



Cultural Exclusion and Identity Crisis: Trespassing in the East and West

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Abstract- This study explores the cultural differences between the East and the West as interpreted by Uzma Aslam Khan in *Trespassing* (2003). The study also focuses on the societies and conditions of the mentioned cultures. The author of the novel thoroughly compares the incidents happening in the West with those in the East. The novel *Trespassing* focuses on the violence and the crisis that the politically suffering Pakistan is going through with the theme of love at its centre. To interpret the violence and crisis, on one hand, in Pakistan and peace and prosperity in America on another, the text of the novel has been closely analyzed through the critical commentaries by Nair, Feldman (2013). The novel also shows the transitional stage Pakistan went through in its Political scenario. Along with Feldman, some concepts of post-colonialism and the subaltern have provided a framework to the study.

Keywords: Crisis, Post-colonial, Political sufferings, Transition

I. INTRODUCTION

Culture is an extended, interconnected and poly-signified term in the social and anthropological terminologies. It is an ideology and modus operandi of people living together. Culture is an umbrella term, such that, it does not represent only a single idea; rather many ideas are connected and related to the main term. Culture is not, and should not be, explained in the realms of on geography and frontiers. Said (1977) used the word Orientalism to describe the deprived and miserable condition of the non-westerns. He argues, Orientalism is the description of the Geographical representation of the Orientals (Arabs). Not only, he argues, is it restricted to Geography; rather, it is extended to Philology, Ethnicities, Linguistics, Literature, Political Science, International Relations and Sociology. In the political sphere, according to Syed Shujaat Ali (2021) the lexical choices and dehumanizing metaphors used by the Bush administration against the Afghans had been so powerful in appeal that they offered a safe camouflage to the sinister imperialistic designs of Bush administration and continued to do it for years despite mounting criticism. Orientalism is a field that defines the Orientals in relation with occidentals. It emerged as a subject in Princeton University; plus, Oxford University contains Orientals faculty. Said argues that the emergence of the concept of East started with the implementation of the concept of the West. Young states that Post-Colonialism is not limited to its being discipline, subject or a theory, rather, it is extended to a vast field of the project through the objective that it aims to achieve: reawakening of the world's powerful and western knowledge formation and reorientation of the ethical norms. Post-Colonialism does not mean exploitation, oppression, hegemony, standardization and poverty have diminished. There is no end to the ideas of the theory. Syed Shujaat Ali (2021) throws light over the dehumanising metaphors used by the West for the residents of the East and says that the dehumanizing metaphors employed by the potent western states to scapegoat the weaker eastern nations is unjust and therefore, this activity, instead of eradicating the menace of terrorism, is rather adding fuel to fire, and causing terrorism to spread; the spill-over effect of this has forced nations like India, to follow suit and quell the rightful demands of their citizens, through the use of dehumanizing metaphors.

Only some Europeans and Americans do not want to revise its central argument of colonization and its callous effects upon the individuals of the colonized lands.

Further, a Modern and Post-modern man is confused to identify himself as an oriental. Hence, the depiction of culture in writing is not just limited to lectures and non-fictional inscription; rather, it can be debated in the realm of fictional literature. To illustrate this, Uzma Aslam Khan makes an effort to focus on the aspects of two completely different cultures in a fictitious manner. *Trespassing* can be the best reference to compare the two distinct cultures simultaneously, such that, the Eastern and the Western. Khan's novel acts as a tale of two worlds: one is of the West that is represented as a 'wonderland'; while the other is of the East that is shown as an image of despair, political uproars and violence. The novel is transformed into fourteen languages in eighteen countries (contributors, 2016)

Moreover, Khan's, is an eminent voice among the writers of Pakistani Fiction in English because of her shrewd, fierce, witty sharpness and deep reflection of human nature. Thérèse Soukar Chehade well justifies this fact: in a remarkable prose, Khan inscribes about the magnificent exquisiteness of Pakistan and the stress in the country and the anguish of the people. In addition, (agency, n.d.) commends the novel: "A novel of great explicitness and tenderness, bursting with splendid portrayal of lands and those who have always inhabited it and those who are always overwhelmingly drawn to it". Nadeem Aslam, a renowned critic and author says: "No one pens like her about the body, about the senses, about the physical world. Uzma Aslam Khan is the writer whose novel I look forward to the most."

This paper investigates the differences between Eastern and Western cultures in the light of *Trespassing*, through post-colonial perspective. Furthermore, the paper significantly and technically probes into finding the effects of the dominant culture, i.e., the West, upon the recessive one, the East. Further, it comments on the geo-political aims of the West in the East. The study also highlights: the cultural exclusivity of the East by the West mindset through Daanish's life, suffering from identity crisis in the US.

Trespassing

The novel revolves around the life of two characters, 'Dia' and 'Daanish', symbolizing the Eastern and the Western cultures, respectively. In the novel, Dia resides in Karachi (Sindh), a province in Pakistan while Daanish abides in America (Khan 9-19). Through scrutinizing Dia's character, we see a typical Pakistani society. Dia is a lens that the writer uses to keenly perceive the events in the novel, and Daanish, as a spokesperson of the writer to infer the factors and features of the Western society. Both these characters seem to have a first-hand experience in the societies they depict.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research, being qualitative in nature, highlights the events and incidents of the novel that is the first-hand information, through different variables and parameters of Textual Analysis, with the novel as a primary source. The researcher has also cited different secondary materials, like books, Journal articles and websites.

Moreover, for the purpose of exploring and successfully achieving the results, the researcher has used the concepts of Post colonialism, Otherness and Subaltern by Beauvoir and Gayatri Spivak. These theories explain how the West sees the East? What factors are responsible for the recessive nature of the East? How the Eastern culture is exploited for the nefarious designs of the West?

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Anita Nair comments about the novel that it is set among an excess of settings like mulberry farms, student cafeterias, bus body builders, water authorities, and American academia in the time of the first Gulf war, the stride of the book is uniform and deft though the humor at times seem forced. If the book wavers, it is for the fact that the fractured narrative and multitude of settings bounce attention and creates false alterations making us wonder who the true heroes of this book are. Dia and Daanish who are trespassers or Shafqut, Riffat, Salamaat or even Anu who knows the exact extent of their trespassing? (Nair, n.d.)

Analyzing Pakistani situation, Tariq Ali asserted that the only things in Khan's novel are not the 'Cocoons' but the smooth prose of the novel also highlights the contrast between the affectionate thread and a world (in this case Pakistan) where every sort of violence is customary. It is a self-assured novel and scripts the appearance of a modern batch of Pakistani fiction writers imaginative by the figure or the belief of a desolate state (Ali, n.d.). This novel is a tragedy based on violence, killings, deaths and mere destruction. Kirkus (2004) reviewed the book as a fashionable quixotic tragedy that exposes a shockingly crisp view while Khan throws light on the multifaceted local, religious, and economic ethics of her own country (Pakistan) and at the same time very well proposes an objective but cold-eyed stance on the attitudes of America during the first Gulf War (Kirkus, 2004).

Khan's skillful representation of Pakistan is indeed intriguing one. She paints Pakistan in a different, blunt and remote desert scene which is in stark deviation from the many recently published books which are set in the Middle East. The novel is set in a crushingly sub-urban locality, depicting a miserable, middle-class house of one of the main characters, Daanish, in a neighborhood which lack even the basic facilities like water and electric power supply. Besides a few exclusions, most of the settings of Khan's novel are of human nature (Powell, 2009). In other words, new statesman reviewed *'Trespassing'* as an affectionate book that is eminent because of the refined description of nature (Diski, 2003). The novel, in itself is a masterpiece by the writer. The role of nature is intensified by the writer through the characters. The Stationary Traveler defines the relationship of characters of novel with nature. The Stationary Traveler describes how the three major characters in the novel are so close to the nature and environment, for instance, Salaamat is the one who finds solace in nature and Dia adores the silk worms and is frequently contemplative over the way worms creates silk, and Dannish is fond of observing seashells to the magnitude that he collects them and lace them in the form of a necklace (Traveler, 2013).

Khan's novel is all about the suffering of Pakistan and the terror people had in them about the modern Pakistan. Asian Reviews of Books says it all about the book in the following words that this is a "Russian doll of a book", although superficially just one overarching story of love and loss, squeezed through a thread of mystery. Khan has plaited a complex tress of many narratives but has also smeared a vivid picture of modern Pakistan. She has differentiated the splendor that warms the lives of the middle classes (Dia and Daanish) with the filth that disgraces the lives of the relegated (Salaamat) and the terror that grasps people and the splendor that encloses them but rests largely unacknowledged. She arouses the sights, sounds and smells of Karachi life, the cultural games that people play and the grading that makes Pakistani social communication so fascinating (Banerjee, 2003).

Trespassing is a story stranded into several subplots. It's a story of flashbacks and flash-forwards. According to M. Feldman (2013) this book comprises not one story but tells many stories, narrated by many narrators shifting to and fro in time. For example, there is the narrative of an ill-fated young Pakistani man who is studying at a college in America. At the same time the novel deals with the story of many different women belonging to different generations who try to push up against religious and cultural barricades. Not only the novel tells different stories but it also offers an expressive interpretation of Pakistani scenic description like that of the beach and a silkworm factory, while at other times it struggles to depict the remote side of life in a large, expended city where the basic facilities like water and electricity are never consistent. Yet there is another story of a common village man who migrates to the city and spends most of his time and money with dispossessed men empowered by a flood of cheap American arms. Not this but there is also a love story in the novel, however; it's difficult to interpret for whom this loves story appeals more to (Feldman, 2013). The sweeping motion of plot makes the story dynamic. New statesman writes about the novel and its story that Dia, the fledgling heroine of Uzma Aslam Khan's striving second novel is captivated by the process of silk formation. She lives in modern Pakistan and spends her spare time at her mother's silk factory, looking at larvae and white cocoons as they wait to be spun into attires. The silk factory provides a fitting allegory for the novel as a whole, which attempts to untie the cocoons - of self-protection and self-delusion - in which people wrap them. *Trespassing* is an effort to comprehend some of the conflicts faced by the young Pakistanis today (Diski, 2003).

Khan's novel is the mirror to the today's Pakistan. Her arguments are true to the fact and her reason is agreeable to those who have experienced the actual situation. Kirkus (2004) defines the novel as a sporadic and a brilliant novel that escapes from the general description of something, thus, one can found a complex fictional world made inside the novel that brilliantly illuminates reality and brings to light the larger

sociopolitical conundrums we all face today and which affects our personal lives in a number of ways (Kirkus, 2004). Modern Pakistan is the distorted face of corruption and political violence. Uzma Aslam Khan, in her novel *Trespassing*, takes us away from the usual representation of the family and politics and introduces us to realize the daily domination of routine political violence, from the stunning sensual panoramas of the silk farms to the swarming streets of Karachi that are putrid, disintegrating, and fraudulent (Khan u. A., 2005). Khan's novel is all about Pakistan and being Pakistani. Becky Powell analyses Uzma Aslam Khan's novel as a tale driven by two young Pakistani characters. She argues that *Trespassing* is a novel that focus in dripping detail on the conflict between the old maxim "you can't go home again" and the one that advocates that "you can take the Pakistani out of Pakistan, but you can't take the Pakistan out of the Pakistani" (Powell 2009, p. 17). *Trespassing* is best known for its vividness and lucidity. *Trespassing* was shortlisted for the 2003 Commonwealth Writers' Prize. Khan's novels are abrupt and full of surprises. She said in one of her interviews that she had never planned out a novel. She stresses that she does not really believe in mapping, because for her the lines amends as one finds them. She believes that the system of a novel itself requires that you stay embrace all sorts of modifications, and stay open to astonishments. All of her novels begin either with an image or a voice (Khan U. A., interview: Uzma Aslam Khan, 2013). To add to the creativity of the skillful representation of novel, her exceptional use of words and her skillful presentation of imagery is what makes the novel a realistic situation in which readers find themselves while going through the text.

"Trespassing", the title of the novel, is meaningful. About the title, The Stationary Traveler writes, Does Daanish "trespass the man-made boundaries and fundamentalism?" (Traveler, 2013) The question is an essential fact. The question is answered, later on, as "being engaged in a friendly (not oppressive) relationship with nature and its creatures do not automatically make one a trespasser of man-made boundaries, much less a radical who resists fundamentalisms. Daanish never trespasses the tradition that binds him to the role of a docile son—although he expresses his discontent frequently, he acquiesces to the arranged marriage at the end, with no qualms over how he may have and will continue to influence the lives of two women—his former lover, Dia, and her best friend he is bequeathed to be married" (Traveler, 2013). By trespassing the boundaries of social structure, one might not be accepted by people. Khan writes, "You've no idea how hostile society gets if you challenge it." (Khan, 289) To further add to the praise of the novel, *Booklist* writes about the novel "Khan tackles political and religious themes as adroitly as she handles the haunting love story . . . A brilliant, lush portrait of Karachi" (Macmillan,2014)

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Cultural Exclusion and Identity Crisis: When both are Experienced Simultaneously

The indifference and ignorance shown to another culture in the society is broadly termed as cultural exclusion. Colonization and cultural dominance go abreast. Though, the former causes the latter; thus, having a cause-and-effect relationship. Spivak (2010) argues that the voices of the Subalterns are regressed and oppressed by the loud roars of the dominant culture and civilization, though politically manipulated. She has called the third world, the Asian and African, a recessive culture, living with their culture and norms being 'othered' and averted. The otherness, Eco n.d. argues, is both within and without, external and internal. The former relates to the people that surround us in the social institutions, like education, family, community, politics and religion; while the latter demonstrates the inner conscience that we live with. When the external cannot get dominance, it creates a social setup in such a way to convince our inner self to question our culture and identity. Consequently, it creates a crisis situation within and outside. Daanish, a Karachi-born journalist, suffers identity crisis and cultural exclusion at the same time. On the one hand, in Pakistan, he survives with lack of basic amenities and resources that are necessary to sustain life, like water, electricity, climate; while on the contrary, in USA, he thrives for his identity as a person from the East. About his survival in Pakistan, "his powerlessness overwhelmed him" and started questioning, rather providing excuses for fulfilling and satisfying his egotistical self. He asked himself a materialistic and desire-driven question: "What could he begin to do here? And yet, somehow, millions survived. Was it survival or immunity?" (Khan, p. 327).

Being a journalist in America, he is never allowed to express his opinion freely although America claims to be a land where everyone gets "freedom of speech". When gulf war was in its full swirls, carnage and brutality got the name of "collateral damage", the people of the USA were celebrating "The Rainbow Parade"; which Khan, through the character of Daanish, criticizes the parade as, "the war's destroyed hundreds of thousands of people. Your media calls it a work of art, and your people wave pompoms." (Khan, p. 179) To discuss the

issues of war, Khan plays two sides, she does not only talk about the role of the West in the ongoing Gulf war but also questions their attitude towards the war they had inflicted upon people. Khan expresses her rage towards the attitude of western people regarding war through the character of Daanish.

She writes, "Since the war began, he and Liam had said nothing about it to each other. It was as if, by staying silent, Liam was telling him: I'm not a part of it." (Khan, p. 180) To criticize the celebration while other half of the world was at war, Khan rhetorically speaks in Daanish's voice, "you're not celebrating the war, Liam, but you're not exactly worked up about it either. You said nothing when your country began the air strikes, nothing when all the propaganda glittered from your television." (Khan 180)

Journalism: When Words Dance with the Promulgation of a War

Journalism is a profession that functions to bring forth the contemporary issues to the limelight of the policy makers and strategists of a country. The current world is squeezed by the internet, networking and information technology. Print, electronic and social media are the boosters that expand particular news within seconds. The concept of separate journalism for east and west is taking flight nowadays. Part of the reason is the geo-political game and repetition of geo-economic mantra, with the expanding nature of globalization. Mott (2010) has explained the origin of eastern and western journalism. He argues that the western journalism is the product of debate on western journalism in China. Further, the fact that there is eastern truth is an inference to the existence of its counterpart, the western. (McGhee, 2019) furthers the question regarding print media whether the West created journalism or journalism created the West. Finding answer to the query put question mark after the word "fact". Generation of the fact and its reorganization for political and community agenda further become the matter of inquiry. Moreover, the journalistic truth and facts are the result of a series of modification over a period of time. Robert Frost elaborates it this way: "Fact is the sweetest dream labor knows". Due to the external and internal strife among national groups and nation-states, respectively, the community of journalism has been stretched beyond boundaries. Many journalists are working to compile a literary account of the miserable situation of the people of the "Third world". Asne Seirstad being one of the Norwegian reporters who published *The Bookseller of Kabul* for the purpose of highlighting the internal and external threats women, in particular, and the people of war-torn countries in general, are facing. Seirstad directly narrated the story of an Afghan woman. However, Uzma Aslam Khan has used journalism, indirectly, as a tool to measure and analyze the perspective of both sides regarding the hot issues, like Gulf War and Afghan War. In the story, Daanish is interested in journalism while his late father wanted him to be a doctor like himself or like all other Pakistani boys in the States who study engineering or business. He would also come back home fat and bouncy, like Khurram (Khan 269).

Furthermore, when journalists are intimidating by the power game and shift in power or the balance of power, they show their solidarity and integrity, worldwide, through formal protest, a right obligated to them by Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Thus, the commonality of protest in journalism is obvious and common in itself. But, due to the West and East schism and poles, the essence of this commonality is lost. Khan, comparatively, inscribes the journalistic protests in West and East: an office English daily raided, men in khaki alleged the group to be involved in hate speech against Pakistan. Thus, they impounded their press. This wasn't first attack on the newspaper office, in fact, in the past six years the office was attacked more than two hundred times. Journalists are remonstrating (Khan, p. 268); while in the West, they live for a cause. What else is there to live for? They make me proud. (Khan, p. 269)

On the grim side of this novel, we come across the Gulf War and annihilation of humanity caused by the war. A war is a 'war' it does not matter who is on the right side and who is on the wrong. War inundates. From the perspective of the Western world, this war was started against Iraq when Iraq attacked Kuwait in August 1990. In response to this attack another war, that is, the Gulf war was waged by United States and the coalition forces from 34 nations. This war has various names and/or codenames such as Operation Desert Shield, Operation Desert Storm, Persian Gulf War, Kuwait war and Iraq war. To express the views of Western people, Khan has used an ironical tone or more appropriately called sarcasm. In the novel, Wayne, Daanish's journalism department head, assigned all the students' different topics and added:

"Censorship is our vilest enemy. Let's not forget that it's almost the two-hundredth anniversary of the First Amendment to the Constitution, the right to free speech. Remember that as guardians of the press, as those who'll go forward into the world with four years of painstaking training, as those who'll be watchers of the vast turbulence around us, it's our role to speak objective truth to those who stay behind and depend on us"

(Khan, p. 146).

But here Khan's sarcasm comes into play; and through the character of Daanish, she expresses her perspective of war by saying "it had been six weeks since Iraq invaded Kuwait. Not one class discussion had addressed the attack, let alone its reporting". (Khan, p.146)

Daanish, however, not satisfied by the topic he had chosen, decided to write on the issues of Gulf War. Wayne responded with remarks that he had done "*weak analysis*", and that he should "*Choose another topic*" (Khan, p. 148). Daanish responded to the remarks that no one else in class has touched the topic, though it's a lot more important than vitamins". (Khan, p. 148)

Indeed, war is more important to write on than vitamins. Khan wrote this novel from a post-colonial perspective. But the position she holds as a narrator is neutral. She is true to the situations and expressive. The problem of corruption, destruction and disorder are faced globally now. At this point in the novel, Uzma Aslam Khan relates the profession of journalism in the East with the one in the West as if you want to study free, and USA and Pakistan are not the places to study fair and free reporting. In the former one might risk to have his essence shattered while in later his bones (Khan, p. 24).

When the Spoiled are Spoiling Themselves: East becoming West

The inner conscience, when impressed with the appearance of the 'others' outside, then the civilization that lived for thousands of years, begin to wither itself through its progeny. Eco n.d. also proposes the exhibition of external causes, the arousal of internal other, and subsequently, leads to the decimation of the latter. Uzma has also demonstrated this through Daanish. Daanish on his way back to his homeland for his father's funeral, during his flight, met Khurram, who later becomes his best friend. Unlike Daanish, Khurram is a chatty fellow, asking questions and passing statements. When they arrived at the airport, Khurram's family welcomed them with a cluster of relatives. Uzma Aslam Khan, through the character of Khurram, conveys the message of hygiene in the city by stating, the people of Karachi walked out of obligation, not for pleasures. Exquisiteness and cleanness were to be sealed indoors, adding to their values. No one cares about public space (Khan, p. 42). On the other hand, through the character of Daanish Khan, she gives us a glimpse of the beauty of western domain as the grasslands are filled with bluets, buttercups, and fascinating susans; the trees with chirping birds, titmice and nostalgic phoebes where Daanish spent most of his time rambling and heeding, engrossed by the land in a way he'd never before. (Khan, p. 47)

In addition, Khan compares the architectural structures of USA with the one in Karachi where Daanish observes deeply and feels pleasure to be walking on land that looked-for only one delineation. In Karachi, there wasn't a single house, school, university, park or office that was free of four walls surrounding a building, though the US Consulate there had loftiest four walls of all (Khan, p. 47).

What's more, 'Salaamat' is a trivial character in the story, yet we can see his part in the novel unavoidable. Khan writes about Salaamat as a person who explains "his flavors to no one" (Khan, p. 127). He originally resides in the rural areas of Pakistan but later on moves to city in search of a proper labor. Here the skillful writer compares the rural setting with the urban one. Khan highlights the features like sand was swapped by granite, mud with cement, fish with scrapes of chewy mutton, smoke and gases that made his chest prickle (Khan, p. 126). The debates between him and his friends reveal enmities between ethnic and regional groups, and the unescapable sense among Sindhis that the "others" - Pathans, Punjabis, Muhajirs - have made them borderline in their own land. In this way, through the rhetoric and views, Khan has described how the nationalistic inner self, disguised with linguistic fervor and regionalist zeal, has disarrayed the integrity of a nation that emerged out of unity and solidarity. Salaamat also adds to the novel's polymorphous erotic activity by seducing a (male) companion while gyrating fantasies about lustful women. Salaamat's role in the novel is minor but, through his eyes, we can see Pakistan - more specifically the vicinities of Pakistan's largest city, that is, Karachi, which no other English writer has portrayed ever before. Fishing villages and beaches, the biota, the bus passenger terminal, work camps, brothels, and the sheds are smeared in colors as seductively decorated as the pictures painted by Salaamat on buses of Karachi. In his realm. We sense the threats- the guns, assaults and unrest - that emerged in Karachi in the Nineties (Hussain, 2003). Through Salaamat, we see the much-distorted face of Karachi.

Geo Politics and Oppression: The Former Dictates the Latter

The war in Afghan war and the war in Iraq are no more humanitarian interventions. Part of the reason is their expanded structure and function to the national interests of the big powers on international stage. These wars have become proxy wars for geopolitical game. Slater DN.d. in his book "*Geopolitics and the Post-Colonial: Rethinking North-South Relations*", pointed out the game being played by the big powers for satisfying their own interests. When it's about war, it's all about what the super-power thinks and wants. The country in charge of power can do anything to you and your country. Khan writes in this novel, "How did Liam (American) manage to make willful ignorance look like innocence? How did he make Daanish (Pakistani) look like the villain? Perhaps this was the greatest power of a superpower" (Khan, p. 181). When, in America, Daanish wrote in his journal about the war and the Western world's role in it, he was obviously discouraged by his head and was asked to write on some other avenues like Vitamins. He was told by Wayne, "Good journalism is snappy and digestible. You're an amateur. Your writing style is ponderous and, well, pretty emotional." (Khan, p. 146)

V. CONCLUSION

Conclusively, the West dictates the East, their cultures, notions, particular institutions and the young generation, through journalism and modernism. *Trespassing*, through the lenses of Daanish, Salamat and Liam have delineated the differences between the West and the East. Moreover, it has also described the reasons behind the calamitous situation in the East. Otherness and cultural exclusion are the foremost causes of the tumultuous condition of the Eastern. The promotion of dominant and recessive cultures can be gauged from the realistic portrayal and rhetorical dialogue of Salamat with other trivial character regarding the schism created in the country by nationalistic fervor, and the modernistic-driven attitude of Danish. Further, the cultural exclusion and otherness also go abreast with the yellow journalism of America, when the war was waged.

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