

FRAGMENTED SELF: AN EXPLORATION OF POSTMODERNISM AND QUEST FOR IDENTITY IN THE CENTRAL CHARACTERS OF SELECTED PAKISTANI FICTION

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Abstract

*This paper sheds light on the clash between the native and the foreign cultures which fragmented their individual consciousness in the scrutinizing for their individual uniformity. The current study is intended to investigate the tacit confidence in diaspora deterritorialization and its aftermaths in Pakistani literature. Modernism tried to delve into fundamental facts but did not succeed to oppose apprehensions and lawlessness of that era by giving birth to contrary postmodernism. Postmodernism has promoted personal emancipation in form of an individuality. This individuality has given rise to personal identification through confronting identity crisis created by modernism through working of societal, religious, political and socio-cultural positions. Personal identity formation corresponds to functioning of these societal by corresponding another issue of same coin of identity crisis. This research sheds light on internal turmoil of individuals which they have to face while living away from their native land. This study has tried to analyze the functioning of these positions behind the enfeeblement of identity in post-modernism through the textual analysis of the central characters in these novels *The Runaways* by Fatima Bhutto, *Cities of Spies* by Surraya Khan, *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid, *Home Fire* by Kamila Shamsie and *Maps for lost Lovers* by Nadeem Aslam. This paper has used theoretical ideas of Bhabha, Dunn and Hall to assist critical formation of ideas. The findings of this study indicate that identity crisis is the most significant issue in all these novels and their protagonists undergo through this procedure.*

Key Words: Postmodernism, Identity Crisis, De-hyphenated identity, Dislocation, Deterritorialization, Cultural alienation, forced assimilation, Third Space enunciation.

Introduction

According to Desai, a person's obsession in his life is for search for meaning literary works help in discovering, underlining and conveying the true identity. (Desai, 1979).

The development of identity and transparent cultural values are interlinked in postmodern era which Dunn explains that identity is "multiple and fluid" (p. 37). The Commodization of culture plays a significant role in recognizing the status of individual on the basis of shared differences within the constructed contours of society. The most basic focus of Postmodernist Pakistani writers is on the historical, socio-cultural and political development of humanity and individual has become problem in era of postmodernity. Literature of this particular time period is deeply related with issues of identity and strife for existence of individual being. It would not be wrong to argue that postmodernism is highly rooted in the idea of individualism and importance of the existence of individuals.

Due to transformation of cultural practices, identities based on race, ethnicity and gender are engaged in conflict through crisis of identity in postmodernism. Milon (2014) has demonstrated this fluctuation of identity is getting oscillated similarly the formation of identity is getting dissolved for existed material substances (p. 10). This phenomenon has become leading factor in post-war Pakistani literature. This literature promotes existentialism and individualism which

prefers personal identity rather than collective identity. Postmodern Pakistani literature is deeply influenced by postmodernism and addresses its multiple issues. The literary figures of this post-war literature are well renowned in international milieu either postmodernism or post colonialism such as Mohsin Hamid, Bina Shah, Bapsi Sidwa, kamila Shamsie, Nadeem Aslam, Surraya Khan, Fatima Bhutto, etc. These writers pen down to develop public consciousness about their socio-cultural and politico-religious issues. Pakistan fiction emphasizes on fragmented identity, distorted history and the voice of subalterns.

This study investigates how the Post-modern Pakistani Literature highlight the issues of quest for identity, sense of belongingness, homelessness, mental asylum, de-hyphenated identities immigration issues, forced assimilation, rootlessness and impacts of 9/11 on the lives of people in the following novels which have been selected for this study; such as Home Fire, Maps for Lost Lovers, Runaways, Exit West, and City of Spices. Identity plays a vital role while in differentiating the individuals from other members of community. When they explore their identity, they unconsciously delve deep into roots of their native culture. Castles explains that identity is provides the significant meaning to life (Castles, 2010, p. 6). He further develops premises: "The construction of identities uses building materials from history, from geography.....from collective memory and from personal fantasies, from power apparatuses and religious revelations....." (Castles, 2010, p. 7).

Literature Review

This study emphasizes on the complicated issues related to development of identity in Pakistani fiction through post-modern lens. The foreigners living away from their native place suffer from transnational and transcultural identity on the basis of their nationality, class and racial differences. Pakistani Literature investigates the constrict relationships between the East and the West in the form of conflicted civilizations and targeted persons on the basis of racial discriminations. Hall (1996) discusses that "race" should be fully apprehended as a "floating signifier" whose meaning is always in state of flux. The selected novels have addressed the problems of re-articulation of identity due to ethnic discrimination. Diasporic people are treated as "others" in western territory and eastern culture former due to ethnic differences and later due to generational gap. As Edward Said (1978) substantiates the Western superiority over the "others" (east) under the paradigm of multi-layered and cross cultural relationship. Bhabha highlights the issues of dislocation, hybrid identity. During encounter between eastern and western culture, diasporic community have to lose the value and traditions of native land which sometimes lead towards psychological degradation. Dunn states that the individuals of post war era have disintegrated the concept of modernity. In post-modernism, individual is the center of importance and same happens with process of conformation of identity.

Osama (2020) analyzed *The Runaway* by Fatima Bhutto and identified the complicated mixture of ideas of individual, national and transcontinental identities which consequently produced the convoluted fictional cartography. Shaikh & Hussain (2022) highlighted the complex issue of identity due to class consciousness by using Erikson's idea of identity from theory of psychological and social development. The characters' suffering due to destitution, societal stratification, devoid of luxury life and familial affairs in the realm are crucial constituents which lead them to a baffled recognition. Hence, they become the subject of confused identity.

Surrayya Khan in her novel *City of Spies* (2015) addressed the issues and sufferings of America-born Pakistanis in their respective native land. This novel also demonstrates how transcultural values have affected the lives of inhabitants. This portrays the miseries of migrants such as

dislocation, displacement, remembrance of past, rootlessness, loneliness, isolation, and double consciousness and this form of diasporic community searches for self-realization, in the adoptive country. The protagonist, Aliya's struggle in the novel for considering Pakistan as the foreign land indicates Khan's purpose to depict the problems of diasporic community.

(Sundus Javaid, 2021) highlighted that *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid portrays the traumatic experiences of immigrants in foreign countries including; migration issue, forced assimilation, homelessness, decentralization, diaspora space, state of in between and fluctuated identity. Brah 1996 explains 'Diaspora' as detachment from kernel or home that implies de-territorialization and disposition with the idea of multifarious journeys, experienced by Saeed and Nadia. (Mir, 2018) cited in his article that *Exist West* unravels the issues of global migration crisis, racism, mass migration, borders, trans-culturalism and magic realism.

According to Ashraf & Hashmi (2021), *Home Fire* by Shamsie depicts multiple problems which are encountered by Pakistanis living in distant territories specially United Kingdom. With the passage of time, it becomes complicated for diasporic people to acclimatize themselves to the norms, values and traditions of the alien country. Consequently, they endeavor the obliteration of identity and the failure of repositioning of identity in the wake of rampant Islamophobia in the west world. Moreover they also investigated *Maps for Lost Lovers* by Nadeem Aslam in the paradigm of cultural hybridity. This novel sheds light on the issues that are faced by Pakistani family Shamas and Kaukab when they are living in constructed imaginary fictional town 'Dasht-e-Tanhai' in United Kingdom. Aslam demonstrates how they are struggling to preserve their native identity in the multicultural scenario.

Theoretical framework

This study uses the ideas of Hall, Sheffer, Bhabha and Duun as theoretical framework. Their thoughts about identity formation and search for self-realization are being discussed here. This research is qualitative and analytical. Hall argues: Identity is not an unchallengeable process nor it is exactly explained as product with a precise meaning to present again (Hall, 1996, p. 222). He instead of focusing on identity, he gives more attention on how an identity is defined. The basic aim behind this discursive practice is to the keen observation into the procedure that becomes the source of distinguishable politics of identity. He states that political allegiances linked to "politics of location" (Hall, 1996, p. 2). He exposes both sides of representation of identity as portrayal of identity from post-colonial point of view and western politics of distortion. Hall defines identity as "we all write and speak from a specific place and time zone from culture and history which is particular" (Hall, 1994, p.121). He explains the variables that construct the identity of individual that "positioned by and positioned himself" (Hall, 1994, p. 226). He emphasizes that identities are all related to position and representation. Since "representation continually implicates the status and subject cannot be similar as the subject being presented" (Hall, 1994, p. 222). He expresses that each authority of "representation is the regime of fabricated power" (Hall, 1994).

Language and its meanings are socially constructed discourses that shapes individual's personality. He argues that identity is formulated "within the discourse of history and culture. They are subjected to accept the standards of powerful strata of society" (Procter, 2004, p. 26). In the influence of Gramsci's philosophical practices of hegemonic culture, Hall states that fragmented groups are compelled to show consent towards their dominant cultural practices. It indicates that how the peripheries have been treated inhuman, uncanny, uneducated and

uncivilized which Bhabha calls as “Others” in foreign territory (Bhabha, 1994). Thus he proves that individual identity is socially created and positioned phenomenon not a natural process. In his essay Encoding, Decoding, Hall exposes the institutionalized construction of identity (Proctor, 2004, p. 67). The assimilated identity brings an unending sufferings which become unbearable burden upon their souls.

Moreover, Sheffer attempts to investigate how much the Diaspora interacts with both the motherland and the host nation (2003) book *Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad*. Sheffer’s theory gives more importance to the notion of “ethno-nationalism” in order to prospect the politics of diasporas that are completely driven by a sense of native identity which is fueled by “ethnic and national features, tendencies, and familiarities” (Sheffer, 2003, p. 11). There are unoccupied Diasporas that date back to antiquity, the middle ages, and modern times. The continuous efforts of these alienated cultural groups to preserve their identities and bonds with their native territory and other isolated groups from the same nation, while living permanently in host countries far from their own, is a key aspect of this phenomenon.

“Showing solidarity with their groups and their entire nation. Organize and are active in the cultural, social, economic and political sphere. Inhabitants of such Diaspora establish trans-state network that reflect complex relationship among the diaspora, their host countries, their homeland, and international actors” (Sheffer, 2003, p. 10).

Thus, most expatriates have reclaimed their identity, which simultaneously develops nostalgic feelings and rootlessness.

Furthermore, Hybridity is a literary term that often has been used by Bhabha in order to depict the blending or loss of identities in his book the *Location of Culture* (1994). It comes in a variety of shape including linguistic, cultural, political, racial, etc. Bhabha states that identity is “always a question of interpretation” at one point (Bhabha, 1994, p. 74). The identity of the motherland and the identity of the host land are the two identities that make up culture. Bhabha suggests that cultures that emerge from hybridization are hybrid. Hybridity provokes the idea of ‘in-betweenness’ which is additionally illustrated through diasporic concept. The mere word ‘diaspora’ is primarily about the deracination and dislocation of people but it leaves negative effects upon the development of individuals’ consciousness. It is stated that the term hybridity has shielded away the cultural and linguistic differences between Global South and Global North which are the colonized and the colonizer.

Bhabha is one of the leading figures of post colonialism who have raised voice for the development of peripheries. It has been argued that hybridity emanates from the interrelationship between the colonizer and the colonized. It is the outcome of the dominance of western culture upon the indigenous inhabitants who become the part of this process consciously or unconsciously. This has also produced paradoxical behaviors ‘on the part of the colonized nation’ which Bhabha calls ‘ambivalence’ (Bhabha, 1994). In his opinion “Social ideas and systems are established within the space” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 37). This space is considered as the third space of emancipation. Cultural identities are always emerged in contrast. Therefore, Bhabha asserts that hierarchies of cultures are unarguable and undependable.

The in between space is a centered hybrid position which develops from cultural ambivalence and uncertainty among people. Third Space of articulation assures that culture transcend the constructed boundaries and people can live jointly and later it becomes form a new prehistoric unity. Bhabha claimed that hybridity is based on cultural differences where the hybrid entities get permission to formulate the meanings in newly designed environment. They perceive culture

through contrast and similarities. He declares that cultural diversification is the amalgamation of diverse cultures while this similarity in culture is the identification of particular ethnic states of particular group holding its norms, and rituals. Hybridization paves way when native inhabitants are coerced to merge into societal norms and values. Bhabha highlights the issues of dislocation, hybrid identity and during the encounter between eastern and western cultures, diasporic community have to face the loss of values and traditions which sometimes lead towards psychological degradation. This happens when the settlers have tried to overpower their ethnic recognition in order to seize their economy, and constitution. These circumstances occur when individuals exceed restrictions and, on this spot, where multiple unlike human communities formed. For him, hybridization always emerges in state of disparity, and through the endeavored methods. That's why, they constantly remain insecure from their surroundings. Bhabha states that identity is "always question of interpretation" (Bhabha, 1994, p.74).

Finally, Duun articulates his ideas upon development of identity in postmodern era. He argues that "the postwar era" has been observed to a complicated chain of societal, ethnical, governmental, constitutional modification, of canonical starting and concluding, and of new ideas, thoughts, stances and perception are comprehensive characteristics of postmodernism (Dunn, 1998, p. 1). Donn also argues that the post war era has changed the dimensions and domains of society. Individuals are suffering by traumatic effects of fragmentation either at national level or international level. Their personality, as individual beings of society, have disintegrated. He states that Postmodernism probes the idea of identity of the people and then provide paradigms for addressing this problem in postwar era (Dunn, 1998, p. 2).

The individual of postwar era has deteriorated the concept of modernity. In postmodernism, individual is in center of importance, same happens with process of conformation of identity. The socio-cultural, economic, political, religiosity and historical changes are important factors that serve the basis for the formation of individual identity. He argues that socio-cultural and political experiences are ruptured, fragmented, pluralized and incoherence, and their meanings are also uncompleted (Duun, 1998, p. 144). The theorists of postmodern period have addressed these issues with full intension. "A theory of identity in postmodern society must address the simultaneously fragmented and pluralized conditions creating the tensions and dilemmas of identity and differences" (Duun, 1998, p. 16). Thus, quest for true identity is the pertinent feature of postmodern writers.

Discussion

Geo-strategically, Pakistan is located in a very trouble region where Pakistani society suffer from religiously, politically, social, culturally and most importantly linguistic barriers. Due to above mentioned issues, there is a shift in Pakistani Literature from modernity to postmodernity which, according to Daniel, addresses the problem of self-realization (Daniel, 2010). Moreover, Erikson states that conflict between identity and confused role of postmodern individuals which show that "identity is being considered related to another group" (Erikson, 1968).

Similarly, Fatima Bhutto in the Runaways narrates the story of three characters, Anita Rose, Sunny and Monty, who are struggling to explore their true identity. Baumen argues that the process of identity formation is not predefined but one has to strive to define it. The novel uncovers the journey of a poverty- stricken girl from Anita to Aliya in the development of identity. She suffers a lot in her life due to class discrimination. Her family does not have reasonable resources to provide her good education and luxurious life. She is mostly rejected by the people which paves way towards developing inferiority complex in her. In order to compete

this complex, she starts dreaming to become a beautiful woman. “Anita Rose closed her eyes and tried to imagine herself as one of the women she had seen in the dramas on TV who sat in pink chairs and had their beautiful light-brown hair washed and dried in salons” (Bhutto, 2020, p. 9). Without knowing the consequences, she becomes part of new activities in order to gain prestigious status in society and get rid from poverty. When she has changed her identity from Anita to Layla, everything becomes scary for her. She says: “Anita was transforming, she felt it. Things for going to happen for her. Her life was changing” (Bhutto, 2020, p. 94). This transformation has drastic effects on her personality because to become a prostitution is not bearable for an ordinary person. “Her brother had trained her to lie low; Osama had guided her to fight somewhere between the two was where Lyla would survive” (Bhutto, 2020, p. 352). Both society and her individuality are responsible for reshaping her identity because in postmodernism, identity is not fixed but it is What Dunn calls, a set of effects produced by discourses.

Like Anita, other characters of the novel are also struggling to preserve their identity. Indian born British, Sunny does not find the meaning of his life. His life is full of worries because of broken family system and fluid identity. His surrounding is also fractured because his father remains busy in his business chores while his mother has died. Additionally, he does not have any friend. In search of comfort zone and true self, he has visited different places. He visits mosque and his communication with Imam shows his unstable mental condition. “I don’t know why I’m here. Sunny’ said to the imam, closed to tears” (Bhutto, 2020, p. 77). Monty like Sunny and Anita has also confused identity despite of his luxurious life style. It shows when Anita and Monty have mutual discussion such as: “Don’t you feel strange, speaking a language every day that’s not your own? Layla asked Monty. But Monty had never spoken anything besides English.” (Bhutto, 2020, p. 106). All the proponents of the novel go to Syria for jihad for their psychological satisfaction. Bhutto portrays the blend of cultures, lack of social contacts and familial affairs are major constituents which play crucial role towards formation of identity crisis.

The City of Spies by Surraya Khan narrates story of Alyia, daughter of western mother and eastern father, who suffers throughout her life due to her dual and fractured identity. It develops inferiority complex in her. The novel depicts the issues of diasporic society which face discrimination not only by individuals but also authorities of the respective country. While being born in Austria, her life is still full of crisis in Europe for being half-and-half. They have treated her family as other which Said calls in Orientalism (1978). The western society has constructed binary system in which they consider themselves as superior and diasporic community is considered as inferior. Aliya, protagonist of the novel, is discriminated in White society just because of her body color. She says: Being white is not being half-and half. It’s being whole..... Being White is nice” (Khan, 2015, p. 58). She does not feel comfortable in the company of her ‘Amerikian’ friend Lizzy due to her physical appearance.

Diasporic community strives to develop a space where they can adjust with the western society which Bhabha calls “third space” in *The Location of Culture* (1984). In order to avoid discrimination, Aliya wears western dresses to become part of that culture. Khan writes: the clothes that I [Alyia] was wearing and the lights streaks in my chestnut hair that made me look less Pakistani” (Khan, 2015, p. 59). By living in white society, her friend circle is different from her. When her friend gives her present, she feels reluctant. As she “felt embarrassed that my shoulders were bare” (Khan, 2015, p. 101). Shaffer (2003) claims that after being affected, they

try to cling back to their original roots. She also considers herself alien in Pakistan. It indicates that she is doubly suffered from identity crisis. She is incapable to accustom herself in both societies.

Diasporic community have fractured identity and Aylia is the representative of that community. She is so much confused from where she belongs to. She ask so many questions from herself. She is unable to answer the questions of her friends. Her mother belongs to Holland and father is Pakistani by origin. She said: “She first asked me where I was from, and because I was born in Austria, I replied. I informed her about Holland the second time because that Holland because that where my mother was from. The last time, I confessed, Pakistan, too. Which once is it?” (p. 244). It indicates how much her identity is questioned everywhere when she is dislocated. Bhabha demonstrates that it grabs some of the troubled consciousness of the relocation of home and the world. The boundaries between them become more “confusing and mysterious” by each day (1994). Her personal recognition is put to ruthless tests because she is disconnected and dislocated from native land. She also faces the issue of bilingualism due her double identity. She cannot speak and understand Urdu properly. In that scenario, she is indulged in the disparities against minorities in every society. She says: “the fact that my world had two universes would never change. But knowing the language would let me decide which universe I wanted to be in and when” (Khan, 2015, p. 42). Thus, she is dwindle in between two cultures and identities but she does not know which is most suitable for her. Her identity is not unified but rather a fractured. She is constantly struggling for unified identity.

Exit West by Mohsin Hamid has been written in third person narration and set in anonymous and war-ravaged city. The story begins with the unidentified city which is under menace of socio-political radicalization and extremism that leave drastic effects upon the lives of Saeed and Nadia. He deconstructs the mere constructed phenomenon of ‘home’ in this novel because the connotative meanings of home are not fulfilled due to war and they are suffering due to lack of peace and aesthetic of the home. They are yearning for home which Brah (1996) labels as “homing desire”. In the beginning of the narrative, both characters travel in distant territories across the globe in order to find home which would ‘fulfill’ the function of home as shelter, peace, comfort and safe heaven. He portrays their traumatic experiences in order to highlight the complicated life of diasporic community in this globalized space as Saeed states his desire of home that: “Earth is moving. And you feel like that you are lying on a giant spinning ball in space” (Hamid, 2017, p. 21).

Saeed and Nadia consider their visits as “temporarily..... for he doubted he would come back amounting to the loss of a home, no less, of his home” (Hamid, 2017, p. 89-90). This indicates how much they have been suffering due to absence of unified home which also shows her desire for unified identity. According to Hamid, they unconsciously keep this factor in their minds that “returning to where they had been born was unthinkable” (Hamid, 2017, p. 134). Due to racial discrimination, the host country has considered them as aliens which Hamid says that “We are all migrants through time” (Hamid, 2017, p. 209). In another place, he also explains the dilemma of traumatic migration. He argues that: “When we migrate, we murder from our lives those we leave behind” (Hamid, 2017, p. 94). It shows that they have to forget their native identity.

Hamid decodes and decentralized the code of traditional form of culture which Bhabha (1994) considered “international Culture” through the depiction of “dark London” in *Exit West* where the identity of residues from other countries has always remained in fluctuation. Saeed and Nadia

are the agents of “multiple personalities” while living in multicultural and transnational society and they come in contact with people having different “skins”. Skin indicates the identity which means they interact with multifarious identities of different regions of the world in London. With the passage of time, their own identity has become a question mark for themselves and it becomes difficult for them to preserve their individual identity. Consequently, they disintegrate themselves into the cultural weaves of that respective country. Hamid states that “the person with multiple personalities was a furthermore a person whose skin appeared to be dissolving as they swam in a soup full of other people whose skin were likewise dissolving” (Hamid, 2017, p. 155-156). Thus, Hamid through the experiences of Nadia and Saeed portrays the whole picture of diasporic community.

Home Fire by Kamila Shamsie exposes the trials and tribulations related to the acculturation of expatriates in the socio-political system of the host country. The core issues that are prevalent in this novel are identity crisis, assimilation, acculturation, multiculturalism, and diasporic dispositioning which have been faced by Isma, Aneeka, Eamon and Karamat. The immigration authorities has investigated Isma very critically even when she gets permission to aboard for Boston. Their behavior towards her is very humiliating and they ask certain queries from her:

“Do you consider yourself British?” the man said. “I am British.” “But do you consider yourself British?” “I’ve lived here all my life.” She meant there was no other country of which she could feel herself a part, but the words came out sounding evasive. The interrogation continued for nearly two hours... He wanted to know her thoughts on Shias, homosexual.... the Great British bake off” (Shamsie, 2017, p. 10).

This is completely shocking situation for her when she realizes that she is not a British. It indicates that Britishness is only associated with European people rather than peripheries despite of its multicultural nature. It also shows that she considers herself British citizen when she is search of home but unfortunately this encounter unfolds the ambivalent nature of the western culture. The contradiction between the native and host cultures come in forefront when she has been forced to accept homosexuality in order to prove her British identity. If she shows her association to the Islamic values, she won’t be able to survive in that society when she has been persuading for higher studies in USA. It signifies that they have to negate their individual native identity, cultural norm, values and traditions.

Eamon and Isma are the representatives of diverse cultures among Pakistani diasporic community. She is deeply rooted in her indigenous culture values. The distinction between the values becomes obvious during their mutual communication. She states: “Thanks, kind of you to say. Where is-----? His vowels unashamedly posh where she had expected the more class-obscuring London accent of his father” (Shamsie, 2017, p. 21). Moreover, the second generation (Eoamonn) has become completely hybridized for the sake of their salvation in western culture. It results in their deprivation from the cultural values of their parents’ generation. He is completely lost in British society and he makes questions about the symbols of Muslim identity such as: “The turban. Is that a style thing or a Muslim thing?” (p. 26). He is not able to understand the reason behind the use of hijab among Muslim women because he has labeled hijab with Muslim Identity. During his encounter with Aneeka, he asks from her: “What were you praying for?? (p. 75).

All these incidents show his detachment from Islamic and Pakistani cultural roots which seem un-identical to him. In the wake of islamophobia, Isma has to face difficult circumstances being a Pakistani Muslim. Their identity has been tarnished due to social media’s constructed

discourses. According to Hall, the process of identity is deeply rooted in one's natural culture. This assimilated brings unending sufferings which become unbearable burden upon their souls that's why their identity has remained discontinued and ruptured. The critical discussion of the novel highlights the struggle of diasporic community for their rights in postmodern arena.

Nadeem Aslam in *Maps for Lost Lovers* accentuates the importance of cultural choices in order to formulate the migrants' identity because their identity has always been remained in a process. According to Bhabh: "We find ourselves in the moment of transit, space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 1). He highlights various problems that have been faced by migrants such as ethnic, religious and linguistics in paradigm of acculturation. He cites Octavio Paz in the novel in order to emphasis identity exploration. "A human being is never what he is but the self he seeks". The people belonging to different strata of society as Indian, Pakistani, Bengali, Sri Lanka and English are the residents of a fictional town '*Dasht-e-tanhai*' (p. 29). Although they are different ethnically, religiously and culturally, yet they have shared experiences of conflicts and confusions. Their struggle to gain individual identity remains futile. Kaukab is the embodiment of those people who are living in that town. She has no knowledge about 'what lay beyond the neighborhood' and how to tackle the outsiders. She says: "She was full of apprehensions concerning the white race and uncomfortable with people of another Sub Continental religious or grouping" (p. 32).

Bhabha explains that the ruptured individuals are caught between different cultures is the most prevalent phenomena of postmodern era. It is the fissured subject that shapes the disintegrated time and being equation of social structures with full force in postmodern time period (Bhabha, 1994, p. 307). In the course of the novel, Shamas and Kaukab, the inhabitants of first generation, are compelled to accept de-hyphenated identities and they are torn between different states "between Lahore and London, between East and West". While living in English society, Kaukab does not voluntarily accepts the contours of foreign culture rather she prefers to hear Pakistani origin singers, poets and writers such as Nusrat Fatah Ali, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Munir Niazi, etc. she admires Nusrat's singing: "the record would begin and soon the listeners would be engrossed" (p. 13). Even the love for Pakistani food like Kerala is deeply rooted in her consciousness.

In this novel, Aslam uses hybrid language, a mixture of English, and Pak-Indian. Bill Ashcroft asserts that the linguistic hybridity transcends the constructed linguistic binaries. English language can be modified to manifest the diverse cultures and experiences. Like fluctuation of identity, language is always remained in the process of fluidity. The most of the characters use the words from Pakistani languages. Aslam depicts the lack of confidence of Diasporas in dealing with English language because they are unable to speak English due to clash of civilization. Different language than the one they did back in Pakistan? In England the heart said "boom boom" instead of dhak dhak; a gun said "bang!" instead of thah!; things fell with a "thud," not a dharam; small bells said "jingle" instead of chaanchaan; the trains said "choo choo" instead of chuk chuk..." (p.60). It shows that Aslam delves deep into the psyche of expatriates and develops the forced assimilated consciousness in which they strive to preserve their native identity.

Conclusion

This study concludes by highlighting the basic subject of fractured identity in postmodern era because of displacement and cultural alienation for the individuals. This paper has investigated the multiple contours in which they strive for uniformity of identity through their internal turmoil which are the outcome of their fluctuating times and spaces in post war era. Stuart Hall (1996) objections the notion that identity is stable and not subject to change. He considers identity as something that perpetually strife for meaning and an ongoing procedure for its formation. Anita, Kaukab, Alyia, Monty, Sunny, Isma, etc have proved the theoretical paradigms of Hall, Sheffer, Bhabha, and Dunn in a very realistic approach.

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