

EXILE, ENCOUNTER, AND EMPOWERMENT: RE-ORIENTALIST ANALYSIS IN BAPSI SIDHWA'S *THE AMERICAN BRAT*

Shahbaz Ali Khan

Lecturer Department of English Linguistics and Literature, Qurtuba university, D.I.Khan.

Shahbazali.qusit.92@gmail.com

Hoorain Rauf

BS English, Qurtuba University, D.I.Khan

Hurainrauf28@gmail.com

Muhammad Luqman

M.Phil, Qurtuba University, D.I.Khan

Manikhan8137@gmail.com

Chahat Shah Zaib

Lecturer University of Science & Technology Bannu

Chahatshahzaib@gmail.com

Nadia Gul

BS English, Virtual University, Kamra (Attock)

Nadiagul2123@gmail.com

Abstract

*This paper critically analyses the novel of Bapsi Sidhwa *An American Brat* (1994) in relation to the Re-Orientalism theory of Lisa Lau that discusses the possibility of diasporic South Asian writers reinforcing the stereotypes of the Orientalist due to their unintentional efficacies of doing so. The study examines the concept of Sidhwa as an insider and outsider who seeks to navigate through portraying Pakistani culture and targeting the Western audiences. The study provides three main components of Re-Orientalism in the novel, i.e. cultural recognition in terms of stereotyping images, generalization and totalization of native traditions, and mixture of fiction with autobiography to establish truth claims (using textual analysis). The results show that even though the novel presents a valuable representation of diasporic identity and cultural clash, it is also part of the reductive stereotypical representations of the South Asian society. By addressing the modern exchange between authenticity, representation and cultural distortion in the contemporary English fiction regarding diasporic women authors, this paper finds a place in an overall discussion on postcolonial and diasporic fashion.*

Keywords: *An American Brat*; Re-Orientalism; Bapsi Sidhwa; Diasporic Literature; Cultural Representation; Lisa Lau; Orientalism; Identity Conflict; Truth Claims; South Asian Fiction

1. Introduction

The influence of Orientalism in literary representations of South Asia has long been a topic of intense discussion, especially after the pioneering text by Edward Said *Orientalism* (1978), which revealed how Western authors developed the more exotic, subordinate and backward image of the East. The pattern of cultural distortion, which was identified in the works of South Asian diasporic writers, is the same and in the past few decades; this has been identified in the works of the South Asian diasporic writers who are ethnically the east but geographically and theoretically the west. This phenomenon is coined by the author Lisa Lau (2009) as Re-Orientalism to use the example of South Asian diasporic writers who remind us of stereotypes associated with Orientalism by intentionally or inadvertently focusing on cultural backwardness, patriarchy, and rigidity of society to become authentic and recognized in the context of western literature. In this paper, Bapsi Sidhwa necessity *An American Brat* (1993) (1994) diasporic homeland notes whether this storytelling to the diaspora author, in his homeland, might become the cause of corrosion and reduction of South Asian culture.

Pakistani born English language novelist Bapsi Sidhwa has won acclaim as an author mostly through the embroidery of personal, political, and cultural themes into her fiction. *An American Brat* (1993) is a story of Feroza Ginwalla, a teenage girl and a child that had to face the world

leaving Pakistan and going to the States; it tells of her evolution as a person in the world that does not agree in many aspects of hers. Sidhwa creates an opposite world of an oppressive, old-fashioned East and a progressive and liberated one, the West through the character of Feroza. Such a binary not only contributes to the identity crisis of the protagonist but also leaves us questioning where Pakistan is depicted as a black and white, fixed, one-dimensional, patriarchal society. Some of the traits of Re-Orientalism echoed in the novel especially the culturally exaggerated elements, generalization of Pakistani norms, and combination of autobiography and fiction, all of which makes the narrative more of a truth about the story than as a personal perspective of it.

According to the theory of Lisa Lau, there are three attributes of Re-Orientalism: Cultural recognition, which involves the diasporic writers to reinforce the stereotypical aspects to exert authenticity; generalization/ totalization which involves the reduction of the whole culture by highlighting on a sole negative image and truth claims to risk being taken as a fictional story and the writer rather introduces an oblique of separation between the fiction and their own experience to maintain credibility. In *An American Brat* (1993), these elements come out when Sidhwa talks of religion, the system of gender roles and expectations in Pakistan. The story is positioned to show that the American experience is one of knowledge and freedom, whereas the Pakistani upbringing is one of control and being a dinosaur. Even though such depiction may be based on lived experience of Sidhwa, it is subject to strengthening monolithic and overall negative cultures of South Asian, particularly to non South Asian readers who may not be aware of the diverse and intricate culture of South Asia.

This paper will endeavor to discuss the involvement that the film *An American Brat* (1993) has in Re-Orientalist discourse and how it makes the work of the diasporic writers complicated culturally. Using the theoretical framework developed by Lau, the study indicates the manner in which the novel; in exploring the theme of identity, represents an occurrence in one way or another., dislocation, cultural conflict, and displacement- also have a corresponding point to Orientalist tendencies internal within the culture. This inquiry moves to larger postcolonial and literary discourses of representation, authenticity and narration morality in diasporic literature. In the process, it offers much needed context on why diasporic writers such as Sidhwa must tread a fine line in ensuring that they do not engage in cultural critique and cultural misrepresentation.

1.1 Research Questions

2. How does Bapsi Sidhwa's *An American Brat* (1994) reflect the key characteristics of Re-Orientalism as outlined by Lisa Lau, particularly in terms of cultural recognition, generalization, and truth claims?
3. In what ways does *An American Brat* (1994) contribute to the reinforcement or re-appropriation of stereotypical representations of South Asian culture in diasporic literature?

1.2 Objectives of research

- 2 To critically examine the portrayal of South Asian cultural identity in *An American Brat* (1994) using Lisa Lau's theoretical framework of Re-Orientalism.
- 3 To identify and analyze the narrative strategies through which Sidhwa, as a diasporic writer, may perpetuate or challenge Orientalist stereotypes in her representation of Pakistani society

1.3 Significance of the Study

The selected study is important because it provides a valuable tool of perspective within which one can analyse the importance of diasporic South Asian women writers in crafting the way in which the rest of the world perceives their own cultures. Conducting a multi-layered analysis

of *An American Brat* (1994) with the lens of theory of Re-Orientalism, it was revealed how Bapsi Sidhwa, even in her insider-outsider role, can unwittingly contribute to the stereotypical branding of Pakistani society. The paper has added value to the other academic discourses regarding postcolonial texts, authenticity, and identity formation in diasporic discourses. It emphasizes the intricacies of having diasporic writers seek to straddle their heritage and their life experience with the preconceptions of international, usually Western, readers. The study applies specifically to literary analysts, cultural analysts, and students that are interested in examining the intersection between power and identity based on its representations in the contemporary South Asian English literature.

1.4 Delimitation of the Study

In this paper, the analysis of *An American Brat* (1994) as a single novel by Bapsi Sidhwa is limited to one theoretical point of view namely the Re-Orientalism scheme offered by Lisa Lau (2009). The study limits itself to the discussion of the ways in which the novel represents the Pakistani culture, culture of gender and identity on the basis of a diasporic perspective. It does not take into account the work of Sidhwa as well as other works of South Asian diasporic literature. Also, merely a textual analysis of the novel is applied to the study and no reader reception or authorial intent other than that which is publicly reported is included in the study. The idea is that, employing the boundaries to be used the literary criticism perspective should be narrowed to ensure the findings of the research study are deep and clear.

2 Literature Review

Edward Said has established the principles of reading the discourse of the peculiarly oriented exotic East in the form of an inferior Other through his masterpiece work *Orientalism* (1978). According to Said, when one considers Orientalism to be a scholarly discipline, it is only part of the picture; it is a type of knowledge production and construes Western domination legitimate and feasible. He argues that images of the East elaborated in the West are so ingrained in colonial relations of power that the Orient is merely frozen, irrational and backward replacing the rational, modern and superior West. This framework by Said is a crucial tool in this paper since, it unravels the historical context of cultural stereotyping, and it preconditions the perception of how such patterns still thrive even today, even in the context of diaspora. His concepts happen to form the backbone of the pure theoretical frameworks of the way Lisa Lau conceptualizes Re-Orientalism, and this research attempts to apply the concept within *An American Brat* (1994).

Even beyond the time between her writing and the publication of his text, Lisa Lau (2009) offers an expansion of Said, under the theme of Re-Orientalism; the tendency of diasporic South Asian writers to recapitulate Orientalist stereotypes unwittingly, especially when writing in English and especially when they are women. Lau notes that there are three essential aspects of Re-Orientalism, which include the use of known representations to seek cultural identification, manifold generalization of poetic cultures and mixture of autobiography and fiction to bolster perceived verisimilitude. According to Lau, the strategies usually result in repackaging of the Eastern cultures to suit Western consumption. It is within the confines of this theory that her theory is particularly relevant to the current research. It helps analyse in detail how even within a context such that the author, Bapsi Sidhwa is culturally linked to Pakistan, she may still prompt or employ forms of narrative that is accommodating to the western viewpoint. In the works by Lau, there is presented an analytical framework with which the specific work is evaluated in regards to cultural representation and formation of identity, *An American Brat* (1994).

The South Asian diaspora has been discussed by scholars like Vijay Mishra (1996) and Homi K. Bhabha (1994) concerning their identity politics of complex nature. The concept known in the work of Mishra as the diasporic imaginary is frequently found in the cultural and cultural

experience of displacement, nostalgia, as well as hybrid identity. In the same way, the subject of the third space by Bhabha can be used to explain how the diasporic as an individual achieves a balance between his/her culture and the host culture, which result in the invention of new, hybrid identities. These structures are useful to drawing Feroza Ginwalla of *An American Brat* (1994) as she battles her way through Eastern values and Western liberties which is characteristic of greater diasporic tensions. This scholarship supports the claim that diasporic narratives are more than merely individual testimonies, and hence they can be positioned as political action because they appeal to the issues of power, belonging, and representation.

Critical reception to *An American Brat* (1994) has tended to concentrate on the issues of coming-of-age story, feminism and the depiction of East vs. West conflict issues within the film. The researchers (Feroza Jussawalla 2005) and Deepika Bahri (2012) also observed that Sidhwa offers a subtle imagery of a young girl trying to maneuver between two opposing cultures. Nevertheless, other critics measure that the novel has a danger of sustaining an unfavourable stereotype of Pakistan as a place, that is dangerously patriarchal and culturally retrogressive especially when compared against the emancipating American environment. These criticisms punctuate with the issues that the theory of Re-Orientalism by Lau has raised. Although being a diaspora gives Sidhwa an opportunity to bring a critique against certain components of her own cultural sphere, it is possible that these critiques are outlined in ways that end up producing reductive generalizations. Such mixed responses point to why we need to be much more critical about the roles that authenticity and representation play in diasporic writing.

3. Methodology

This paper is a qualitative research study based on interpretative-cum-explanatory methods of such a nature, this paper argued through textual analysis the representation of Re-Orientalism in the novel, *An American Brat* by Bapsi Sidhwa (1994). The qualitative research best fits the study since it gives an opportunity to analyze the plot, themes, and writing styles of the novel in detail. The overall purpose is to reveal the ways of discursive pattern and cultural representation as background to the Re-Orientalisms in depicting South Asian identity and culture. The methodology in question is interpretative and focuses on the meanings that make the text not on the spreadsheets.

3.1 Data collection tools

Textual analysis, a close and methodical reading of the novel constitutes the major instrument to collect data in the present research. Textual analysis will make it possible to locate the repetitive themes, motifs, narrative strategies and characterizations ranging vertical with the traits of Re-Orientalism as theorized by Lisa Lau. Words used in a passage that indicate cultural recognition, generalization and obscuring fiction and autobiography is highlighted and critically analyzed. The primary source is supplemented by secondary sources such as literary criticism, theories and articles by other scholars on Orientalism and diaspora, literatures on and about it.

3.2 Sample

This study sample is purposely taken and is composed of only one novel by Bapsi Sidhwa *An American Brat* (1994). The novel is selected since it represents the most crucial theme of diasporic identity, cultural dispute and negotiation across East-West binaries which makes the title qualifies as a perfect case study in terms of Re-Orientalist discourse. There is attention to this one text specifically in order to give a detailed and concise exploration of its content, narration framework, and representations of culture in the context of the research aims. No additional novels or texts will be used to be able to keep the analysis specific and deep.

3.3 Theoretical framework

This study has a theoretical background of a concept of Re-Orientalism proposed by Lisa Lau (2009) that was established as an expansion to an original concept created by Edward Said (Orientalism). In *Orientalism* (1978), Said criticises Western depiction of the East which is a form of cultural domination to create the Orient as inferior, frozen and exotic Other. Lau Re-Orient herself onto diasporic South Asian authors making it clear that even though they share culture, through the practices of narration they cannot help but replicate the orientalist stereotypes. According to Lau, there are three key features of Re-Orientalism:

Cultural Recognition: Idealizing the story by highlighting stereotypical aspects of culture to validate the story among the westerners.

Generalization and Totalization: Representing the culture as monolithic whereby negative or backward factors are usually highlighted.

Truth Claims: The ambiguity between fiction and autobiography to claim truth and truthfulness.

This framework can be used mostly in discussion of *An American Brat* (1994) because it concerns the twin positioning of the diasporic author who must mediate between the insider viewpoints and outsider visions. Using the theory put forward by Lau, the present study will analyse how the narrative strategies implemented by Sidhwa can lead to the diversion and re-appropriation of the South Asian cultural identity in the diasporic literature.

4. First Problem: The Necessity of Being Recognizably South Asian

Re-Orientalism has been characterized by the fact that, diasporic people, who belong to the same culture, can export their own, individual, Orientalist stance towards their own culture and identity. This mostly cannot be satisfied by the desire to experience and to be a part of authenticity and to be in touch with their roots - at the same time work in a new cultural milieu. The relations of power in this process become marked out by the Re-Orientalism as the diasporic authors are turned into the insider and the outsider as well as the proficient of the culture and the keeper of the traditional values. Psychological therapy will be the initial course of action as it will be in place in the treatment of the injured individuals (Lau, 2009, p. 572).

Sidhwa appears like an outsider as she tries to provide a foreign opinion on a culture that she does not feel actually belongs to. Her characterization perceives the interest of a foreigner attempting to offer herself and her readers, a distant and alien culture of the western view. In the case of the narration of the story of Feroza, she displays a Westernized character, an Orientalism facade and how she fits in the Re-Orientalism. In essence Sidhwa is an Orientalized oriental who is existentially situated to the East or the West depending on which way one gets the spiritual sustenance through the West. It is an orientalism of exteriority... Orientalism is the discourse which speaks about the orient and explains its mysteries to and about the west. It is also overwhelming to feel that one must do this (Said, 1978, p. 20).

Sidhwa reinstates the Orientalist images through her suffocation of backwardness and inferiority of Muslims and Islam in *An American Brat* (1993). The fact that she out rightly maligns the very Islam in addition to Pakistan serves as contributing to stereotypes that convey inaccurate impressions of Islamic norms and people of Pakistan. Talking about such wave of Fundamentalism at the time then in the 1970s, in the first chapter Zareen, in describing the state of their daughter Feroza, tells her husband about this situation. Zareen says that she is getting more and more backward with every day (Sidhwa, 1994, p. 9). This aspect that Zareen is worried that her daughter Feroza will grow up a backward human being can be thought of as the case of Re-Orientalism.

These fears show elements of colonisation of rigid cultural values and norms thus tend to represent the feeling of Orientalism that covers an area perception of the fixed and essentialised version on the same. In addition to that, cultural caution and concern is expressed by the fact that when Feroza is worried about being sociable with strangers she is not willing to answer

the phone. Zareen is now claiming that Feroza would not even touch the phone. What would befall in case it is someone I do not identify myself with? Born to a British family, Julie is a peripheral blood comprising of perfumes which led to the death of people (Sidhwa, 1994, p. 10). The reaction can be considered to be the reaction to the phenomenon of the Orientalists because of which the interaction between strangers is perceived as the threat to the traditional values and norms. This fits into this concept of Re-Orientalism and its author Lau because the diasporic writers of a female gender over emphasize the aspects of their ethnicity as a methodology in order to justify their culture.

Later, in future Zareen complains about the attitude of Feroza. She recalls, as narrated by Zareen, how she was called to get her daughter (Feroza), in school; where she told her, Mummy, Please, don't transit to school, to have on love that way (Sidhwa, 1994, p. 10). Zareen goes berserk, saying, she was offended to have sleeveless sari-blouse! Actually, this claustrophobic mentality, which is being publicized by General Zia (Fundamentalism) is infesting to her too" (Sidhwa, 1994, p. 10). General Zia is also not an exception because the behavior of Feroza was as a result of the narrow minded stance of General Zia according to the statement the character made. This can be compared to the political aspect covered in the text where it is mentioned that everything is governed by politics, martial law to be specific and religion dictates everything about the Pakistani way of life. Ours awhile it suggests a relationship of power between regime on the political playing field and the citizens and Zareen is importing the power of General Zia down to her personal level and believes that the mind and demeanor of her daughter are being manipulated by the General and by meanness. It may be discussed concerning the power relations and the Orientalist vision of the East as the place, where there is no progress or the power of the oppressing governments. Moreover, it is possible to state that the reading may be viewed as observance of the manner in which eagerly the authors of the diaspora help to reproduce the stereotypes and cultural regulations of the motherland. They end up propagating the notion of the us versus them mentality developing the perception of the east is backward as compared with the west.

Taking into consideration the concept created by the Lisa Lau, Re-Orientalism, it seems that the text brings an opinion that Sidhwa is bargaining her place within the boundaries of being the insider and the outsider. The picture might be occasioned by the necessity to keep in touch with her origins and transforming to a new setting. This duality can lead to some cultural attributes being down-graded so as to assert her identity. The western reader requires flesh and blood glimpses of the oriental culture and what he needs is a superficiality rather than depth. He wants to know and he does not want to know in the full sense. You are free to put your toes in the mystical waters of the East with all its exotic connotations and you can fret at being drowned (Shivani, 2006, p. 5). *An American Brat* (1993) offers numerous useless day to day relations of the Pakistani society. All this comes in the very name of local colouring of the novel. But, behind that, there is still another more lurking purpose, a scrambling after the wanted authenticity. Sidhwa clarifies that an attack happened in the middle of the fare of Feroza where all the relatives and guests are looking relaxed and enjoying the moment in the garden. Then a clamour of that of which they could not make out what it was the cause, arrested their breathing. They more or less at the same time heard that the stereo at the Market mosque was being tested. There was a cough that whirled along the air. and cleared his throat with a squelchy undertones, and he roared a great and impressive and squelchy ahun-haam! to the full satisfaction of his art, and the great, and the impressive, and the squelchy, ahun-haam! was dispatched along the eight loudest stereo amplifiers in Lahore -situated right on the top of the minaret of the mosque." (Sidhwa, 1994, p. 45)

That is why such chaotic image is also the reflection of the Forster, *A Passage to India* that believes the East the chaotic and uncivilization can never match the Western palates. The

corruption and abuse of power sensationalism may not prove to be much out of place in the West but it goes well into their developed perception of the East. Another well-known literary philosopher notes this by further stating what has been already stated above about this, namely that it is another of the useful functions of the picturesque, Orientalizing in this instance, to check, that the people comprehended in that frame, and having their identity by its introduction, are imperatively alien to, more backward than, and intellectually inferior to those who creates the product, and consumes it. Their Otherness is set in stone.”

The issue of the absence of diversity is grounded on the fact based on the state of art whereby the women were certainly not factored in the category of people who could be utilized as artists. The work of art is a production based on the interests of the culture; the viewer is given the work of art by which to determine the next position in the culture (Nochlin, 1989, p. 51).

The Western readers take delight in reading about the unknown and the peculiar activities in a book. This satisfies their voyeurizing desires and it therefore makes it an appetizing spectacle. Eschew is brought in when such a depiction is averred to be metamorphosing the ugly into the beautiful in order to sell. Indigenous writers are strategically making use of the foreign sounding words and phrases to illustrate the indigenous culture to foreigners silently. According to the statement, sometimes the notion of exotic culture is referred to in the west not only when the descriptions of the cultural practice have been presented but in some cases even foreign sounding phrases would be used to produce an effect of a foreign-culture. According to Shivani, smoking cigarettes also brings more than just its economic benefits, as every person who has been exposed to cigarette smoking is at risk of developing lung cancer, and it is due to the risks of contracting lung cancer that most developed countries have set up institutions to help people quit the use of cigarettes (Shivani, 2006, p. 2).

An American Brat (1993) too is filled with images and language that will alienate the western audience. The first chapter is a narrative of the conversation that follows between Zareen and her husband who is the epitome of Eastern article which is quite comprehensive. Zareen insults her husband by saying that she should not wear sleeveless blouses because she runs around and gets drunk in the evening. I know that you think my sari-blouses are too short, but short enough not to be as short as my sister’s choli. At least I am not wandering about flaunting my navel (Sidhwa, 1994, p. 12). This is the one that involves the depiction of the east that only acts as a representation of an exotic nation to be commercially exploited by the west. Deplored by Huggans in his book *The Postcolonial Exotic*, in fact, it is considered as a form of exploitation of the culture by purpose in order to feed the desire of Western consumption. It turns out to be the case because of the doubts and misconceptions one might have about the environment being encountered, or rather, the nature of the environment that is being encountered (Huggans (1994) p. 60).

Another strategy employed by re-Oriental writers to appease the Western reader is the usage of an unknown language. Reading words that are new and unusual would simply be a pleasure to the western audiences. The whole range of the Urdu and Punjabi vocabulary the list is not exhaustive here is used in *An American Brat* (1993), e.g. afeemi, anjuman, atash, baap, badmash, baijee, begum, bibi, burqa, bus kar, chadar, chitta, choli, dhoopkar, dal, dhoti, dopatta, fakir, ghazal, goonda, gora, chitta, gup-shup, haveli, heejra, The presence of local color is so ingrained in the novel in the sense that, the local language is utilized so as to get a sense of what the western readers are used to experience to have a flavor of the unfamiliar to them and an exotic environment.

An American Brat (1993) is placed in Lahore in the 1970s and it occurs in the scale of political uproar of the times and the permeating scandalousness and additionally outlines the sufferings of its residents. The extensive way of using stories of disadvantaged women, the marked difference between the rich and the poor, a revolution and a vivid account of riots, commotion,

instability, lockouts, strikes, and shutter-downs are just the few characteristics that have been prevalent in the modern English literature in South Asia. Such an amalgamation is likely to be brought out as a clever rearrangement of old-tried stuff with few or very slight implications. This is not a recent recourse to pretty-much hokum patterns at all because these kinds of descriptions pop up in novel after novel. Even best authors of such caliber as Tariq Ali or Mohsin Hamid cannot help themselves and resort to unbelievable simplistic and reductive interpretations of Pakistan.

The Pakistani English writers also have a criticism by Snehal Shingavi (2013) who, in a talk, with Bilal Rasheed, appears to take an advantage of getting a crack at suggesting that the regime of Zia was particularly repressive in contrast to the more free regimes that followed that of Bhutto and Musharraf. Shingavi presumes that this preoccupation can be owed to the childhood years experienced under Zia that has predisposed an over consideration with regards to the state, the military and religious experts of the individuals who have written in English in the 1990s and the 2000s. Even though it becomes clear that both Zia and Musharraf should be criticized, Shingavi continues to state that these writers are pre-disposed to superseding the prominence of these regimes with the exclusion of the other aspect of the Pakistani which is of an intricate nature... Shingavi goes further to say that, although it is a fact that the rule of atrocities of Zia was there, many of such writers in their work reveal a dominant nostalgia of era of Bhutto. (Shingavi, 2013)

The biggest criticism ever pointed out by Pakistan English fiction is its never ending interest in political matters and small novels have continued to emancipate themselves out of the political uncertainties which have been going on in this country. Because of this, the literary arena of Pakistan is even being condemned to be so focused over what is happening. With the formulaic approach to the illustration of the political upheavals the Pakistani writers of fiction end up being in the second welfare position as it were with regards to the western ones. This is the perception, which generally comes to be as a primitive country in most aspects of the world.

Politics occupies a leading role in *An American Brat* (1993) as one thing that echoed the long years of dictatorship under Zia. The military regime has always been blamed on most of the current challenges that have remained to plague the country. In the novel, one constantly hears the mentioning of the chaotic situation in the country Pakistan. Zareen to Cyrus:

“I wore frocks when I was her age and rode a bicycle to Kinnaird College. And this was in 1959 and 1960 fifteen years after Partition! Is she permitted to wear frocks? No. Don t make your legs show, don t dress up like that, don t act like this, it was said about women. Girls are not allowed to think, play hockey, sing or dance! Then why not show them a pair of burqas and keep them inside the four walls of their homes because everything seems to corrupt their pious little minds so easily! (Sidhwa, 1994, p. 10)

In this case, Zareen is griping about the conservative and limiting traits that have been forced down the throat of women and this is how she finds herself irritated by the fact that the societal conditioning forms a part of the decision that women make. She pronounces on what women are not supposed to do using the reference to the mullahs wearing burqas to give the signal that she is to construct simplification and stereotyping of expectations that the society would demand to be met by the woman. This keeps the notion alive that women must adhere to extreme gender and cultural practices. To make this message even more effective, Sidhwa asserts that, in Pakistan, everything one does in conducting his or her daily life was being

influenced by goings on in the country; politics was partaking a special brew: martial law and religion (Sidhwa, 1994, p. 11). This follows the idea of overcompensating since Sidhwa is trying to create a strong identity of the South Asians in the diaspora.

4.1 Second Problem: Generalizations and Totalisations:

This is one of the meanings of the two terms; generalization and totalization; To make wider the importance of something particular. (Vocabulary.com)

The other definition clarifies that it is an utterance spoken and written in which you say or write that something is always the case when it is only sometimes the case. (Cambridge Dictionary)

The second aspect that is mentioned by Lau I is the blending of generalizations and totalization in the works of the diasporic writers. Such authors tend to represent the statements that appear to be of an said-norm rather than of an exception. According to Lau, out of this phenomenon of negative re-orientation there are actually many ways that can be said to bring about this phenomenon. Lau believes that such generalization and totalization of a culture may be due to the cold commercial intentions of exoticizing so that more sales are made (Lau, 2009, pp. 584-585). This might be also the case because these authors because of their continual renegotiation of their identity will always want to lay claim to one type of knowledge (insider status) and at the same time in some ways to roll themselves out (so as to achieve the lesser status of knowledge informant or delegate). As Lau points out (2009, p. 585), that is not so.

The situation when the main characters are thrown out of the society due to their defiant behaviors, the attempts of them to act upon their own rights is the most favorite thing which Sidhwa likes to demonstrate to her characters. Her narrations are the wellsprings of the information about the world that would be retrogressively in her western readers where women are accepted as the subjects of subordination and they are silly murdered in the name of honor. It is a social system women are in marginal social position and it reflected the western perception of the Orient. Looking at woman as non-people with no ability to act or choice to make, perform to spread Western ideas. The western outlooks are inclined to present the third-world women as miserable depressive people. The topic matter seems to suggest that the oriental ladies are wanting to be freed up of the male domination which is generally viewed as the white woman as enlightenment as the knight in shining armour. According to the study of Rahman (2010), the digital revolution has created an exciting and interesting world to live in (p. 57).

It is stated by Zareen in chapter one at the very start of the book when she is talking of the situation as it was at the time she is saying to Cyrus: suppose Feroza was riding a bicycle to school now. a freak she would be! Such goondas would grunt at vulgar noises and bang her about and the mullahs would make sure she had something to cover her head with. Instead of going forward, we are going back. God and the harmony which the latter demonstrates his creation are all about the essence that all men share common traits even though they are diverse in nature (Sidhwa, 1994, p. 11).

In this case, Zareen laments that the situation is backward as, in the event that her child Feroza tried to cycle to school on a bicycle, she would be harassed and beaten up since she is not conforming to the conservative gender perceived norms. It is an illustration of how there were gendered limits and how Orientalise stereotypes of female oppression held true. In the postcolonial feminist views of Lila Abu-Lughod, in the case of the representations of the category of the Orientalism, crude stereotypes are applied to the Muslim woman, the author mentions that the latter is a rep-resentation... created by a chain of discourses of Orientalism which manufactures an imagined figure (Lughod, 2013, p. 20). She also mentions that this

builds stereotypes, overlooks problems of different cultural diversities and produces a very skewed image of how mixed societies and people operate.

4.2 The third Problem: The Claims of Truth

The definition of the concept of the truth claim is one of the definitions which proposes that the truth claim is the statement or a statement which is a proposition which a given person or a system of beliefs follows. (HandWiki.org)

The other definition is as following, a hypothesis this is an idea that is not yet proved by the experience correct. transparent; visible; clear (Collins Dictionary) transparent; visible; clear (Dictionary.com)

The diasporic authors may even say that they visit reality to select certain things in the novel, and therefore they have no limits to differentiate the fiction and autobiography. What I mean by this is the case in point an author pens down a story that has so many similarities to his or her own life-story yet a story that probably glorifies as well as rationalizes the acts of the main character in said story but a story that the author pens down under the pretence that it is fiction (Lau, 2009, p. 585). Whereas this is a fiction story, the setting is fictitious, there are moments when this story connects to the writer herself who is a diasporic writer. This proximity to personal experience allows the author to go a step further into the authenticity. As (Lau, 2009, p. 586) adds, paternal support (memorandum) should never be left in the hands of the person who does it. This is because it is always the preparing organisation which must be the one preparing it.

In many cases, it is possible to establish the apparent similarity with the life experience of the author and therefore the easy identification thereof. This implies that there is a claim of truth even though there is no direct declaration of this which presents a skewed and prejudiced picture of a particular culture. According to Lau, although there are some diasporic writers who present the contents of a new culture as a part of a greater image, overall focus in diasporic writing can be seen to still be trying to assert the polarity of the alternative between the Orient and the Occident.

Speaking about representation of culture, Said states that: Orientalism is a kind of thinking that presupposes distinction, ontological and epistemological, between the Orient and (most of the time) the Occident (Said, 1978, p. 2). In *An American Brat* (1993), right before our eyes Sidhwa does seem to be placing real-life amidst the narrative of Feroza to perhaps subvert the fombre of fiction and autobiography. In the fourth chapter, Sidhwa gives the situation that lies at the airport as Feroza goes to Denver in Pakistan. She narrates,

Rohinton, a heavy, determined monosyllabic, took two solid strides, and, in the person of two gentlemen who were cleaning their teeth, watched the girls with swaggering kohl-rimmed eyes, he said, Stop! The men blundered off the path fatter than gentle. The uncle had all the rights as he was in the custody of the girls. and afterwards Rohinton, having Behram present, the brother of Zareen, who __ paced a circuit of breadth round the girls, ranging bounds. They had seen a bunch of college students ogle at the girls and make cracks. __ illeshello tight had seen a bunch of college yellows looking at the girls and making jags. Three aunts marched to them. 'Oye, shamelesses! And mothers, sisters, have ye not? She says, go and look at them.' (Sidhwa, 1994, p. 49)

One of the ways in which the possible truth claim between cultural difference and societal expectation between the West and the East was created by the author on the lines of how the protagonist, Feroza met on a social gathering is one possible way. The implication of the culture difference is the fact that both Cyrus and Zareen brothers save/rescue their sister who

in turn have gone too far in terms of ogling and other unwarranted advances towards girls. Bapsi Sidhwa introduces the protective attitude as one of the guardian practices, which could be a forced cultural imperative to which she could either relate to her views or her biography. Similarly, the actions of the college boys may be seen as the manifestation of the Orientalist gaze that is likely to transform the girls into the objects of infatuation and poking fun at them. The fact that the aunts are engaged in a fight by students shows a kind of contradiction between the cultural values because the aunts come out to protect the dignity of the girls with all the mechanisms available to them, and this might come out as the author is an ally to Sidhwa in terms of demands of the society and the need to be somehow sheltered in new environments. The phenomenon of Orientalism is characterized with the help of the Western gaze (Edward Said). As it is said by him, Orient is surveilled because its behavioral issues appear to be of the Almost noise (but not quite) kind and thus can be viewed as the result of the reservoir of the infinite peculiarity that exists beneath (Said, 1978, p. 103). They talk about the new life of Sidhwa in the new world (America) as she states the opposite contrary to what it is stated before:

and, besides, and when they were indifferently occupied in their own concerns, here and there not even turned their heads, or looked on them at all, even, or gazed at her, at that, as they too would have done, in Pakistan. The author (Sidhwa) argues: she was unknown by anyone and no one knew her! The emotion of being so suddenly free, at least, of all that thousand of restraints, which governed her life was intoxicating." It is in this sense that (Sidhwa, 1994, p. claims that: (58)

Here Sidhwa gives us the initial encounter of Feroza to the new world and that is America and it is departure of the probing of the society in Pakistan. The fact that they were not following culturally accepted norms that Feroza was accustomed to can be seen in such statement as nobody, not even the people...had even bothered to take a look in their direction or stare at Feroza. Bapsi emphasizes the concept of a feeling of freedom that Feroza experiences in this new place. putting emphasis on absence of those restrictions which originated her life in Pakistan. This type of depiction is an argument towards the truth ruling out the attitude of the author toward the distances between culture as well as the influence of the new acquired freedom in the false anonymity of a U.S. background.

Experiences that take place in the real life in majority of the instances are intercepted and the diasporic women writers adhere them to their fiction works. Other attributes of their workings include the portrayal of their home society as a patriarchal society and the characters depicted to work in their fictions seem to be in a dilemma trying to do away with patriarchy. Patriarchy is stated as a social structure where the power of the society is organized to males, a kind of subordination and superior bond between the subordination and dominating of the male population that makes the collective giving the case result into an overall relationship of subordination and dominance between the two-sexes. Male supremacy is not only a set of scattered instances of male superiority, but also such multiplex hierarchy that is intertwined and so deep-seated in numerous organizations and constructs, and can be no more and no less than economic, political, religious, cultural and family domains. In *An American Brat* (1993), Sidhwa develops the ways through which politics (patriarchy) have their influences on the life of individuals and even more on women in Pakistan. She argues,

Pakistani politics was not everybody but everybody business in the respect that it was directly linked to every individual including the women, the way they were to dress, whether to or not play hockey in schools, how they had to behave even behind the four walls of their houses. It is talked about as regards to the way their members treat others and how they will treat you in the rest of the world (Sidhwa, 1994, p. 171).

This argument that everyone is personally interested in politics in Pakistan because it dictates what people wear, in schools, even how people behave in the homes etc conveys a statement commenting on the intensity of the involvement of people through the instrument of politics that decides over the aspects of their lives and even individual freedoms. The difference that this very depiction brings is that, the experience or observation of the author is connected to the fictional work, on a personal level. The narrative is switched to the introspection of Feroza concerning her life in America with Jo. Sidhwa states,

Living together with Jo, Feroza could come to realize that she could come to understand Americans and their exotic culture; the extent to which an abstract principle like freedom could encompass and how numerous the rights that the people had but, as well as, how their rights were exercised and not like in Pakistan where the people were in a coma upon those rights being rested on a constitution. A person like Jo was able to ascertain her rights in the law and in event that she had to Jo could demand accountability of state. In all of this, she gave tribute to the watchdog work which a free press had done."

This is one party which is actually insistent on ensuring that things turn out right and this it has done on many occasions (Sidhwa, 1994, p. 171).

According to one researcher, the western liberalism with an emphasis on freedom and autonomy of a person is conventionally employed in evaluating other cultures and hence an order of moral values is created (Mahmood, 2005, p. 14). Another backdrop is the narration of Feroza as she lives with Jo in the United States as this produced a contrasting impression as the range of freedom that the society is thought to have and rights of a person in the society in the United States are mentioned. Also, through her possible truth claim, Sidhwa is not entirely wrong in some of the truths due to the indication of abstract ideas, e.g., the initiation of the notions of freedom and lie dependently active nature of the rights as compared to the lack of knowledge of the ideas in Pakistan.

Based on the Orientalist discourses, the western media is unbiased, objective and dedicated in untangling injustices. Feroza saying that she appreciates the watchdog aspect of the free press as a means of reaching some level of accountability goes further to make the author feel the way he does about the way the democratic institutions in the U.S. operate and could be an indication of the values and principles that Sidhwa thinks is significant. Nevertheless, the juxtaposition promotes the Orientalism theory of the West as being superior to the East in all aspects concerning life. In her interweaving of facts and Feroza gives support to her (philosophical) explanations of the variations between the two cultures, Sidhwa uses the observations, the experiences of the character to put forth her ideas of the differences; a way of making the character a servant of her personal ideologies.

And then there is the other play *An American Brat* (1993) where the observation of Zareen is showcased upon the arrival of Feroza. Pakistan, a pointer of the potential perceptions that the author had on the change in the society. Bapsi Sidhwa seems to be expressing a truth claim in the story of Zareen about the evolving sociopolitical landscape in Pakistan during the time. Zareen speaks of how the focus of the people on martyrdom of Bhutto has moved to the new focus, of legality, or in other words, to introduction of the Haddood Ordinances by General Zia in 1979 and creation of the Federal Shariat Court.

Zareen tells Feroza:

"The new knavery in them had snuck on, and because they lacked foresight had gave them a jump on one occasion by shocking them on, hearing of a case of the Famida and Allah Baksh. Adultery was accused by the father of the girl as the couple had run away and she wanted to marry him. They were to be stoned to death." Their eyes are measured according to their self-respect or how they look at

themselves to be. About 90 percent of the illegal immigrants are unemployed. This means 9 out of 10 illegally immigrants are unemployed” (Sidhwa, 1994, p. 236).

The above probable truth claim is provided with another depth through the reference to the Famida and Allah Baksh case. The case regarding the accusation of adultery and the cruel treatment of stoning people to death becomes an eye opener to the reader in the way in which the writer portrays how these law changes has impacted the lives of the people. By incorporating all this into her tale, Sidhwa helps readers conceptualize how she feels about the complexities of the Pakistani society as well as how the conditions of cultural and religious norms are evolving.

Considering the further idea of Zareen expressed in the narration, the case of Safia Bibi can be regarded as another truth-statement of the vision of the author in regards to the wrongs of society and ramifications of judicial reforms. Zareen explains to Feroza that:

“But the shock that provoked the massive wave of public indignation came with Safia Bibi’s case. The blind sixteen-year-old servant girl, pregnant out of wedlock as a result of rape, was charged with adultery. She was sentenced to three years rigorous imprisonment, fifteen lashes, and a fine of a thousand rupees. _Safia Bibi’s father, in bringing charges against her assailant, had been unwittingly trapped by the Zina Ordinance. It required the testimony of four ‘honorable’ male eye-witnesses or eight female eyewitnesses to establish rape. The startled women, who had enjoyed equal witness status under the previous law, realized that their worth had been discounted by fifty percent. _Since it was scarcely possible to produce four male eye-witnesses given the private nature of the crime, the blind girl’s testimony against the assailant was not admissible. Being sightless, she was not considered a reliable witness. Since rape could not be proved, she was charged under a subcategory of rape: ‘fornication outside the sanctity of marriage.’” (Sidhwa, 1994, p. 236)

Not only does Bapsi Sidhwa present the example of Safia Bibi and thus demonstrate how the courts have been institutionally discriminating and the agonized results of the marginalized individuals in the Pakistani court system. The contrast of the innocence and powerlessness of Safia Bibi, with the exigencies of the Zina Ordinance brings out the ugly side of gender discrimination and of deprivation of the right of women by wearing the mask of religion. Similarly, we can say that that the fact that Safia Bibi cannot get justice due to some discriminatory clauses of law is something that the author says to be the truth claim of his/her statement about the adverse effects of such law on individuals that are less privileged in the society.

On the same note, Sidhwa has expressed her views by introducing the character of Zareen through *An American Brat* (1993). Zareen attributes the backwardness tendency to the increased influence of religion where she says that mullahs instruct the individuals to be conservative and the source of women wrapping their heads. This is a sign of the cross-border of religion and politics in the formation of postulates or norms in the society that has been perpetrating discrimination in Pakistan and Islam simply because of stereotyping. The statement that Zareen tells Feroza about not being able to ride a bicycle to their school so casually and without putting other members of the society out of their harms way due to social dictations and cultural conventions puts more stress on the fact, that respecting of traditional values and the cultural norms is what is expected and that it puts the freedom of that individual in chains. This is the repressive social norms and values that go in line with the issue of

generalizations and totalizations of literature as a component of diasporic women of South Asia.

Sidhwa herself a diasporic writer also examines the tendency of the diasporic writers to make their home nation the Other in the western nation in *An American Brat* (1993). The same manner used by Sidhwa in retaining the cultural overtones also contributes unfortunately to re-orientalizing process. Similarly, to her counterparts, east too is a hinting that Sidhwa portrays the Muslim Women in the east as many a time are voiceless and seem not to be welcome in the work place scenario. It is a pity that such minimalist and negative images of the Eastern Muslim woman might create the idea that Islam is oppressing and promotes submissive way of thinking towards the female sex. This ongoing portrayal of the women in the East in this manner may be a stumbling block in the process of gaining positive inclinations towards the East and Islam.

There is also the lack of an existence of the reality that the Eastern Muslim women could positively contribute in their communities as well as be actively part of the other aspects of the society as any other ethnicity. Agreeing with the suggestion by Lisa Lau about ReOrientalism, the name of one of the books- *An American Brat* (1993) actually suggests that Sidhwa is a writer of diaspora, who is an insider and outsider at the same time. Yet, the movie *An American Brat* (1993) looks at the unavoidable results of the diasporic literature very gently in the reproduction of the falsehood of the west every time to the east.

The primary aspects, which are evident in *An American Brat* (1993) include language and ethnic practices as the form of cultural transmission that also serves as vehicles of the conveying rite. There are various complications in cultural issues that tend to romanticize the culture to the foreign reader, and they tend to concentrate on some theme rather than looking at the positivity in it. It appears to be either trivial or unusual in its appreciation even when there are positive features there, in either case. This is a propensity to avoid putting a display of wholesome pictures and draws attention to the hollows by themselves. Through this analysis, a belief is established that either consciously or unconsciously these Pakistani writers of English fiction use the tool of the Orientalists to describe the native culture in order to attract the attention of the stronger western market.

Lau asserts that the influential status of the diasporic writers tend to be associated with an issue of insecurity in their self-identities. These writers make their way in a so-called hybrid culture, which also includes aspects of Western and Oriental cultures. They are the puzzles of self, disjointed and still lacking a shape since they do not quite fit in the East or the West fully. As chameleons, they are able to take a combination of previous and present experiences and most of the time they allude to far-flung locations (Lau, 2009, p. 581). Lau claims that given the incoherent state of their identity formation, diasporic authors are struggling with the validity of their diasporic literature. They have different strategies to overcome this predicament.

To some writers, validation is something very active and thus they consult with the locals in order to make sure that the manuscripts they are writing are accurate. Other people on the other hand have a different view and see authenticity as something unimportant and they continue to write without any hindrance. There exists, however, a group of diasporic writers who in their insistence on their authenticity do not explore all the nuances of identities and subsequently present an oversimplified, stereotyped, and sensationalized picture of culture (Lau, 2009, p. 581). They tend to read audiences who are assumed to be unfamiliar with the culture under representation. Lau is opposed to this strategy since it re-oriented the genre of literature connected to a certain country or region and continues to eradicate distortion, inaccuracies in the depiction of the culture (Lau, 2009, p. 581).

In brief, the *An American Brat* (1993) by Sidhwa fits into the scheme by Lau (2009) of ReOrientalism in terms of highlighting familiar aspects of culture, making generalizations, and

claim to a truth. These representational choices participate in the harmful re-orientalizing process as they may oversimplify and misrepresent the cultural images of the East again supporting the western readers orientation about the East in their mind in terms of orientalist stereotyp.

5 Findings and Conclusion

In *An American Brat* (1994), it can be seen that the novel has most of the elements of Re-Orientalism as suggested by Lisa Lau. Primarily, the cultural recognition demonstrates itself in the setting that Sidhwa knowingly highlights expression of familiar cultural artefacts in the form of religious conservatism, gender prohibitions and male domination in Pakistan. All these are used as a way of authenticating the narrative to the Western readers and at the same time inviting stereotypes.

The second element is generalization and totalization, which can often be found in the novel Pakistan description. The story is likely to give an impression of the country and the culture as homogenous oppressive with very little mention of the diversity or the things that are progressive. The family and social background of Feroza is depicted as highly against change thus giving the impression of a rigid backward society. This all-encompassing description is reductionist to the actualities of the Pakistani culture and presents it as an opposite to the American environment, which is more active and liberal.

Third, the fusion of fiction and autobiography brings with it the ambiguity of fiction being in this case and it may lead to misguiding the readers to think that the fictional portrayal is truthful by forming an accurate picture of an entire culture. Sidhwa relies on personal accounts as well as her cultural heritage through which she adds to her criticism fusing the two aspects of reality in fiction. Although this makes sense and makes the protagonist relatable, it leads to the extent of what Lau refers to as the truth claim the cultural attempt to render subjective experience as cultural true fact.

Conclusion

This paper has determined that although Bapsi Sidhwa, *An American Brat* (1994) is a strong exposition of diasporic identity, nevertheless, the book is unintentionally helping to fuel the discourse of Re-Orientalism, because it is reinforcing the stereotypical depiction of the South Asian culture. The novel creates a polarised ideal of a repressive Orient and egalitarian Occident by means of overemphasis, generalisation and truth statements through culture. This model reduces the complexity of culture and can affect how the world views and perceives Pakistan in a simplistic non-culturally conscious way.

The results help to emphasize the ambivalent status of diasporic authors who have to balance between their individual integrity and the cultural commitment. Although Sidhwa seems engaged in an excellent criticism of gender, religion and identity in South Asian regions, her modes of narration, seemingly based on the sensibilities of the audience, tend to partake of Orientalist discourses of representation.

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