anam’s perception of her land is associated with all the filthy, and negative images of the orient. As a result, the orient is now considered uncivilized and othered not only by the former colonial masters but also by their own native writers as well.

For a western reader, the following account can easily strengthen up his/her bleak understanding regarding the responsibilities of an eastern woman and man. Not only the western but also the native reader as well, feel alienated at such a “holistic representation of the ‘Orient’” (Lau “Introducing re-Orientalism” 4). In doing so, Anam, in an implicit yet explicit manner, savors the needs of the global market and the global consumers relish on this commodity to their fullest.

A stereotypical underpinning is evident which highlights the spendthrift attitude of a desi aurat. She is shown to care about her dresses and appearance which sets her off from any other responsibilities that she may have to fulfil. This once again brings in the element of reducing the native to a mere market tag. Chottu told Joy that he does not have time for flirting-shirting and he has to work harder than before “to keep the woman in saris and earrings” (*TGM* 58). The aforementioned lines hint that there is something intriguing for the western audience as such notions are source of engaging western reader, into the mysteriously exotic east, by taking the fictional details as a standard narrative. Anam’s construction of present-day fictional Bangladesh serves as a contrast to a safe and peaceful West where women do not suffer from such ills. These trends of maintaining up the saris and earrings, do not speak to them since the women in the west are working like men to make their expenses meet their needs. Not just the western reader but to some extent a native reader may feel estranged since the portrayal is presented as a norm which in actual is an exception. A striking contrast is available for the western reader since he/she cannot familiarize with the notion under discussion.

Anam portrays as if not just the women but also the men are reduced to the point of bringing saris and earrings for their women. Other responsibilities like bringing up a child in a better manner are to be fulfilled instead of bringing saris for the wife. This intends to re-strengthen the binary oppositions between the exotic and the non-exotic by presenting South Asian women and men both as enticing vulnerable and enchantingly exotic. Anam seems to hark- back to the colonial era by validating the cultural practices of the place just to present it as a commodity for global consumption.

Societal norms are always rooted deeply in its belief system since they are centuries old and in an Oriental society; patriarchal in nature. In such societies, women are a showpiece to be kept confined the four walls of her place. The lack of liberty is visible in each and every part of Bangladesh where women are lifeless survival. Piya who was a rape-victim, during the war of Liberation, gets rejected by the society as she has destroyed the honor of her family as if she, herself, is willing to get raped. Anam stresses upon the details which put emphasis on the deliberate idiosyncrasies and present them as, what Lau puts in, “established and institutionalized truths and facts” (Introducing re-Orientalism 37).

This helps a native reader to understand that writers, particularly the ones living in the west, find it easier to exploit the women by depicting them as weak and traditionally trapped. They are conscious of the market demands for gender restricted roles. The writer presents Piya with all miseries as she is raped during the war, resultantly, she is considered as an out-cast. When she finds every door shut for her, she turns towards Sohail to seek shelter from the barbaric world. Eventually, she comes to Sohail’s place, everyone was suspicious about Piya regarding her arrival. Almost everyone starts thinking that there seems to be something between Sohail and Piya. It as a non-digestible sight if a female comes asking for a man. More or less, she is a symbol of all the hardships faced by the women of Bangladesh. She can be considered a victor if her survival under unfavorable conditions is highlighted but her victorious self ends up in mystery when she leaves without telling anyone about her departure from Sohail’s place. Her decision of disappearing silently from the place of Sohail, the place where she came to seek shelter and was safe there as well. Such escape on the part of a woman who is already a third world woman will add fuel to the fire of exoticism and mysterious aura which bring in the aura of modified Orientalism i.e., re-Orientalism.

Misrepresentation is one of the major tools which is used by “cultural producers” (Lau “Introducing re-Orientalism” 3) with the eastern affiliations to build their narrative. Tracing back the concept of misrepresentation to the era of Orientalism, Aijaz Ahmad reproaches Said on his idea of representation as an aim to discover the misguided and an element of distortion of fact. For Ahmed, Said throughout the discourse of Orientalism searched for a discursive reality that would facilitate true portrayal of the misrepresented (186-187). The criticism raised by Ahmad concerns whether representations are true or not. However, what, I, as a researcher, want to argue is the aspect of representations being problematic. Regardless of dual nature of representations; a true reality or a distorted figure. What according to me is problematic is the dominating relation between the represented and representer. What kinds of benefits are available for the representer i.e., Orientals Others-within who are more into the continuation of distorted fictitious stories and lessons rather than the distillation and spreading of “knowledge” about the orient with misleading facts. They receive overarching criticism on their representation. The answer lies in the evident fact i.e, the fame. Such postcolonial intellectuals earn a tremendous amount of fame with their inclined attitude towards indulging into the act of strengthening the misconceptions and illusions about their native land. At large, they generalize the destruction of the orient. Their generalizing ability, gets their work capitalized as they are fabricating, the culture of orient’s life, with over-generalization. This, thereby, results in deployment of re-Orientalism which known as new manifestations of Said’s Orientalism.

Western readers usually lack knowledge about eastern societies, or might be naïve enough, therefore, whatsoever is said about the eastern societies is held as a fact. Misrepresentation of any phenomena becomes quite handy yet dangerous since such works are a source of, an undoubtable, benefit for the writer. Their narratives label a particular community as gruesome in a stereotyped way. Such stereotyped notions, get readily accepted in the international market and become a part of the mainstream perception of a particular culture. The following lines describe the only child in the novel, Zaid, who was described earlier as “everything else about him suggested poverty” (*TGM* 34). Whatever Zaid does in the plot is more or less ignored since he is a mother-less child. Anam presents nothing positive about Zaid; he is a thief at a young age, he cheats, he has no manners. When Ammoo and Maya discover about Zaid’s act of stealing money, Maya lets the matter go by making this remark, “Please, Ma, it’s no big

thing” (*TGM* 61). This account is an exaggerate-generalization and an account of misrepresentation of the filthy and disgusting act of stealing. According to Maya, Ammoo must not hit Zaid since he is a mother-less child. He needs time to adjust with this reality which is always used as an excuse. When Ammoo discovers that Zaid steals things and tells a lie at this early age of 6, she cannot hit him. The reason behind letting him go is not this that he is a kid but he is a kid with temper. Ammoo, being an experienced mother of two, is portrayed as unable to tackle a child, “Did you hit him?/ Ammoo shook her head.’ He has a temper. A few months ago he set the curtains on fire. I thought the whole house would burn down.” (*TGM* 61). Such details are self-sufficient and “pandering” to the tastes of a western reader since a re-emphasizes on exaggeration and misrepresentation of an Orient entity. Such distorted representations regarding the orient either it be a woman, man or a child are appreciated by the west. Such accounts are highly acclaimed and are honoured with prestigious awards. In order to sound faithful and realistic about their native culture, writers deliberately pick few peculiarities to sound authentic. In doing so, they present their culture as a metaphor for the whole society. This is what Lau says that Orientals other-within are, “Orientalizing the Orient... re-Orientalizing their own culture and people” (Lau “Introducing re-Orientalism” 7).

Meenskhi Mukherjee is not the driving theorist behind this analysis but I mention few of her saying. Her views are supporting the view of my main theorist i.e., Lisa Lau. As maintained by Mukherjee that writers writing about a native land try to cash their native-card by portraying their natives in the backdrop of exoticism by picking up few details. This arbitrary selection of the episodes in the native culture appear to be the main reason for their success in the international market. Elaborate descriptions of religious activities, daily affairs of a native is not meant for the native since he/she already knows the details provided. Such elaborated accounts provide a chance to the western reader to peep into a native culture which may not be that authentic. For instance, by providing ‘authentic’ feel of praying Salah, the detailed description of which may not be necessary for a native reader, however, such portrayal is not considered redundant by Anglophone audience. Re-Orientalist writer depicts the ordinary and mundane phenomenon in detail. The following extract seems like word-by-word translation of the religious obligation the Orientals perform

They pointed towards Mecca.... Together they stood, turned their heads from

side to side. They folded their hands, kneeled and performed the Sejda, putting their foreheads to the ground. (*TGM* 79)

As maintained by Linda Nochlins such descriptions are “to certify that the people encapsulated by it, defined by its presence, are irredeemably different from, more backward than, and culturally inferior to those who construct” (51).

At another place, Anam seems to be presenting elaborate description of a *golgappa* plate, an orient’s snack. She describes by using excessive details where a single word *golgappa* seems sufficient. Her usage of English vocabulary to describe Maya’s act of eating golgappas is an instance that this event is not meant to be consumed by a native. Moreover, there is no equivalent word for phuchka, golgappa or panipuri in English, so if there is no such accommodation for this word then how is it possible that a western reader will be able to identify it. This simply adds to the element of strangeness. For him/her, such accounts add to the element of exoticism and an eastern reader with a critical eye may consider such details as useless since s/he knows every detail about this snack. “The phuchkas arrived, a dozen shells, each filled with its chickpea and potato mixture. Maya poured in the tamarind water and popped one into her mouth” (*TGM* 103).

The succeeding lines describe the internal instability of Bangladesh where horror and terror rule. Describing country’s internal political riots or ethnic rivalry seem satisfactory enough to reemphasize the low-quality stereotypes to “serve profit margins” by successfully addressing to the appetite of western market (Lau “Introducing re-Orientalism” 35). This narrative highlights the underlying political chaos and rifts describing Bangladesh as a lawless state. Quite evident through the event, when Ammo and Maya are heading towards New Market to get a Sari, on their way to the shop, they witness a crowd of Chattro League holding up large banners about the vice-chancellor being sacked and the dictator’s corruption. The crowd is peacefully protesting but it is the police who charge lathis against them, beat them down, drag the protestors by their arm-pits. During all this, Maya’s sight is caught by a boy whose hands are holding his bleeding head which serves as a symbol of cannibalizing. The protest is peaceful then why do police jump in? Why police inflicted violence? Moreover, in order to scatter the crowd, tear gas is billowed. In the backdrop of violence and horror going on, Tahmima Anam shows how hypocrite, corrupt, cruel, bankrupt the politicians or the dictators are. Particularly, when the clock struck 6, Maya turns on the

T.V to get some more update regarding the violence she, herself, has witnessed and, to her surprise, there is no mentioning of beatings, protests and arrests. The above mentioned instance highlights the domineering attitude of the dictators or the rulers in the east. They put forward the details which favour them, likewise re-Orientalists do the same.

The skewed information presented by media is resonating to the approach seen in the works of re-Orientalists. This approach, of picking and nourishing the distorted news, enhances their pockets by enabling them to earn more swiftly in the international market. Anam does the same by highlighting seething corruption. The country is depicted as lawless where people are liable to all kinds of violence, dragged, and beaten in the public. This backdrop of exotic elements are woven into the distraught and disturbed Bangladesh's political scenario. On the part of a writer, it appears to be a conscious effort. The text contains adequate illustrations of "Othering" since for a western reader, such details are important where the writers "other" themselves with all the knowledge of an insider along with the mocking attitude of an outsider and this is what re-Orientalism asserts.

Anam presents Bangladesh as a country on the threshold of collapse and left to God to be fixed. The above-mentioned lines is a demonstration of the sheer incapacity of our shattered and almost non-existent administrative system. This portrays Bangladesh appear as a country which is sinking further in the gyre of vagueness, awaiting some wonders to put an end to Bengalis' social and political problems.

Lau, in her essay, "Introducing re-Orientalism A new manifestation of Orientalism" in *Re-Orientalism and SouthAsian Identity Politics: The Oriental Other within* provides critique of Orientals Other-within works, as Lau writes, "for feeding into a hegemonic, postcolonial desire to consume the exotic" (7). Anam's desire to feed the western audience is evident when she narrates the tale of Sohail's coming back from war as when Sohail comes back from war in 1972, everybody wants him to tell him the tales of heroism and how does he prove himself to be heroic during the war. All he has got, are the traumatic experiences of being in a war, a burden on his soul which he cannot spill out. In this case, Maya acts as a western reader who intrigues the east, Sohail, to narrate his experience of heroism. For a western reader, war brings out heroism and highlights the elements of bravery but Sohail "is afraid to talk". Maya, an implicit western reader, always regarding him hungrily, eager for small scraps of details. He

wants Maya to be quiet so that she may realize how greedy she seems by devouring in to the wounds of Sohail, the east, which he wants to get healed. Maya wants him to tell that during wars, he planted bombs and blown up the bridges. However, he is not having such tales to narrate. All he possesses is silence which is making Maya, the implicit western reader, angrier, and angrier. Essentially, Maya being a sister, must understand the logic behind the silence of his brother who just came from the war. She should act like a responsible sister unlike the west who always wants to know about the east just to celebrate the negative image of the east. This is what Shivani calls, “demand for low quality exotically flavoured fare, deliberately pander to this demand and voluntarily self-Other so as to provide an unsustaining diet” (qtd. in Lau “Introducing re-Orientalism” 5). Maya, herself, witness the horrors of war while working as a volunteer. As a native, she was well-aware of the trauma of war and there seems no need for her to exploit Sohail’s trauma, if the text’s aim is to address the native.

At another place, the discussion between Maya and Sohail on sending Zaid to school, ends with Sohail’s decision to send Zaid to Madrassa. Sohail’s character is portrayed as a rigid religious figure. He is shown unwilling to give anyone an ear who presents an opposition to his decision of sending Zaid to Madrassa. The decision results in death and destruction. Maya strives hard to make his brother realize that he is ruining the life of his innocent son but all in vain. Maya acts as an educated, free-thinking, and, sensible individual by questioning the decision of Sohail regarding Zaid. For Sohail, the only responsibility he has is to serve religion instead of taking up responsibilities of his son. Zaid. Contrariwise, Zaid, being a young boy, is afraid of loneliness and he falls asleep, “in the company of wings” (*TGM* 145) in madrasa along the rats, the rustle of mosquito nets, the hum-snoring.

Any irrational, absurd and preposterous notions for a western reader is the main source to trace exotic element in the Orient culture. The Huzoor, is the character, indicating religious mindset and is considered as a semi-god figure who cannot be altered or questioned. Huzoor is shown as a rigid-creature with no mercy for the children in his madrasa as Huzoor strikes a child who was unable to recall his lesson, “Even the roar let out by Huzoor when he discovered the boy didn’t know the Arabic alphabet...he doesn’t know. The Huzoor strikes him three times across the palm. One, two, three.” (*TGM* 181-182). This image of Huzoor caters well to the western reader as it highlights terrorizing and distorting image of a religious figure. Moreover, it further

exaggerates and misrepresents a figure giving a holistic representation of Islam. The boys under the control of Mullah are unaware of even the very basic etiquette of life. The thing which they know is how to perform waddu and recite Koran. This is not what Islam teaches but in the preceding lines, Islam is confined to waddu and reciting Koran.

Anam uses religion as a maneuvering technique which reinforces western agenda of Islam being a manipulative and regressive religion. For instance, Huzoor, a religious figure, is shown as a barbaric and ruthless creature and abuses the young boys not just emotionally but physically too. Rokeya tells Maya that Zaid tried to run away from the cage of Huzoor since, “He said it was because at the madrassa the Huzoor made him lie down. What did he mean by that, Maya Apa? Because I have been thinking about it and thinking about it, and it can be only one thing, really. Only one thing” (*TGM* 239). The above mentioned lines present a filthy and generalized notion of all the religious figures in Islam as hypocrites who have the respected religious titles. Anam does not highlight the element that Huzoor is a religious figure from the entire body of religious personalities. Whether consciously or unconsciously, she stereotypes and reduces Islam just to the figures of Huzoor and Sohail. It is ironical to see Zaid sodomised by Huzoor, a mullah while his *maulana* father was busy teaching ethics and morals to others. An institution believed to inculcate morality and ethics in children and making them believers is seen as stooping to a criminal action. Unluckily, both of the characters cannot be taken as representative. They do not carry the essence of what Islam is and what are the teaching of Islam. It is commonly believed, by owing these respectful religious titles, they should preach the teaching of Prophet and Quran. Instead of preaching the teaching, they are insincere to their positions by violating the religious tenants whom they must guard and preach. Anam’s act of “underscore[ing] its [the east’s] instability and mutability” (Lau “Introducing re-Orientalism” 1) is not just labelling a religious character of Huzoor in damaging flair. Moreover, it re-establishes a typical westernized concept of religious bigotry and maneuvering tactics is depicted by small- minded people whose simplicity is being played upon by the so-called religious scholars. Therefore, Anam presents a boxed image of Islam, as what Lau says, “a normative conception of what is deemed oriental and thus tolerable to chiefly white audience” (99). In the western readership circle, such details are highly acclaimed since the portrayal of Huzoor is a conscious effort of holding on to, as Anam, in one of her talks, ‘Writing about Muslims’, Anam mentions nothing derogatory about Huzoor who

used to come to almost everyone's house to teach their students how to read and memorize Quran and her father does not allow them to read and memorize Quran from Huzoor since he is against rote learning. There is no other reason mentioned by Anam in her speech which highlights the filth which she present in her novel.

Such delineations in the writings of Oriental Other-within tend to participate in trade of cultural commodification by underscoring its instability by considering the East as spectacle which results in feeding the giant western literary industry by blending out more packaged and reduced materials. Maya, upon hearing what Rokeya tells her, immediately goes to Sohail and pleads him to get Zaid back from that Madrassa, ““The point is, you have to get him out of there. He does not seem to give an ear to what Maya is saying and he comforts Maya by that he will look into the matter and will go to madrassa the following day. Maya wants innocent Zaid to be free from whatever Hell his father has sent him to and she tells him, “Madrassa is not a good place, Bhaiya” (263). In the madrassa, Zaid is not learning anything good except few Arabic verses and learning how to pick up a lizard, pulling of its tail and flinging it into the water. Over here, Madrassa in particular is represented as a place full of disgust and obliteration. Moreover, Islam is portrayed as a source of nurturing homegrown extremists who preach Islam with shallow biasness along with its literal adaptation and application is the reason behind global chaos. Anam appears to be reinforcing stereotypes by trading pseudo-culture by selling them out for easy profits which exotify and validate the portrayals since they are coming from an Oriental. This is what Lau holds that re-Orientalism is based on how South- Asian writers' Eastern affiliation have come to term with the idea of an Orientalized by distorting representations of the Orient (Lau “Introducing re-Orientalism” 3).

4.3 Conclusion

Based on the aforementioned analysis, it is visible that Anam's *The Good Muslim* (2011) seems to reassert Bangladesh as a hotbed of embedded violence either it be, its society, culture, and religion. Anam's intentions appear to be market-driven, and assimilative as Anam, through her portrayal of inferior and uncultured orient in *The Good Muslim* (2011) focuses on those issues which earned her an immediate success by getting her longlisted and shortlisted for the awards. She achieves it through different characters of her novel may it be Huzoor, Nazia, Zaid, or any other stereotypical

character from *The Good Muslim* (2011). Moreover, she appears to be bargaining willingly to address the western desire to consume real stories about Orient, its culture and society. As a result, this give-in attitude, reinforces stereotypes, pander to the western literary market by packing the contrast between the west and the east. This ensures re-strengthening the idea of othering. Invariably, Bengalis are deployed as the inferior side on the binary as disorderly, messy, perplexed, and exotic for the west which is considered an epitome of sophistication and civilization. Such paradoxical position of this Oriental Other- within gains a privileged fame for the western reader. She represents the culture stereotypically and over-simplistically since it fills up the pocket for representing much-needed clichéd portrayal of their own. In doing so, she turns her orient into an exotic one by misrepresenting, and misleading orient's culture. in return, this stereotypically placed orient earns her a lot of fame with currency.

CHAPTER 5

BRANDISHING OF EXOTICA: TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF *THE BLINDMAN'S GARDEN*

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to trace the elements of re-Orientalism, exoticism, issue of the intended audience, in Aslam's *The Blindman's Garden* (2013) where he uses a lot of exoticization and generalization to savour to the flavor of Orientalist perspective in the shape of re-Orientalism. Just like Anam, Aslam is also an award-winning novelist. However, the text under study got shortlisted for DSC Prize for South Asian Literature and the Ondaatje Prize in 2014 which is given by the Royal Society of Literature. The expression, "[B]randishing of exotica" is borrowed from Lau's work *Re-Orientalism and South Asian Identity Politics* (2011) where she writes that few diasporic writers write with the aim to brandish their orient.

The plot of Aslam's *The Blindman's Garden* (2013) is told by an omniscient narrator who inhabits the minds of almost every character. The story expositis in the fictional town of Heer with Jeo, a newly married doctor who gives himself the mission, "Wishing to be where he is most needed to be as close as possible to the carnage of this war - he has arranged in secret to cross over into Afghanistan from Peshawar." (12). His intention to help the needy in the war- stricken place takes his life and his foster brother gets captured by Warlords and is given under the custody of Americans.

Aslam may be seen as one of the examples of Oriental Others-within when the backwardness Joe and Mikal is stressed upon when they are leaving for Afghanistan to help the injured and wounded. Later these characters end up into gyre of dismay, despair, and desperation. Furthermore, their appalled condition highlights their inherent backwardness.

5.2 *The Blindman's Garden*

In *The Blindman's Garden* (2013), a number of cultural and religious markers

may also be seen to give a picture of exoticizing the religious and cultural symbols. This aspect of exoticism has in return earned a large market value. The novel is more like a historical record of the catastrophes as an aftermath of 9/11 encompassing every compass of life at individual as well as at a collective level. It seems that Aslam fabricates terror in front of his readers which makes his work one of the best sellers in the western readership circle. A true depiction of what Lisa Lau says about an Oriental Other-within, “pandering to a western literary market place [...] reinforcing stereotypes, playing to the gallery [...] in return for easy profits [...] betraying its postcolonial roots” (“Re-Orientalism” 73). This argument gets validated in this fiction as at many places in the novel, there seems to be a belittling of description of affairs of life. Resultantly, Aslam Other-within appears to be relying on dangerous stereotypes, gross misappropriations, and decontextualized representations; no matter how unbelievable and out of the context the portrayal may be which in return fetches a lot of currency in the west.

Aslam, in *The Blindman's Garden* (2011), portrays the lives of those survivors who are impacted by war and provides a candid picture of their plight to the world. It is a world where borders between enemy and ally is blurred and the desire to get back home burns fiercely. Set in Afghanistan and Pakistan after 9/11, this novel is about the narratives of family craving their loved ones, a narrative of war, and narrative of tribes where hopelessness burns the brightest.

Over-generalizing the experiences of a handful of natives for a larger majority makes his text being considered as factual social experience. This Pakistani-born writer seems to be giving sweeping generalizations about the wicked axis of some of the Taliban by including natives into it. However, there are a number of contradictions and inconsistencies as an aftermath of 9/11. His logic is “that there are no innocent people in a guilty nation” (*TGM* 6). Since, the attack was made by Taliban (Al-Qaeda) who claimed to be Muslims, thereby, has implicated every Muslim living in Afghanistan and Pakistan to be guilty of 9/11. Such generalized statement made by Aslam has reinforced the Western rhetoric of East being a terrorist, barbaric and ruthless. It seems that Aslam demeans an already silenced and defenseless native who finds himself in an alien environment, and his social circle to “museum quality” (Lau “Introducing re-Orientalism” 7). The portrayal of the characters of Tara and Mikal in this manner, are

products to be consumed by the globalized centers under the label of credible-authentic orient and its perceived marginality.

The latter-day world especially post 9/11 world brings to fame such Orientals Other-within who reinforce the binaries of malignancy and civilized. Thereby, apparently get them engrossed in the culture of their orient. This binarism concludes with mockery and humiliation directed towards the native. Aslam does this by taking bird pardoner as a specimen for noble ferocity and savagery, thereby, highlights disgust for the natives. This aspect adheres to the demands of the international market i.e., eastern demonstrations continue to be western-centric, by selling bird pardoner as a commodity. The character of the bird pardoner is an interesting example of subscribing to the market. The bird pardoner by placing snares and catching the birds, the birds caught will pray for the forgiveness of the sinner. Giving the character of the bird pardoner in the hands of the west earns significant marketability prospect by authenticating exotic anecdote about barbaric natives particularly Muslims when he writes “The bigger the sin, the rarer and more expensive the bird that is needed to erase it” (*TBG* 8). He sets snares to conduct his business and claims that the freed bird will pray for the forgiveness of the one who has set it free. Such kind of representation is considered as stereotypical and exotic by the empirical market whereas, for a native, it is generally a gross misrepresentation. However, Aslam treasures his representations enough to be accommodated in the business of stressing eastern instability where human impulses stand no ground. A generalized portrayal of inferior, alien, exotic, ruthless is considered as specific, true and heart-felt events penned down by the Oriental(s) Other-within.

5.2.1 [N]o innocent people in a guilty nation

It is assumed that contemporary South Asian writers write from western perspective, serving the international agenda of feeding an ill-founded ideology of the western market. In doing so, these writers betray their postcolonial roots by creating an ambiance of utmost remoteness. Hence, re-Orientalists convert the culture of South Asia into a “spectacle” for the western readers to consume it as, what Mitchell calls, ‘world-as exhibition’ (qtd. in Lau “Introducing re-Orientalism” 7). Orientals Other-within are the ones who faithfully maintain the tradition of Orientalism in maintaining the east as the darkest. Lau notes that a lot references are made at the expense of the

local culture by depicting it in an archaic state. For her, such kind of narratives, where we perceive a rich culture through the binaries of superiority and inferiority are symbolic of colonialist mindset. This binarism is not brought into the limelight by the west but this time, it is our native writers with marketing strategies that results in repackaging the orient for global consumption. Their negative stereotypes are said to be vehicles for nurturing “the hegemonic, post-colonial desire to consume the exotic” (7) by presenting the orient in an overly dogmatic manner to earn western capital out of exoticizing the orient.

Aslam, in the exposition of the plot, presents instance of Rohan’s ancestors in the war of mutiny. Resultantly, Muslim land was taken over by the non-believers, referring to the commencement of the boundaries of inferior and superior in the Subcontinent. During the war, a number of people tried to show their loyalty to the masters by sticking up with the master. Aslam metaphorically represents it as “Insects are being attracted by the lantern in Rohan’s hand as he walks back to the house, moths that look like shavings from a pencil sharpener, and moths that are so outsized and intensely pigmented they can be mistaken for butterflies” (*TBG* 11).

The above quoted instance may be taken as a reference to the present-day moths, Oriental Other-within, since they appear to follow the glitters of capitals in the Western market- the lantern, motif of hope and prosperity. The west considers these moths as claiming cultural certainty and authority in delineation. All such moths appear to submit themselves to the lantern by assigning its loyalty to the west. Therefore, the only hope left to get their inferiority and dependency cashed by portraying each and every single moth as those awaiting for lantern, the west; which is not at all a generalized case. In subscribing their loyalty to the lantern, such moths get their native card cashed by presenting themselves well in the western market and play the cords which the lantern wants them to play. Lisa Lau takes this lullaby as “re- Orientalism” where portrayal of ‘East’ as its negative alter ego, alluring and exotic, dangerous and mysterious. This is done just to satisfy the appetite of the western market and its consumers is yoked with a sense of exoticism. Since, re-Orientalism is to recycle and reinforce the east as gross and negative. Likewise, Aslam, does the re- negotiation of power, the setting up of straw men, and other such ingenious strategies some degree of humbugging, in the jockeying for advantageous positions. (Lau “Introducing re-Orientalism” 3, 5)

Nonetheless, *The Blindman’s Garden* (2013) is overly loaded with cultural re-

Orientalism; how re-Orientalism is re-inscribed into the cultural trends as specified by the instance of Naheed, a widow, expecting a baby of her dead husband. Naheed's miserable portrayal is held up as an omnipresent tale of marginalized women in the east seeming to satisfy the western tourist appetite. Aslam does not misrepresent Naheed as east in particular South Asian region has a lot of such Naheed[s] but keeping her as a monolithic is where Aslam intentions get in daze. He does not rescue Naheed from this darkness rather he is seen as following the bandwagon of women as victims.

Tara, her mother, gets worried about her daughter as she knows that her cultural norms have no place for a widow. Since Tara is a widow too so she knows how Naheed will be received by the society. A native already knows the fate of women like Naheed and Tara. Therefore, the over-emphasis on helplessness of Tara and Naheed hint at the place of a woman in the society of brown skinned people which again is a food for ever-hungry west, always anxious to see east as downgraded and low-class. "I can marry you off if you are just a widow. But a widow with a baby- you 'll be alone for the rest of your life" (*TBG* 100). This downgrading details of a young widow is not required to a native dweller since s/he knows what society has in store for such women. Aslam acts of pandering to the pressures of the western readership is seen when he shows Tara as insisting Naheed to abort the baby. Not only this, he gives much space in his narrative to Tara's insistence but also he seems to give no ear to the strong-willed Naheed who wants to keep the baby. Hence, it is quite apparent that Aslam gives in to the pressures of western readers. Such descriptions then get into to the domains of othering, or what Wagner calls, "[The] striking parallelism of Orientalism and Occidentalism" (qtd. in Lau "Re-Orientalism" 13).

Tara is seen as imparting terror on her daughter, by forcing her only daughter to abort a life, is a phenomenon known to natives like us, so it gives rise to a significant investigation that for whom such phenomena are described for; intended readership. As per Mukherjee, the author gets involved in the same attitude "in order to be able to cater to the larger internationally situated Anglophone readership" (7). She highlights the anxiety (of being a native) which such diasporic writers represent in their narratives. They use English as their medium of communication but are quite obsessed with the notion of writing 'authentic' to manifest their native-ness to the natives. This deliberate effort gets quite evident when these authors write unnecessarily long descriptive details

taking in native cultural trends. This is where Aslam's sense of being native and belonging to the land of the orient get cross-questioned that for whom has Aslam penned this exemplification down? For whom does he write for? As native reader does not demand such redundant descriptions and representations, it would not be wrong to state that such alike descriptions are purposive for an audience unaware of such cultural notions. Resultantly, this gets into the realm of re-Orientalism where writers incorporate such exotic images and tendencies in order to facilitate and captivate western onlookers about native culture, a highly profitable article of trade to be consumed in the globalized merchandise.

Particularly, for a native, the description of widow being helpless does not call for such an explicit account. In a rural society such concepts are studied and known with such illustration. Aslam does not feel any need to describe Naheed's voice in an elaborate manner which signify his submission in front of western readership circle. He reconciles her to insignificance and helplessness. Such details are suggestive of getting the symbols translated for a non-native.

The above-mentioned lines from *The Blindman's Garden* (2013) are inadequate and redundant as it gives unnecessary explicit descriptions of a thing or phenomenon already known to the native. This approach is more critical instead of constructive. Such details lead us to what M. Banerjee in her work, "More than meet the eye" notes that Lau's provocative ideas astonish us, "Whether Contemporary South Asian English fiction writers are not infact 'post-colonial' native informants catering to a particular western desire of what constitutes 'Indianness'" (3). At another place, oppression seems to be the rule of the day when Aslam narrates the incident of Ahmed's mother death, 'who had known nothing but contempt and ruthlessness from her husband while she was alive.' (TBG 171). Highlighting the postcolonial desire to consume the exotic by over emphasizing on being South Asian and the portrayal of oriental women, as a sidelined figure and men as oppressors, is a sort of reaffirmation of western beliefs.

Lau's re-Orientalism theory puts forth a critique on the relationship present between East and West, where the only purpose of the west is to visit the east as a tourist with lack of engagement or engaging with a superficial glance. These well-positioned re-Orientalists act as tourist guides rather than clearly denying the notion of skewed representations. In this context, a lot of extrapolations are spotted as the plots, main as

well as sub-plots, of *The Blindman's Garden* (2013) unfold with the perpetuation of upholding generalization by “using exoticism of East as a marketing strategy for careerist opportunities through profiteering of a fashionable alterity” (“Introducing re-Orientalism” 4). Aslam seems to be presenting an overly generalized and partial facts of women being killed every other day during the times of war. A sensible reader may understand that all women of tribal areas do not the same fate. He writes, “there has not been a single day when she [Tara] has not heard of a woman killed with bullet or razor or rope, drowned or strangled with her own veil, buried alive or burnt alive, poisoned or suffocated, having her nose cut off or entire face disfigured with acid or the whole body cut to pieces, run over by a car or battered with fire wood” (*TBG* 113). It appears as if works like *The Blindman's Garden* (2013) are proficiently opinionated works for they end up establishing ideas which intend to please the audience rather specific audience instead of enlightening them.

At a literal level, *The Blindman's Garden* (2013) is setting grounds which make us believe that it is as an amusing tale about the ethnical group. However, an in-depth analysis highlights the irresponsible approach adopted by Aslam while writing about his own lands and people. He grossly misrepresents the authentic details of a lesser known ethnic group by giving in to what Mitchell argued that Orientalism is not just a 19th century phenomenon of reducing it to just colonial supremacy or dominance. It is a method essential to the peculiar nature of the modern world, which if true, would imply that re-Orientalism is the natural heir to Orientalism (qtd. in Lau “Introducing re-Orientalism” 5). Such women along with their representation are considered as symbol of authenticity by the west since all such details are put forward by one of their own. Aslam validates the same by picturing their passivity and presents their victimization as the main stream whereas, the equation is not as imbalanced as he presents in his narrative garden where he seems to be blind at times.

The author exaggerates the state of affairs to please his intended readership. Not every women in the tribal areas are killed under the name of honour. As an eastern myself, I comprehend that not every women fall a prey to the violence, still a large number does but generalizing it to each and every women is a reductionist statement at writer's part, especially the one who resides aboard. There is not much information available to be consumed by the west where women are pictured as strong and

independent. Therefore, any piece of writing which serves western reader appetite by highlighting the inferiority, barbarism, and violence is perceived, by western reader, and projected, by diasporic writer, as authentic. Such portrayals readily get accepted as exotic by the readers especially the western. Their works, as Lau argues, seem to be guilty of “skewed, in favor of groups in positions of power and in command of cultural capital” (Lau “Re-Orientalism” 19).

These descriptions re-strengthen the notion of voiceless orient as barbaric. As a consequence, instead of putting up a challenge to the western stereotypical notions, these writers underpin the western notions about a particular society by detailing them into intrinsic backwardness. For Lau, in a piece of writing, “the author must edit out the non-significant but nonetheless ‘real facts’” (24). As contrary, It is visible as Aslam presents evidences of utmost remoteness which are not ‘real facts’ when Tara, a mother, tries to abort her newly widowed daughter’s fetus as she is too afraid of society and her daughter’s fate since she thinks that no one will be ready to marry a widow with a baby. Moreover, at a minor level, she is depicting a handful of mothers who are unable to present a legitimate thing with a legal hand. But Aslam depicts absolute wilderness by highlighting unbound hard-heartedness of a mother.

The author yearns to create something unbelievably shocking in his effort to highlight the backwardness and remoteness of the orient. Tara poisons the meal of her mother-to-be daughter and insists her to eat the food as it will improve baby’s development and the daughter “raises it to her mouth but then drops it” (*TGM* 102). Tara implicitly put to words her action of trying to kill an innocent as society will not accept her. “I didn’t invent this World, Naheed. Your life will be ruined” (102). Naheed insists on bringing up her child and to find a mean to make two ends meet but Tara, once again, highlights the patriarchal-driven surroundings with such a reductionist aptitude. It seems easier to kill one’s life, just to save your own, as compared to face the resistance especially when you are on righteous.

Lau holds the stance that South Asian fiction tends to exploit women more in their narratives since it is an international issue and can assure a treasure box to the writer. Not only the issue of women is an international one but also tales of women from plundered land are studied in academia with generalized approach. This generalized approach is an act of exoticizing the complete vibrant culture by labelling

it as “vulnerable and fragile being” (“Re-Orientalism” 36). Tara is shown as trapped in the cultural expectations put to the mother of a young widow. She is conditioned by her culture in such a manner that Tara has to give privilege to what people will say instead of her daughter’s happiness.

In the above lines, Aslam does not mention that he is portraying Tara as the one who does not stand as a woman but as a metaphor for all South Asian women afraid of the societal allegations, in particular Pakistani women. This brings in the events where the writers through their narrators are “othering” their people. In doing so, they also othered their culture to gain reader’s approval and well-paid publications and fame. As per T.Khair, “re-Orientalism is genetically modified Orientalism” (11). Tara wears the mask of a downtrodden and a victim of harsh realities at cultural level. “He? What if it’s a girl? Where will we get the money to marry her off in twenty years?” (*TBG* 102). From the above quoted lines, it is perceptible that a female either a baby girl, a pre-teen, a teen, an adult or even an old one, is considered as a burden in eastern world as parents have to bear the cost of getting her married by preparing her dowry. The theory of re-Orientalism depicts the process of compartmentalizing orient’s (women) to a rigid point that same idea of a native woman being culturally entrapped is recurring over and again. This is where Lau comes in and calls to attention the approach adopted by the writers of ‘Othering of the self’ which has become a highly-profitable commodity.

Such images, of a woman being defenseless, electrify the writer’s intended market as what this intended world has come to know is through these cultural ambassadors. These ambassadors have shown eastern women dictated by their men and being submissive to them. There is a huge gap present in-between the realistic portrayal and an essentially-made up reality that is considered as authentic and final which is paradoxically defined. None the less, Aslam here, seems to be actively participating in game of international commodification of cultural differences and appears to capitalize on its apparent marginality.

The religious upheaval and political turmoil are the major driving forces behind keeping the tradition of Orientalism in maintaining the ‘world-as-exhibition’ (Mitchell qtd. in Lau “Introducing re-Orientalism” 7). The inclination towards Islam is an inevitable part of the novel. Since Islam is a forget-me-not part of the countries either it be Aslam’s Afghan-Pakistan or Anam’s Bangladesh as discussed in the preceding

chapter. Nadeem Aslam does not feel any kind of resentment to bring the essentially-distorted realities of religious contagion. He might seem courageous to put forward terrorist and fundamentalist religious activities. At the same time, he appears to restrict Islam to just unjust fundamentalist activities just like Anam in *The Good Muslim* (2011). The present narrative is not the debut interms of misrepresenting Islam, Aslam is seen to be in this practice through the characters like Kaukab, in his *The Wasted Vigil* (2008), a daughter of a cleric, used to see religion as predominant part of lives around her seeks same respect towards centuries old rules from her children and husband. He maintains non-aligned point of view to render brutal practices in the name of Islam to expose the religious quandary. Aslam tackles the severe attack on the school in Pakistan. Mikal in *The Blindman's Garden* (2013) Casa in *The Wasted Vigil* (2009) is an embodiment of young radical minds who are capable of getting into the filth. A genuine essence of such portrayals lie in their strength to alter the gaze of the outsider.

If we commence with religious re-Orientalism then an amended and transfigured variety of our native religious norms are seem to be in action. Since, religious concepts are presented in compartmentalized technique, this gives a sense of coarseness and rudeness which is almost vicious. Aslam summons shockingly innovative yet exotic details regarding natives to the western readers. His reference of Taliban dominance in *The Blindman's Garden* (2013) and Kyra's connections in training young minds to get into terrorism and its radical uprising in the city, Heer. 'Did you hear that Taliban are putting inexperienced Pakistani boys on the frontlines, where they are getting slaughtered?' (TBG 25). In *The Blindman's Garden* (2013), Rohan along with Tara, Naheed, and Yasmin goes to the cemetery to pray for the comfort of Jeo's soul but are stopped by four women in veil from head to toe, who are wearing green bands around their heads with motif of Ardent Spirit's flag on them. The women declared that women are not allowed to enter into the graveyard. "Women are not allowed into graveyards according to our religion" ... Since when? Rohan asks. 'Muslim women have been visiting graves for hundreds of years'. That is an innovation and has to be put an end to. We are here for that purpose." (TBG 92). Even on Yasmin's insistence, to see her brother's grave since her brother died in the Afghanistan, she is not allowed to catch a sight of her brother's grave and is served with a suggestion to pray for her brother at home instead of coming to cemetery by adding that "he was our brother and died defending Islam" (93)

When such features are observed through native reader's eye, he feels alienated with the religious norms fed to him. The above mentioned details present an alien, absurd, and contradictory manifesto. Aslam portrays such meagre image of religion as opposed to what a native has observed and practiced since ages along with anthropologists' records which have been recording about them and their culture. This functionally illiterate conduct of four women covered in black from head to toe has provided quite substantial grounds for writer. This results in capitalizing this degraded marginality of the natives as an aspect of the South Asian religious norms. As the description of these women favours the inaccurate notions about women in Islam being enclosed in four walls reinforced by Naheed, who is disgracing a martyr's blood by moving out with an uncovered face. Likewise, Yasmin tries to move in but she is violently resisted by one of the women who remarked, "It's because of people like you...Islam has been brought so low" (*TBG* 93). These women even disrespect Rohan who is twice or thrice their age. This may give the intended audience, the impression of east being crude in mannerism as well. Yasmin gives a reminder to these women to behave properly but in return gets bombard with the response of being superior in Allah's eyes. According to them, they are quite virtuous and Allah has given them the responsibility to rebuke the loathsome wretch.

In addition to the imagery of reducing religion to insignificant issues of visiting a grave, Aslam, through another instance interconnected with religion, points out the event of disrespecting Koran, Muslim's holy text, as when *gora* interrogator is interrogating Mikal to get information regarding Al-Qaeda, he threatens him to get through with him, will force nudity, "[T]hreatening to desecrate Koran in front of him placing him in prolonged stress position" (218). It seems as specific details of a society are picked and scattered and the scatter seems too boundless which is built on the mechanics of exotic consumption. Meanwhile, the identical crudeness is considered as a general fact about the whole community which completely puts a native reader into astonishment and uneasiness but more likely, a pleasure-sight for a western reader.

A stereotypical representation of religion is prominent to achieve desired outcome which is to re-reinforce the notion held by the West that Islam can be exploited, manipulated, and maneuvered by dominant groups to advance their inconsequential schemes. They are portrayed as ignorant, who use their influence to tether the

disbelievers. It would not be wrong to state that such representations seem to be a measured labour behind this piece of fiction since native reader at the end is left with cupped hands full of enigma and conundrum, whereas, western reader does not consider it as a piece of fiction full of mysterious details. For him, it is a bona fide native story which is a sum total of cultural values, religious norms, political and social scenarios.

Subsequently, 'Oriental' culture has taken the chief position in a diasporic writer's work which has resulted into an integration which according to J.Desai is assimilated "with the logic of cultural hybridity, and this assimilation is based primarily on profit" (64). Contemporary diasporic writers are endorsing what Wagner denominates as 'neo-Orientalism'. This is in a way, a narrow representation which is designed to earn capital by informing readers since such writers are "emissaries of ethnicities and cultures" as they consider themselves a bridge or a translator between the two sides of the boundary. It seems easier to understand why Pakistani fiction by writers from the east is regarded as what Lau calls, 'truth claims', deliberately heighten the abyss between the west and the east, where while doing that represents their own land as "the other" which further paints the culture of the other as inferior containing truth claims. Native reader seems to be adherent to the notion that writers like Aslam are in a position of telling the truth if they consider the element of "authorial betrayal of cultural roots" (Lee qtd. in Lau 26).

The Blindman's Garden (2013) at large relies on dehumanized elements and treatments of the people caught either by Americans or by tribal people. The people along with their approach towards life are shown as violent, cruel, and devoid of any moral code of life and humanity. Mikal became the prisoner of a warlord, who cut off Mikal's trigger finger, on each of his hands and nailed the two pieces to a doorframe along with those taken from dozens of other captives. He kept entreating to extract the bullets from his body but no one answered his pleads and one fine night a group came to take out the bullets from his body which resulted in the circulation of a rumour that American are using solid gold bullets. It gives the impression that ammunition is more important than a human's life. The same warlord who was all powerful in his area fell a prey to American soldiers highlighting that in front of west, any power of east stands as nill. "[T]he warlord who has betrayed him (Mikal) to the Americans has now himself been arrested." (TBG 216)

Based on the portrayals put forth by these writers, natives are very reticent and orthodox when it comes to depict any facet of their culture. An immense account of miserable experiences of men, during war, other than Mikal are nowhere present. Maybe, the excessive amount of trail and tribulations which Mikal faces appear to be quite satisfying the thirst of the western reader who wants to observe, ‘dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient’ (Said 3). Native readers may read or assume this description as a work showing little respect for the natives and have turned it into an illiterate and blood-thirsty culture. Mikal condition is a metaphor of every captive under Taliban’s rule as Lau states that the writers are themselves involved in this trade of making one’s own culture peculiar “to the extent of adding a certain bizarre aura so much so that it enters into the sphere of an exotic extension of the preconceived western perceptions of the East or what the occident has come to know as the Orient” (11). Such details are observed as alienating their own domestic native by giving it a flair of foreignness/ exoticness.

A thorough account of customs followed by native does not highlight the rich cultural roots of a native rather it foregrounds the uncultured and uncivilized orient. After the death of Sofia, Rohan gives up the school which he runs and the original Ardent House becomes his home. As contrary to his expectations, Ardent Spirit develops connections with Intelligence agency and becomes a jihadi training group. After few years, it went into the control of Major Kyra, a former major in Pakistani Army, who along his students is aiming to bomb a Christian church. He maintains that exploding such places will not deter the West from continuing its war and our government does the bidding of the west (Americans) as we were beggars. Quite ironically for him, who once was one of the honourable patriots; nonetheless quite ironic, the death of twenties or thirties does not have any significance and no one will give an ear to this bombing except if an English man gets killed, “they (the west) will pay attention if something happens to a white person” (*TBG* 174) and authorities will work as F16. The head of Ottoman replied “If we don’t send a message now they’ll attack other Muslim countries. Why don’t we raid the school and hold everyone hostage?” As per him, after the conspiracy of September (9/11) the easterns are the ones who sew Terror. Earlier in the text, Aslam pens down, “Those claiming responsibility [for attacks on churches] had said that since Western Christians were bombing and

destroying mosques in Afghanistan, they were beginning a campaign to annihilate churches in Pakistan.” (*TBG* 94.)

Since western reader does not have any first-hand experience with the people like Major Kyra and his pupils who are small-scale jihadists. At one end, Kyra along with his pupils is putting his share in the bloodshed, whereas, at another, he is presenting his *Ardent Spirit* as the institute which teaches decency and love of the religion. Nonetheless, Aslam, in a skillful way, shows that they have the power to destroy the lives of “[...] innocent people in a guilty nation (*TBG* 6) and then get categorized as ‘thugs with Koran’ (305). At one point, they are acting as killers whereas at another place they are seeking guidance from Koran. Ahmed, one of Kyra’s pupil, makes sure that his back is not turned towards the Holy Book including other religious texts. Aslam brings to notice the hypocritical and contradictory nature of people in the east by keeping in black and white their act of attacking the school and of seeking guidance from religious texts while attacking.

A number of unbacked statements are used by the author under study, in order to describe such people as at one end they are resisting the bloodshed and then washing their hands with the blood of innocents. For Lau, such writers serve a significant role in providing misleading and skewed stereotypes; re-orientalizing in damaging ways. The negative re-orientalism being perpetuated by South Asian diasporic writers through sweeping generalization results in glaring inaccuracies. Moreover, this instance somehow poses a challenge to the good faith of the contemporary representative of native land and their customs who are positioning themselves to negotiate for seeking an advantageous point where they can easily address the taste of the western demands for the uncivilized orient as it is fairly visible that they get involved in re-Orientalist’s trade which serves /delivers inauthentic information of their native land to whites by learning to please them by becoming “bridges and translators between East and West” (Lau “Introducing re-Orientalism” 26).

Practically, it seems as if the author puts in enormous efforts to make such places as hazardous places where death is part and parcel of a person’s life. It can come without any wrongdoing, fault or reason as if in the tribal areas, it is legal to put an end to anyone’s life without any threat. Such representation intensifies the remoteness and primitiveness. Resultantly, it removes native reader from the world in which he lives.

This pulls in the factor of othering where the reader, a native, cannot identify with people which results in surprise. Making the reader unable to feel unison with the read as the text put forths, “new form of Orientalism [which] violates the integrity of the literature, recycling and reinforcing the shallowest of stereotypes” (Shivani 3).

This brings in the situation where an indigenous reader seems to be clinging to the idea of author’s role as a truth-teller but somewhat native reader got exposed to “authorial betrayal” (Lee qtd. in Lau “Introducing re-Orientalism” 26).

The author brings forth knowledge which lacks actual knowledge regarding native’s land, culture, traditions, and customs “to serve profit margins” since he shows ‘whites’ as civilized with sophisticated manners as the moment Mikal got under the custody of whites; they treated him with fine manners. The author presents himself as white spokesman by putting to paper the event when Mikal was not giving responses to the questions asked by a white interrogator through Pashto interpreter in a number of languages, that what will the goras do to make him talk? Are they going to take up a pistol or pull out his one of the nails just like Pakistani jailers did. At a surface level, this statement does not indicate any binarism but with an analytic eye, it is quite visible that author himself establishes the binaries of civilized and barbaric by giving reference of a Pakistani jailer in derogatory flair.

Likewise approach is observed at another place, when these Whites are forcing Mikal to inform them about himself and any piece of information if he has of Al- Qaeda. Even in such wild and vicious circumstances, where according to the author, a Pakistani jailer would lose his mind, these Whites are acting as civilized as David Town, says, “The reason the United States isn’t torturing you, hooking you up to electricity or drilling holes in your bones, as some countries in the world do, is not that torture doesn’t work. Torture most definitely does work. But we don’t do it because we believe it is wrong and uncivilized” (*TBG* 186). Even, if they do harm or hit someone that resonates with their agenda to provide justice.

The narrative presents a sharp contrast between the treatment of prisoner by a gora military officer and by a tribal warlord through the character of Mikal. From the way, Mikal gets treated by the whites establishes their superior and sophisticated manners as they did not do any physical abuse to Mikal. However, earlier in the story,

readers came across the depiction of Mikal's miseries as his index finger from both the hands was cut and he was sold to whites for \$5000 (indicating that east does not care for a human life, all they want is money)

The present tale shows little regard to the Orient and its cultural norms. It appears as if the writer is trying hard to convert these details into a spectacle. Lau adds, "The native writers themselves are involved in the process of making their own culture appear peculiar to the extent of adding a certain bizarre aura so much so that it enters into the sphere of an exotic extension of the preconceived western perceptions of the east or what occident has come to know as the Orient" (11). The element of ~~recession~~ is sketched and enhanced through the extremely bizarre talk which talks place between the whites, Mikal, and even Jeo when the white man continues to laugh at the uncivilized nature of the people residing in the east. Aslam, through the words of one of the white men, re-emphasizes the western notion of east especially Pakistan as barbaric, remote, and crude where doctors prescribe unnecessary medicines to win bonuses from the drug companies, where milkman adds lethal white chemical to increase his profit margin, a land where everyone is engaged in killing, policemen died while taking bribe. As Aslam writes:

[S]hameless beggar country full of liars, hypocrites, beaters of women and children and animals and the weak, brazen rapists and unpunished murderers, torturers who probably dissolved his father's body in a drum of acid in Lahore Fort, delusional morons and fools who wanted independence from the British and a country of their own, but now can't wait to leave it, emigrate, emigrate, emigrate to Britain... (*TBG* 191)

Such characteristics are sharpening the factor of exoticism and strangeness, which make the reader aloof and terror-stricken. Pakistanis are depicted as crude and hypocrites. Moreover, it is certain that the writer is trying to think of himself as authoritative to speak on behalf of "The Orient" as the previous colonizers have done to make the East sound more unfriendly and anti-intellectual. He pictures a philistine society governed by violence. These lines convey a sense of loss which is display of desertedness.

Such details show signs of paradoxes and anomalies as fictional works like *The*

Blindman's Garden (2013) are supposed to be stories intended to please instead of informing. *The Blindman's Garden* (2013) is creating people's especially reader's point of view about a country that is a metaphor of inferiority in each and every sphere. Such writings cannot be considered as mere imaginative or creative texts by the western readers. It would be irresponsible to do so, as such detailed accounts are taken as a fact by the western reader. A native can easily identify such details as a mere stereotyping of the Orient since he is well-aware of the situation in his country more than the *firangis* who are just dipping their toes to satisfy their desire to see east as inferior and have reduced it to a wasteland. Probably, such stereotypical descriptions are fascinating and intriguing for the scholars and the readers. Globally, everyone is quite curious to know more about such wastelands. With such demands it is quite obvious to provide factual and authentic information but instead of demolishing such stereotypes, our Orientals Other-within are concreting and making profits out of this counterfeit layout which does not wholly solely defines the place which he has stereotypically defined.

Privacies of natives are snatched and are represented as vulgar. Pakistan is shown as a dark and gloomy land with people in despair and dismay enraptured in absurdity. The characters put to pages are mere dummies playing a greater role in the grand scheme of readers and publishers. Such partially-factual tales guarantee the author the marketability of his work as it is quite alluring to the capitalist market. The author with little knowledge about these areas is making huge profit. For him, such details must be devoid of any kind of authorial intervention to ensure high profit margin. Exploitation of native knowledge is done to get desired fame.

The work seems to relay on the narrative built by the Whites and Aslam appears to be at their side by 'Othering' his own Orient who is not as barbaric as he pens it down. One of the stories in the novel circumnavigates around smugglers and ransom seekers who ensure their survival either through ransom money or by selling people to American for \$5000 each. "I will cut the boy's (innocent) throat and I will kill you! He says while Rohan glares at him. 'your boy was caught fighting against us...we need money to make sure the widows and the children of those dead men don't become beggars'" (*TBG* n.pag). It would not be out-of-context to state that author seems to depict barbarism by making vigorous efforts to make the Orient's land as a danger land where no civilized being can survive. He is trying to exaggerate the element of remoteness so

that it may seem alien to the world which reader knows. This takes in the element of exoticism as a result of “Othering” since readers, the native to be specific, cannot identify with this over-generalization of the tribe-specific violence. Lau writes, in doing so, the authors self-other themselves in the process of inculcating fear and terror-stricken Pakistan. Not only this, for a western reader such details are one of “authenticity” factors as he/ she will consider it as a cultural diary of the people represented and regard it as exotic. Hence, he/she finds it irrational when compared with his/her own culture.

Kyra’s old friend, president’s security officer, is portrayed as a humbug who helped Major Kyra to get ammunition for the siege in Pakistan, illegally, as he was bringing them from China. The captain despite his job nature, helped his friend which further brings in “a normative conception of what is deemed safely oriental and thus tolerable to chiefly white audience” (Lau 99). Aslam writes that Kyra’s friend himself came to the airport in his official car and in his presence no one dared to touch Kyra’s luggage. Misuse of power done by one of the officers is taken up as whole department being corrupt that is not the case. Misuse of power along with status must not be generalized as it is unjust to label the department as corrupt.

By representing a military officer like captain, the brown-skinned author, over and again does “self-stereotyping” as it seems that he tries to alienate the native by generalizing with sweeping statements appearing more the norm than the exception. Certainly, the novel appears to be a deliberate work, aims to generate capital and fame, by deliberating engaging with re-Orientalism. Re-Orientalization occurs within “seemingly self-reflexive reworkings in contemporary popular culture, but it occurs in works that pertain to be a reaction to common form of exoticization” (Wagner qtd. in Lau (“Re-Orientalism” 107). The character of captain is caricatured; presenting an overly dogmatic generalization regarding army being corrupt with political titles insincere to the job. The author seems to present himself with ‘assimilationist mindset’ since he re- packages the Orient for the global consumption. It is be noted how Aslam presents Pakistani military officer and how he colours David Town; an American. Hence, Aslam establishes binaries of corrupt and non-corrupt, civilized and uncivilized, loyal and disloyal, thereby, playing the role of a re-Orientalist. An obvious question that arises in such a scenario is that aren’t there any corrupt officer in the west? David Town

is depicted as a loyal servant who is committed to the tasks assigned to him unlike Captain who is not committed to his job but involved in filthy games, indeed. All of such details, are directed towards global literary industry as South Asian authors are subscribing to the standards of binaries evident in the colonial writings.

The present-day Anglophone South Asian, in particular Pakistani, writers are self-conscious of their re-working on the characteristics apparent in the Orientalism as they are involved in further reducing the already reduced native. They represent their natives as suffering creatures who must endure the most horrible circumstances due to the greed, corruption, ignorance, and violence of many of its inhabitants. This seconds what Wagner says in “Foreign fantasies and genres in *Bride and Prejudice*: Jane Austen re-Orientalizes British Bollywood” that in re-packaging of Orient for global consumption “[R]e-Orientalism operates as an internal process that mimics...This mimicking may at times be inadvertent, yet self-othering it implies is as often deliberately market driven. The resulting products join what Graham Huggan has so pointedly termed the production of a ‘post-colonial exotic’; in marketing of multiculturalism on a global scale” (Wagner qtd. in Lau “Re-Orientalism” 107). It is an unavoidable fact that the native feels an indescribable pain from having been in the reduced and shrink position as he finds himself in an alien environment with no knowledge of what is being presented. Such stereotypical accounts are projecting that the writer has created a world full of despair, destruction, havoc, and malice where blood of this reduced creature is of no significance.

Their tremendous promotion in the western readership is due to their act of upholding the internal consistency of Orientalism. The theory focuses on the “fall-out” of the hand-picked aspects of the ‘Orient’. Quite intriguingly, this overly fall-out portrayal discloses the fine-drawn re-negotiation of power, re-arrangement of a native as a straw man and other such ingeniously clever strategies in the maneuvering of native details for an advantageous positions. As Shivani points out:

[F]ar from the former empire writing, let alone striking back, this new fiction goes out of its way to avoid creating any sense of discomfort or awareness of historical complicity in its western audience. (3)

These authors find their luggage of Oriental(ness) appealing and tend to capitalize on their exotic representation rather than a portrayal of affairs devoid of politics and

history. Mikal tackles to free himself from Americans custody by running away to get back to his Pakistan. On his journey back to home, he faces a number of hurdles and he consciously tackles the need of the hour by not informing his family back in Heer about his arrival as he was afraid that Americans are following him and will trace the location of where the call was answered.

During his way back home, Aslam portrays himself as a literary gatekeeper who is giving his readers access to a censored and sanitized image of the native, therefore, contributes to the 'blockbuster' process of misleading and misrepresenting (Shivani qtd. in Lau "Introducing re-Orientalism" 19). Mikal haphazard journey of going back home contains his brutal nature as he ate from the faintly rotting corpse of a jackal, rabbit, and a snake. The way Aslam portrays Mikal's act of eating a snake, "he picks up a snake by its tail and, like a whip, slams the head against the rock...guts are pulled out along with the skin...He traps one end between a splice in a stick and wraps the length in a spiral around the stick and ties the other end with stalks and roasts the snake over an open flame." (*TBG* 223). Aslam's portrayal of Mikal, getting the food ready for himself, provides snippets of authenticity for the western reader who is desperate to have mundane details of Orient's life which are least taxing to his intellect. His desire to know about the mysterious East is fulfilled by writers like Aslam who shape their narratives in accordance with the role of re-Orientalist of depicting a "notion of exotic culture" alien not only for a western but also for an eastern reader.

As I have already mentioned in my introduction, writers do sprinkle alien details with the yardstick of authenticity which is considered as an untrustworthy equipment for the native. The purpose behind sprinkling alien details is to express the peculiarities of native culture. Aslam does the same by sprinkling ammunition-specific vocabulary as if each and every native is familiar with it. Mikal on his way back to Pakistan gets a knife from the boy. The boy presents redundant and unnecessary details, "it is a lockback knife with a cracked deer-antler grip and nickel bolsters" (*TBG* 221). By reading such details in the hands of a western reader, may result in a generalized idea that the east is full of terror and terrorist activities since a normal human being will never keep such a detailed account of what are the specimens of the particular weapon. The writer presents such account time and again to authenticate the notion of the Orient as the one who has been involved in the trade of war and weaponry since ages. The idea of extensive

vocabulary of ammunition establishes the commodification of the Orient by packaging his culture in war-specific vocabulary. Another exempli gratia is, “[h]e operates the six-inch Herbert lathe...the three-and-a-half-inch Myford...the Boley watchmaker’s lathe...[t]he Senior milling machine...” (*TBG* 232). The bombardment of such an extensive vocabulary brings the fiction into the exotic light just to highlight the element of alienation and exoticism as according to the western readers, these works may be considered to be presenting facts with accuracy in terms of representing Pakistani society and culture. Undoubtedly, this is one of the issues which brings in crisis of representation as it annoys local readers, critics because this issue of factual truth is one which Lau regards as, “not just necessary but practically a prerequisite for ‘good work’ and ‘good art’” (Lau “Re-Orientalism” 20). Writers writing about Pakistan but are having dual nationalities (US resident) are in a defenseless position to be accused of having lost touch, since they have been living in abroad since long. They do not have sufficient knowledge about how things work here in their homeland. For Lau, they are not only accused of re-Orientalism, “but of having cowardly, mercenary, western-approval-seeking motives for doing so” (19) since their portrayals are a diasporic version of their culture. Aslam appears to be referring to Pakistan in *The Blindman’s Garden* (2013) as some kind of producer or supplier of ammunition and global audience perceives Pakistan with the symbols representing terrors. For Lau, such technique is known as re-Orientalism since native culture and society is presented in a way where the representation tends to abuse them and create a sense of fear and repulsion in the mind of the western reader. My point over here is not merely to highlight the marginalization of women. For sure, my concern is how such sidelined figures are bringing forth the notion of re-Orientalism as Orient’s women are presented as weak. These sidelined women in the eastern land are confined in the boundaries of their house and are not allowed to leave their house. In case if they have to, they have to seek permission since eastern men still hold orthodox rather conservative vision regarding women leaving their houses even if they have to do it for some financial purposes. Tara, Naheed’s mother, is badly criticized when she used to work to earn for her bread and butter. Tara is physically abused by Sharif Sharif, the man whom Aslam introduces as “Sharif, Sharif performs his ablutions downstairs” (*TBG* 69). Sharif Sharif used Tara for few years after she became widow then threw her away as if she is the one who forced her to use her physically. At another place, Tara is assaulted by a man and when

she goes to police to report the event. There, she was asked to bring four witnesses according to Shariah Law. There seen no such witnesses, resultantly, Tara is jailed with the accusation of adultery when it is just an assault not a consensual intercourse. The man is nowhere mentioned which portrays biased attitude of Aslam while dealing such a topic. When Naheed gets widowed after receiving her husband's body, Sharif Sharif again appear onto the stage to "fulfil your [Naheed] need. You don't need anyone else" (TBG 247).

Is it just a coincidence that Aslam in *The Blindman's Garden* (2013) subscribes to the stereotyping without even noticing that what he is giving in the hand of the western readers. He seems to ignore the facts that these readers are eager to satisfy their quest to know about the east. When Naheed goes missing for some time, her family is not willing to tell people about her disappearance since all are afraid of the fact that she will be called as immoral by the people who will lend ear to the announcement of Naheed's missing.

South Asian writers should be considerate enough to notice the fact that neither the western market nor western readers take their novels as a mere fiction. They consider it as an autobiographical confessions of an author regarding his society. Such assumptions then generate prejudices, social misunderstanding, and misreading of the text which indeed, either consciously or unconsciously, invite and create such binaries evident by the work of such authors.

By drawing attention to the violence in the ex-colonies of the Master, the writer, in some ways, extends the orientalist trope of presenting the eastern-other only in terms of, unmitigated suffering, deficits, and violence which is an extension of the Orientalist portrayal of the non-European. Most of the times, these fictions are interpreted as feeding the dominant narrative connected with gender inequality. Moreover, these piece of writings are not read as a piece of fiction that is why the western reader builds his perceptions of Orient's society, grounded on these readings. Such works can either set aside the stereotypes or set in them since they are affiliated with an eastern society.

For a western audience, such detailed account are a window to have glance of the real native i.e., Pakistani society since the fiction is rooted in depth in Pakistan's tradition and culture. Resultantly, such representations highlight what Lau states, "no

more an Occident or Western person is Orientalizing the Orient but Oriental, native writers themselves are re-Orientalizing their own culture and people” (Lau 7) since reductionist portrayal is one of the most sellable products in the west. As a reader, it is noticeable that Aslam’s *The Blindman’s Garden* (2013) seems to make sure that we are in squalor Pakistan exposed to a lot of psychological and physical harassment. The life of Tara is sufficient to explain how miserable a woman’s life becomes when she becomes a widow. It is evident, how biased and hostile Pakistani culture is of its women. Gender and religion are seen as very decisive elements responsible in confining women to chains. If they experience any expression of freedom, they face a sever backlash from the patriarchal mind-set of the male dominated Pakistan. As Lau writes in her essay that a woman is a show piece of weakness and fragility and for a western reader such images are “exotic” and “unique” since such depiction is “something which he/she normally doesn’t come across” in their environment. (36).

Religion gets a tricky flair in modern-day contemporary fiction particular written and produced by the Muslims writers, either they are Pakistani, Indian, Bengali, Nepali or from any other corner of the world. Religion is no longer confined within the boundaries which are demarcated for it but during this contemporary era. Particularly, after 9/11 religion has been taken as tool of politics to justify their ruthless, mean and self-centered interests. More appropriately, religion is a power entity of politics. The lines coming out of the pen of a Pakistani author about a Pakistani is always under one kind or another kind of observance and one never experiences a sense of complete liberty. South Asian authors are aware of this vigilance and are still writing in a way which still addresses the pigeonholes of backward and regressive culture. As Lau holds, the act of depicting Pakistani society by an Oriental with backward cultural and ethical trends are a proof of its association and relativity with all the negative and cynical symbols in the to-date South Asian Anglophone literature, is not being done by the whites but the native writers themselves. The lines below are meant to highlight that how such an attitude of preference and pick becomes a wholesome representative of Islam as conservative and as a promotion of barbarism.

When the plan to bombard a school gets into action, we see a lot of stereotypical comments which the author validates as an ‘Oriental Other-within’ since Ahmed justifies the killings of innocent children by relating it to the sacrifice Hazart Ibrahim

A.S has given to prove his love for his Allah, and to show that he does not love any one more than his Creator. A woman who is concerned about children's health, she comes in and tells Ahmed that his violence is traumatizing the innocent hearts since Ahmed and his fellows has depicted a lot of horror and terror under the name of jihad. Ahmed adds, "You must believe me when I say that I too am upset about the innocent children. But I feel Allah is asking us to sacrifice them to prove our love to Him, as he asked Ibrahim to cut the throat of his son to prove his obedience. With these few wounds we will heal Islam." (*TBG* 290). There is a van which has a loud speaker attached to it and the man in the car is quoting verses from the Koran against violence and jihad. Ahmed being intolerant enough, ordered to open fire onto the van.

It is quite visible that Aslam, at one end made, presents Ahmed as a one who wants to show his love to Allah but at another place is regressive and rigid that if anything which is not according to his agenda, he will not negotiate rather he will become violent. Since as a reader, I know that the Quranic verses which were put on to the loud speaker are not taken out of the context. However, for Ahmed it was quite unbearable as he has exploited the context of the verses and exploited the sacred text to his mere and rigid agenda of bombarding the school, to get Father Mede under control so that American will leave the captured Afghanis or Pakistan i.e., Muslims. Ironically, Ahmed cannot see what he himself was doing in damaging ways.

According to Lau, such representation carries weight since a native is saying this about his/her religion and it is most likely to happen that a reader will take it as an authentic detail of the land by regarding it as an authentic account since it is written by a native not by a white. Such kinds of writings are serving as a helping hand to legalize an exact and definite narrative being narrative by native about his homeland on the international platform. Hence, the native land becomes the symbol of barbarism, violence, squalor, and all such negative synonyms get attached to it. Resultantly, a native reader feels uncomfortable since he can easily locate the exploitation of the information which is just in practice by few men like Ahmed who are "half mad" since they are like puppets in the hands of dons like Major Kyra and other negative figures.

In such vicious circumstance, where according to Aslam, a Pakistani jailer would lose his mind, David Town, the white interrogator, says, "The reason the United States isn't torturing you, hooking you up to electricity or drilling holes in your bones,

as some countries in the world do, is not that torture doesn't work. Torture most definitely does work. But we don't do it because we believe it is wrong and uncivilized" (TBG 186). This depiction according to Lau states that bringing forward the filth of one's culture and respect for the other as the interrogators are reinforcing Mikal, quite peacefully, to tell them about him and his people, mainly terrorists.

In order to put on display his native card or native authenticity, Aslam gives the impression of stepping in to some sort of exaggerated exoticism. While describing a masjid, Aslam goes into long and detailed information regarding a masjid which brings in the aspect of Mukherjee's 'intended audience' since a Muslim is well-aware and informed of the architect of a mosque. For Mukherjee, writers are not always writing for their South Asian audience in English, they have an intended market in their mind and this brings in Lau verdict of "power of representation" and "the radical instability of representation" (8) to describe a domestic thing which results in commodification of either the exotic or the landscape of the exotic. Aslam describes the building, known as masjid in detail, which is a purely Eastern building and an Eastern does not require the redundant account on a thing which he/she already knows, where entire Quran was inscribed on the walls and a lot of calligraphy has been done on the walls too. "The entire Koran...inscribed on its exterior walls...The calligraphy...on the interior walls and ceilings too" (TBG 153)

The Pakistani Anglophone fiction is mainly about the representation of the east and its inhabitants which serve as a contrast to the west and its lifestyle. Pakistani Anglophone fiction is capable of giving voice to the corner lives in a culturally diverse country like Pakistan. The detailed portrayal of the lives in small town like *Heer* is, at one end, a faithful representation but it is also adding brandishing the exotica by overly stereotyping of the people with their affairs of lives. Apparently, it seems like that Aslam through his native characters adopts a hostile attitude towards the West but deep down this is not the case. Aslam, quite playfully, is working with his insidious pleasure principle by bringing to pitch the widely held belief of being still poor, not financially but also morally and ethically. His portrayal of Talibans adds fuel to the burning fire of exoticism or "curious internal coherence" (Lau "Introducing re-Orientalism"7) for the sake of notability. Apart from the issue of verbal abuse, the novel discusses evils in the Orient's society which brings the outcome of Pakistan being distinguished as

stereotypical nation with stereotypical minds. For such writers, the West is a bridge, according to the present scenarios, is the source of prosperous future and even present as our Orientals Others- within present an explicit account of this phenomenon.

Pakistani Anglophone writers throw light on the affairs of women in Pakistani household. Lives of women are badly affected by the males. As Aslam's Shareef in *The Blindman's Garden* (2013) time and again keeps an evil eye on Naheed especially after she became widow. Apart from all this, a number of women are self-confident but the writer does not feel any need to give them ample place in his narrative. Aslam unlocks the vulnerable status of women in the traditional- orthodox setting. Violence towards women is quite visible in the selected novel of Aslam; the sexual assaults of Naheed's Mother- Tara, add more detailed representation of stereotypical treatment of women.

The knack of choosing smallest details from the rustic is quite apparent in Aslam's fiction which serves as an appetite for Western reader by talking of "thorny issue of accuracy" (Lau 8). Aslam puts Taliban as a display of brutality and gender inequality which signal towards gross misrepresentations about Pakistan whereas, he does not portray Whites with this flair. Such misleading and misrepresented details are perceived as authentic tale of presenting the East as the spectacle by the Orientals maintaining the curious inherent or realistic tales of authenticity. This exhibition is perceived as an authentic representation of the native land by the native informant, in this case the Oriental Other-within, and thereby claiming the cultural and truth and authority in the representation by serving the East as the spectacle.

The attachment to the religion is quite evident in Aslam's work particularly *The Blindman's Garden* (2013) where he brings in rotten realities of religious contamination by courageously putting forth terrorism and religious fundamentalism. The characters like Bird Pardoner, women in veil from head to toe who were not allowing other women to enter into the cemetery.

The representation of Islam in *The Blindman's Garden* (2013) is bitterly criticized as Pakistan and its religion has been stereotyped to the extremes. There is a handful of writers who put stress that author may not have sufficient knowledge regarding Islam and Pakistan since he is not living there. He must not be held accountable if he does not have adequate knowledge regarding Islam and Pakistan but he must be held accountable for giving his fiction in the hand of the Canon and earning a lot of fame due to such reductionist study. The point is if he is not having a sufficient

knowledge regarding Islam or Pakistan then why is he involved in commodification. This highlights how celebrity culture is brandishing the exotica by re-representing the East in the authentic flair of exoticism by reinforcing the shallowest of the stereotypes. Aslam, just like many other South Asian writers, highlights the emotional fallouts and insecurities of the people and act as a tourist guide instead of clearly negating the skewed representations. In a straight-forward manner, he subscribes to the re-Orientalist's discourse of maintaining the east as crude and barbaric instead of shunning aside all such details. His narrative draws an image of Pakistan that is an anatomy of chaos, bombed-out villages, mutilations, long wanderings, and murder. Hence, presents it as an inferior, dependent, doomed, and a failure.

5.3 Conclusion

Aslam in his narrative, *The Blindman's Garden* (2013), seems to be belittling the affairs of life to an extent that they are sometimes unbelievable. The novel, as evident through the analysis, has built an environment which tells a good deal about how uncivilized and orthodox these orientals themselves are along with their landscapes. Such portrayals delineate an immense amount of knowledge and description which is quite distant from the natives, highlighting the outward illegibility of natives. Nonetheless, Aslam, through these descriptions, fetches a lot appraisal from the western readership.

The narrative intends to draw a misleading and misrepresented picture of Pakistan which is always doomed and at the receiving end whether it be political, social or cultural as evident through Naheed's miseries, Tara's troubles, Mikal's torturous state. All such details, are what Lau observes, "no more an Occident or Western person is Orientalizing the Orient" but native novelists themselves are "re-Orientalizing their own culture and people" (7). Therefore, seen as repackaging his own orient for global consumption and appraisal. The novel draws an image of Pakistan and Afghanistan as reliant on others with dehumanized elements and treatments of the people caught either by Americans or by natives. The people along with their way of life are shown as violent, cruel, and devoid of any moral code of life and humanity. The preceding representations help such a work to become a hot-seller in the West since it authenticates horror by writing fiction with a purpose, either implicit or explicit, of selling it in the market as a commodity.

Aslam appears to be selling the exoticism of his native land by incorporating comprador attitude. He is seen as coming to terms with an Orientalized East. He gives in to the pressures of western readership by becoming a prey to the stereotypical representations. Thereby, re-packages the inherent instability of the orient for the western audience by making it a marketable commodity. Such representations are, then, perceived by the West as authentic descriptions of the land where he aims to visit as a tourist with least engagement.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Findings of the Study

This study is concluded with the findings that narratives like *The Good Muslim* (2011) and *The Blindman's Garden* (2013) seem to be working in the manner of what Occidentals did during colonial era. They are seen as presenting the east as exotic, mysterious, alluring, and dangerous; full of women oppression, harassments, political turmoil, cultural disintegration, and stereotyping of Islam. It is quite apparent that the selected South Asian authors are hardly considered, in the western marketplace, for the literary merit but are considered as social diaries about the land. By doing so, such postcolonial intellectuals do add to the multiple narratives already existing in the literary world, but it is irrefutable that while representing their own, they pledge to the system of binaries, existing from colonial times.

To a large extent, both the selected writers, Anam and Aslam, are seen as negotiating their indigenous cultural representation(s) for the western market since majority of their representations are gross misrepresentations of the native culture, religion and traditions. With their take on Islam, it would not be inappropriate to say that both have othered themselves in their works. They negotiate their representations by representing stereotypical portrayals of religion and culture to the western reader. Moreover, the use of language and settings further reduce the Muslim other which is visible and maintained through their writings. The previous chapters discuss in detail the way they over-simplify and over-generalize experiences of a handful of community to the entire region by ignoring any mark of improvement. To a large extent, therefore, their texts serve to the interest and demands of the western market and reader. The western reader's interest in the reading gets evoked by exotic and mystery of the orient. S/He might have never heard or visited the places described in *A Good Muslim* (2011) and *The Blindman's Garden* (2013). It represents the orient as orthodox and uncivilized, a piece of information easily consumable by the west readership.

Every experience narrated by Aslam and Anam is of a world after the colonial raj. Their experiences are a source of stereotyping the conflicts either it be Afghan War or the War of 1971. Consequently, their identities are a reflection of fluid- global market

and the over-arching existence of barrier- alien and exotic. Such identities seem to be an outcome of cultural mingling between the east and the west. It is visible that the power of west continues to mesmerize the east. It is quite unlikely that readers will be at home with such depiction when they have divergent cultural baggage. The landscape portrayed is contradictory to what a native sees at his home-place. Possible interpretations could be that the reader may misunderstand the narratives or may give-in to the filthy representation of the monstrous other. In order to define and maintain west's superiority, the author has to consider rest as inferior. In present times, this desire of maintaining super status is somehow partially fulfilled by diasporic writers who write about identified places and fill them with their shallow consideration of the place and its resident. As a result, they subscribe to the timeless desire of the west to be grander beyond the skyline of the known Orient.

Invariably, the orient is deployed at the inferior side of the binary as disorderly, messy, perplexed, and exotic, whereas west appears to be an epitome of civilization. Such inconsistent positioning of South Asian writings where an Oriental Other-within gains a privileged fame in the western readership circle whose appraisal fills up his/her pocket with rewards and capital, for representing much-needed clichéd portrayal of their own. In so doing, they make their guiltless orient, subject to guilt, and injustice. Lau does not hold all the diasporic writers accountable for re-Orientalizing, keeping the other as the other. She accepts the fact that not all diasporic writers are reducing the orient to an othered community, as there are some who knit the cultural uniqueness intact without comparing with the chasm of the west.

This research has explored how re-Orientalism is employed by the selected South Asian Anglophone writers. It aimed at analyzing the way in which both the writers, belonging to different geographies of South Asia, have mapped out their orient by reducing their orient's cultural aesthetics with their "natively authentic" approach which involves generalization and distorted image of the orient either it be a Pakistani orient or Bengali orient.

Instead of labeling the selected works to be serving any specific agenda, this study was just an attempt to explore new avenue of interpreting South Asian Anglophone fiction. Moreover, it kept its purpose to initiate a debate on the notion of Lau's re-Orientalism where South Asian Anglophone writers find their baggage of

being an Orient entity quite charming, and by subscribing to the stereotypical portrayal of the orient, they tend to play and pander the element of stereotyping and over generalization. Both the selected authors, Anam and Aslam, are seen to be stereotyping their exotica for the consumption of the western readership. This seems to be, what Mukherjee describes as “planned authenticity” (11), which seems to have damaged the aestheticism in their cultures.

The exotic charisma of the East has always been a source of fascination for the West. During colonial reign, such binarism was conducted by the white masters but in today’s world the Oriental(s) other-within intellectuals, brandishing the exotica, are the torch bearer of colonial practices. By depicting the local culture with their unique styles, these native informers continue to mesmerize western readership circle. Consequently, they become mouthpieces of the muted peripheral with planned authenticity. The oddities depicted in their texts are colored by misleading and misrepresented portrayals.

6.2 Recommendations for further Researchers

Theories like Lau’s re-Orientalism encourage the mind to study and analyze literature from a new dimension which help to keep the interpretative spirit of literature alive. It does not label or limit any piece of literature to any specific theory but it encourages the academia with new tools and approach that provide new avenue from the previous viewpoints inferred from any piece of fiction.

This study enables me to recommend some suggestions for future researchers. South Asian Anglophone writings may be explored from a number of perspectives. The researchers may explore other works of Anam and Aslam in the light of theory of re-Orientalism. Similarly, Anam and Aslam’s selected texts may be analyzed from other theoretical underpinnings. The textual analysis of *The Good Muslim* (2011) and *The Blindman’s Garden* (2013) enables me to also suggest that both the primary texts selected for this study can be analyzed from the theories on war since both the narratives are written under the backdrop of war. Not only this, traumatic experiences of Aslam’s Mikal and Anam’s Sohail can be analyzed in detail. The portrayal of women in both the novels from any feminist perspective can also be done. Future researchers can explore the notion of re-Orientalism is not just restricted to the Orientals Other-within of South Asian, it can easily be traced in any of the works by those who were ex- colonies of the Master. A comparative discussion can be generated by the approach of compare and

contrast Orientals Other-within from different ex-colonies of the *Raj*. Even trans-cultural tropes can be traced in the works of Anam and Aslam.

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