

REPRESENTATION OF ISLAM: A POSTCOLONIAL READING OF NADEEM ASLAM'S MAPS FOR LOST LOVERS

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ABSTRACT

This research seeks to explore image of Islam in Maps for Lost Lovers (2004). It briefly discusses theories of representation from Plato to present; discourses issue of transparency; demonstrates power of representations, and shows their implication for postcolonial studies. It demonstrates how Said, using Foucault's constructionist-discursive approach to production of knowledge, re-describes Orientalism as a discursive establishment, at the same time, offers a review of Said's insights on Orientalist's techniques of representation to construct stereotypes of non-Europeans. Furthermore, this study recalls stereotypes of Islam and Muslims that were normative in Orientalist discourse and shows their continuation in present-day images of Islam. A small critique of some postcolonial works illustrates how fundamentalist version of Islam has been advocated by them; hence, bringing forth the need to analyze ideologies inscribed in postcolonial texts. Said's theoretical model provides methodology for analysis of Aslam's novel. The research concludes that Maps presents a reductive view of Islam and reinforces its stereotypical image of fundamentalism. It also indicates that Aslam's perception of Islam has reminiscences of Orientalists, thereby, showing the connivance of postcolonial works with neo-colonial imperial agenda.

Keywords: Postcolonial literature, representation, Orientalist discourse, stereotypes, fundamentalism

INTRODUCTION

This research pursues to investigate representation or image of Islam in *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004) by Nadeem Aslam. This text brought him several awards, such as, Kiriya Pacific Rim Book Prize, Encore Award, ("Nadeem Aslam," n.d.) and Patras Bokhari ("Patras Bokhari Award," n.d.). Both acclaim and its publication in the aftermath of 9/11 placed *Maps* into a powerful discursive position. Therefore, it is significant to scrutinize the image construction of Islam in a text that has achieved a kind of canonicity. *Aslam tells a story of a Pakistani Muslim family as well as of a migrant community living in a closely-knit Diaspora, Dashte Tanhahi_ a microcosm of Pakistan in England. It is Islam that delineates the lifestyles of people in Pakistan and Dashte Tanhahi. Like the writers of exile, Aslam's narrative also oscillates between two poles: home and exile. He explores inner lives of migrant Pakistani Muslims and cultural clash faced by them. Said's Orientalist model provides epistemology for the study. This paper shows how Aslam has represented Islam and, Pakistani Muslims.*

Simply put "representation means using language to say something meaningful about or to represent the world meaningfully, to other people" (Hall, 1997, p.15). Representations are indispensable for human life because people make sense of the world through them. They are ways of creating and sharing meaning among people of a culture (ibid). To be intelligible, each object, person, idea and feeling must have a representation. Representation can be

anything: a name, a symbol, a word, and a picture. It mainly constitutes mental impressions of things or ideas and signs or language to signify them (Nayar, 2009, p. 25).

It is a centuries old concern of literary theory and criticism. Nightingale (2006) finds its origin in Plato in 4th century B.C (p. 37). Plato introduces the term 'imitation' (Trans.1990, 15), that is, theoretically similar to representation (Fowler, 2006, p. 120). In *Republic*, he uses the term pejoratively and assessed imitative arts as tritely removed ersatz of God-created incorporeal world (p.16-18). Plato was not unfamiliar with harmful potential of representations; when, he declared poetic imitation as damaging to the thinking of audience (p.15). Clearly, he evaluated literary representation in terms of its social function (Nightingale, 2006, p. 40). Aristotelian concept of imitation, as considered by Selden (1990), is more complicated than Plato. Imitation, for Aristotle, is not just replication of things out there but includes intricate processing of them. Poetry is an objet d'art and is valued for its own sake (p. 40).

These writers are significant as they offer two major debates on representation that were unresolved till 20th century.

1. Representation and its truthfulness to reality.
2. Impact of representations on the audience.

Plato's idealism influenced 18th century Romantics (Selden, 1990, p. 8). They promoted expressive notion of representation. Author was considered as a free individual who invents meaning through language. They believe that thinking takes place independently in author's mind and language just reflects those thoughts (Bennett, 2006, p. 49). Contrarily, 19th century realists support the mimetic view of language. People were highly inspired by scientific discourses such as *Darwin's Origin of Species* (1859). Revolution in science demanded a language that was purified from subjective biases to report natural phenomenon. Scientific approach swept every field of life and literature was no exception (Habib, 2005, p. 471-76). It was assumed that novel could represent reality as it really was. Myth that language can represent objectively reached its heights in this period.

It is, now, useful to come back to the effects of representation that Plato was weary of in 4th century BC. Boehmer (2005) has discussed power of representation with reference to imperial textuality. Representations of newly discovered territories created the effects as if no one lives there and they were free to be occupied. Literature disseminated colonial dreams as travel writing inspired exploration of exotic lands (p. 14-5). Most importantly, it supported colonization by affecting psyche of people as it constructed roles of superior and inferior in the heads of colonizer and colonized respectively (McLeod, 2007, p. 18). During 19th century, most imperialists valued a high profile image of themselves as conquerors and champions of civilization. Realist fiction shaped cultural self-assurance of colonizers because notions of race, and national egotism were inscribed in them (Boehmer, 2005, p. 14-23). On the contrary, colonial representation psychologically disarmed natives by making them feel inferior to colonizers (McLeod, 2007, p. 18). This debate shows Plato's views on effects of representation were not baseless as representation can potently acts on mind or cognition. Until advent of linguistic and cultural studies in 20th century representations of non-Western nations went on without criticism.

Publication of *Course in General Linguistic* (1915) by Ferdinand de Saussure proved a turning point from reflective and intentional approaches to constructionist approach¹ to

¹ The terms "reflective, intentional and constructionist" have been taken from Hall's essay "The Work of Representations." (See "The Work of Representation." In S. Hall (Ed.), *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (pp. 13-52). London. Thousand Oaks & New Delhi: Sage Publication.)

representation. Saussure's bifurcation of linguistic sign undermined the pictorial view of language once for all. Sign is a "psychological entity" (p. 26) that joins "a concept and a sound image" (ibid) which Saussure terms as "signified and signifier" (p. 27) respectively. Words, therefore, do not denote some outside reality but to their mental impressions. It establishes that a representation can never be a Xerox replica of its original because it produces meaning of the concepts in the head through language. Besides, this theory understates the autonomy of author as a source of meaning as Saussure theorizes that language is a social construct and word/referent relations are 'arbitrary' (p. 27). Meaning is fixed due to general approval of a speaking public. Once established, meanings are unchanged by individuals (p. 27). Furthermore, he debates that thinking is determined by language and not vice versa. Thinking minus language, states Saussure (1916), is an unclear "nebula" (p. 114). Therefore, authors are incapable of instilling unique meaning in representation because their understanding of world is already intermediated by the language they use. Sapir and Whorf (1921) also postulated that language reflects mode of thinking of a given culture and controls perception of the world of its members (qtd. in Yule, 1996, 247-8) Hence these theories contradict Romantic notions of author as someone special. It is established fact today that languages are cultural creations and are strongly related to issues of class, power and ideology.

Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (2002) proved another substantial contribution to constructionist approaches to representation. Quite differently from its preceding linguistic denotations, Foucault regarded 'discourse' as a borderline around the word "statement" (p. 90). He hypothesizes that a discourse brings together those statements which "refer to one and the same object" (p. 36). Statements, for Foucault, are neither merely grammatical sentences nor just material marks (p. 91, 121), but all things that can be consigned certain "modalities of existence" (p.121). The critics, such as Mills (2005), argue that a statement could be a map, a photograph, or any representation (p. 65). It means discourse provides context for representations (Nayar, 2009, p. 21). Any society at a particular point in history is constitutive of diverse discourses such as law, medicine, politics, religion, and literature. Every discourse has a 'system of dispersion' (Foucault, 2002, p. 42) that Foucault terms as discursive formation (p. 42-3). Explaining Foucault, Hall states that discourses establish certain ways of seeing a topic and repress others. Hence discourse constitutes its subjects. Strength of Foucault's theory resides in its spatial-temporal turn in analysis of representation which was absent from Saussure's purely linguistic model. Besides, it theorizes in terms of institutional regulation of statements which brings to fore involvement of power in production of knowledge. In addition, Foucault also posits individuals as ideological subject of already existing discursive structures (p. 72-80).

Theories of post colonialism are highly indebted to these insights into workings of language and discourse. Constructionist approaches to representation displaces realists' proposition of true representation through language. It is useless to judge genuineness of representations by comparing them to their reals as sense of reality is conceived inside one's head. Representations, hence, are symbolic of the real world. There is always a degree of abstraction involved in the work of representations ("representation" 2012). Representations always take away some aspect or add more to their originals. The debate, above, also informs that languages are inherently cultural creations and embody worldview of those who speak them. In addition, humans are not free thinking individuals instead are constructs of language/discourse. Furthermore, the idea of colonial discourse is also materialized because of Foucault's philosophy of discourse.

Making use of these insights, postcolonial theory emerged and presented a devastating censure of colonial and neo-colonial representations of non-Europeans. Post colonialism is a method/approach to subvert the assumptions held by colonialism. Postcolonial approach involves strategic reading of texts to disrupt Eurocentric biases inscribed in them. It brings into play thoughts such as equality, liberation, and democracy so as to combat domineering formations of prejudice, bigotry, and manipulation (Nayar, 2008, p. 17). It stresses the need to replace traditional reading practices and proposes to reconsider our reading habits (McLeod, 2007, p. 33-4).

Said (1978) renewed Foucault's discursive propositions in terms of imperial representational practices. Foucault (2002) asserts that one is working with a discursive formation if one has discovered constancy between ideas, statements, concepts, and themes (p. 42). On the same ground, Said posits Orientalism as a "discursive formation" which disperses a style of "regularized (or orientalized) writing, vision, and study," (p. 202) ruled by Eurocentric prejudices presumably corresponding to the East (ibid). Orientalism, for Said, is not purely an academic field. It is a kind of discourse which propagates expectant ways of seeing the East (p. 2-3). Elaborating on power/knowledge node by Foucault, Said also refers to it as a corporate institution that advances ways of controlling the East through constructing knowledge about it (p. 3). East as it is materialized in Western mind, culture and politics is result of Western system of representation rather than some eastern reality (p. 22). And representations, recognizes Said, are only re-presentations (p. 21) as language is always immersed in ideology, culture and political setting of "representer" (p. 273).

Said's concerns are representation, more representation and their place within discourse. Orientalists' representations, for Said, belong to a discursive domain that is configured for them not only by subject matter but also by shared tradition and history. Thus representation of East is meaningful by being consistent with stereotypes that were customary within *the discourse* Orientalism (1978, p. 273). In construing Orientalists' texts, Said notices that writers are incapable of liberating themselves from constraints that Orientalism puts on them (p. 43-4). Therefore, throughout the ages, Orientalists have produced certain regular characteristics of East in their works.

Said asserts that East was conceived in Western imagination through the lenses of stereotype_ a term coined by Lippmann. Stereotypes are images in head. They are also processes whereby mind squeezes complexity of world into small and understandable form (Lippmann, 1922, p. 3-7). Said (1978) argues, perhaps on the same principle that stereotype renders non-Western world graspable to the West (p. 61, 66). Orientalists use several discursive techniques to construct mental images of Orientals: generalizations, descriptions, use of copula 'is', typecast characterization etc. Said has discussed type characterization of 'Oriental' (p. 230) in detail. A type usually has a specific character that offers the onlooker with an epithet (p. 119). Western scholars always describe non-Western people in generalized terms. Geographical difference leads to construction of types, such as "the Asiatic and the African" (p. 120). In addition, Said asserts that if a single character appears, it stands for a whole class because of its "discursive confinement" (p. 66).

For centuries, Islam has constantly been misunderstood by West as Said (1981) asserts, "Islam represents not only a formidable competitor but also a late coming challenge to Christianity" (p. 4). In one way or the other, Muslim countries have always remained a hurdle in the way of Western domination of non-Western regions. Since the time of Crusades, Islamic regions such as Arab and Ottoman had many military confrontations with Europe and were quite successful in terrorizing Europe (Said, 1978, p. 73-74). This centuries long

political history is working behind the images of Muslims and an impression of being combatant is built in relation to their portrayals.

Orientalists usually portrayed Muslims in relation to violence and bloodshed, for instance, Arabs were associated with rivalry and warfare (Said, 1978, p. 48, 287). Muslims were represented as superstitious and anti-modern (Said, p. 61). Position of Muslim women is never acceptable to West. Turks were described as having *Harems* which shows them as morally corrupt and sexually aberrant (Said, p. 190). Thus Orientalist's discourse has constructed Islam as an antithesis of Western civilization.

Orientalism is over but influences of its discursive structures are still visible on today's Western discourse on Islam. It has achieved a kind of neo-Orientalist status. Some new labels are added to the old archive of images of Muslims, for instance, fundamentalist (After Iranian Revolution, 1978–79 and Rushdie Affair) ("fundamentalism," 2012), and terrorists (After 9/11). Characteristics of Islam are similar to old stereotypes of it. Seen through Western eyes, Islam is still a jingoistic religion so Muslim the 'ideal enemy' of middle ages has now been named as Islamic fundamentalist (Amir, 1998, p. 45). There again, fundamentalism² is very hard on women, it does not allow freedom of speech, and time and again Islamic Sharia has been related to violence. In short, it is still medieval and barbaric and poles apart of the secular, liberal, humane West.

In multicultural societies such as Britain, it is imperative for people to understand each other's cultural mores. Postcolonial literature has the potential to make communities understand diverse lifestyles of different cultures. Following review offers a comparison between two types of postcolonial writers. The first group includes Kureishi and Ali who have spent their entire lives in England. Kureishi was born and bred there and Ali left Bangladesh at the age of three ("Monica Ali"). Hence their subjectivities are constituted by Western discourses. Hamid and Sidhwa, though now expatriates, have been raised in Pakistan.

Birt (2006) offers a gist of post 9/11 discourse on Muslims. For him, this discourse posits a clash between "moderate and fundamentalist" ("Notes on Islamophobia") figures within Muslims societies and postcolonial novels are complicit to it (ibid). In *Kurishi*, Islam is a book of rules that constrains human life. Shahid, the protagonist, temporarily becomes attached to fundamentalist Islam, finds it too constraining because it does not allow diversity of life. Thus, instead of sticking to Islam, he moves on with his English girlfriend to the so called life of liberation i.e. full of alcohol, drugs and sex (qtd. in Holmes, n.d., p. 296-13). Moreover his portrayal of Shahid's friends also conforms to Western typecasts of extremists (Birt, 2006, "Notes"). In *My Son: the Fanatic* (1997), another work by Kurishi, successfully explores attraction of a youth towards Islamic fundamentalism. The story revolves around Pervez, a Pakistani taxi driver, and his British born Farid. Pervez is epitome of secularism who eats pork; drinks wine, and loves Bettina, a white prostitute. As the story unfolds, Farid slowly moves away from "a society soaked in sex" (p. 64) and turns towards fundamentalism leaving his father bewildered. Although, Kureishi poignantly suggests failure of Western relativism and secularism in providing satisfaction to individuals and shows how Western rationalism has always unacknowledged "the need people have of belief" (p. xii); but, my contention is to scrutinize what image of Islam has been constructed through such

² The term *fundamentalism* has been defined in several ways; for instance, Britannica (2012) explains it as a "type of militantly conservative religious movement characterized by the advocacy of strict conformity to sacred texts." But, I understand it as distortion of any religion; hence, it has been used loosely in the paper. Moreover, the aim of this study is to deal with issue of representation (of Islam) in the postcolonial literature and not to deny problem of fundamentalism in several Muslim societies including Pakistan.

characterization. These texts show Islam and fundamentalism as one, for instance, Kureishi, in his introduction to *My Son*, asserts, "Islam was a particular firm way of saying 'no' to all sorts of things" (1997, p. vii). In Ali's *Brick Lane* (2005), Karim and Questionnaire are *jihadis*. These authors have addressed modern day issues; but, are unable to present tolerant and compassionate spirit of Islam. Like their Western counterpart, Kureishi and Ali construct generalized image of Islam as they unite Islam and fundamentalism. No effort is made to differentiate between Islamic fundamentalism and liberal tendencies of Islam. If there are liberal characters such as Pervez and Shahid, they represent white ideology. Birt (2006) also suggests that liberal tendencies present in such works are part of Western assimilation agenda ("Notes"). Hence such representations conform to the politicized version of Islam.

In contrast to Hanief Kureishi's typecast Muslims, Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) is a breath of fresh air. This novel does not directly relate to the issues of Islam or of cultural clash in Diaspora but it would be useful to compare Chengaz to Kureishi's fundamentalist characters. Unlike Kureishi's fundamentalists' characters Chengaz does not use Islam as an excuse for becoming fundamentalist or terrorist. He has his own political story to tell that subvert US discourse on fundamentalism (Boehmer and Morten 14). Bapsi Sidhwa's *American Brat* (2005) is another significant work on religion. She critiques Zoroastrianism such as their need to marry outside Parsi community but she never in the least denigrates the religion. Her novel shows a deep sense of for her religion and its rituals. This pride is nowhere to be seen in Kureishi and Ali's books. She also criticized politicization of Islam in Zia period. When Feroza is influenced by fundamentalist strain, her mother blames Zia and politics for Islamization and not Islam. Hamid and Sidhwa clearly demonstrate where their ideologies and loyalties lie. Above discussion shows how different ideologies have been produced by these two groups of writers. It also demonstrated that Ali and Kureishi have become constructs of Western discourses as their representation produce images of Islam that are part of Western popular imagination.

Now, it goes without saying that images (of non-Western people and cultures) constructed by postcolonial writers are needed to be analyzed. Postcolonial writers are considered 'metonym' (Nayar, 2008, p. 70) of Asian communities of their origin. It is important to ask whether their portrayals are representatives of the society they are representing or does it reinforce the images that West seeks (ibid). Aslam is contemporary of Ali and Kureishi and residing in Britain since the age of fourteen. He has been several awards for *Maps*, but, Kalra (2009) claims that *Maps* has not gained much attention in Pakistani Diasporas (p.12). This research explores how Aslam has described Islam, and Muslim.

METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative research and involves close textual reading of *Maps for Lost Lovers*. It investigates what image of Islam (whether positive or negative) has been constructed in the novel by an expatriate author. Research paradigm is postcolonial as Said's views on Orientalist discourse, representation, and portrayal of non-European cultures and Islam have been considered suitable to make theoretical postulations for the study. Following points have been chosen for the analysis.

Typecasting was one of the major discursive strategies in Orientalists writing. Said proposes that typecast characterization immediately invokes title in the mind of observer (p. 120). This paper mainly scrutinizes representation of Muslims; hence, focusing on image of Islam created through them. It explores Does Aslam stereotype Muslims? If yes then what type of traits are highlighted in them? The study is delimited to male figures only.

Another is “generalization” that is making sweeping statements about non-Western cultures and people (p. 45).

East/West split was “a starting point” (p. 16) Orientalists’ works because they were subjects of a discourse that erects Orient/ Occident divide. In this divergence, South (East) is conceived as inferior and opposite to the North (West). This geographical difference accompanies social, cultural, religious dissimilarities that eventually lead to division of people (p. 43, 6). Islam is described as an indicator of difference between Western and Islamic world. This study explores whether Aslam has dispelled misconceptions about Islam or he reinforces them.

Stereotypes of Male Characters

Said identifies construction of ‘type’ as one of the major discursive strategy in Orientalists’ texts. Such characters are confined within discourse; therefore, they do not stand alone but signify a whole class (Said, 1978, p. 66). Aslam’s characterization of Muslim clerics falls under this category. In current discourse on Islamic fundamentalism, Islam has usually been associated with bearded figures (Karim 118). These figures, in relation to Islam and Pakistan, have become a negative discursive strategy in media portrayals of Islam. Creation of such characters by a postcolonial writer intensifies Islam’s image as a fundamentalist religion. *In the beginning of the novel, narrator mentions a cleric which suggests the role played by Islam within Pakistan and migrant community.* Naming and physiognomy demonstrates individuality in characterization. These clerics are nameless with scarce physical details that suggest all of them have same attributes. One is described as having “a beard large enough for peacocks to nest in” (p. 186). He exorcises a girl supposedly possessed by djinns and kills her in the process as Aslam writes “The holy man heated a metal plate until it was red hot and forced her to stand on it [...] the arms and legs broken by a cricket bat. The front of the chest had caved in as though she had been jumped on repeatedly” (p. 186). It produces a barbarous image of the cleric who is capable of immense violence. It also shows Muslims as believers of superstitions (irrational beliefs) that underlies Western rationalism. This cleric has been confined discursively and becomes emblem of an entire class (of Muslim clerics) outside text. There is repetition of such characters in the text that also classifies them as “generic type” (Said, 1978, p. 66). Repetition shows that these figures are common to Pakistani Muslim society. A man consults another cleric on drinking wine. Instead of providing help, cleric ‘thundering down the line’ (p. 9) chides him. This again demonstrates the severity of Muslim priests. Another cleric in mosque preaches abhorrence for sex. It shows Islam as a religion that does not recognize basic human needs, whereas, its subtext implies superiority of Western liberal mores. The cleric also teaches that white women are dirty and forbids Muslims from marrying them. It entails that Islam does not permit its followers *to* mix with non-Muslims. Islam is shown to be an isolationist religion and Muslims as bigots. Typecasting usually has two purposes: to criticize the social evils and to propagate negative images (Morris, 1993, p. 3). It could be argued that Aslam is right in criticizing malpractices in society. The problem with Aslam’s representation is that it silences liberal Muslim scholars altogether. Such exclusion in *Maps* causes stereotypical representations of Muslim priests as iconic fundamentalist *mullahs*.

Aslam endorses stereotypical images of Pakistani Muslim men. Keeping up with Orientalist traditions, men are described in relation to violence, and subjugation of women. *Barra* and *Chotta* are examples of volatile Muslim men. They are butchers by profession and are involved in heroin smuggling. When the elder brother was born, he had ‘a piece of clotted blood’ (p. 341) that implies his blood thirsty nature. The younger is a drunkard. They kill their sister Chanda and her lover Jugnu for the sake of honour. They cut up their sister’s body

into pieces with ‘two butcher knives, and a cleaver, a saw...an axe’ (p. 357) burn her and then bury the remains. Same treatment is meted to *Jugnu*; he is killed first, dismembered, burnt and buried. Aslam has taken up a serious issue present in Pakistan; but, Aslam’s characters continuously associate honour killing to Islam. Barra and Chotta consider themselves to be “Allah’s ‘sword’ against ‘sinners” (p. 175). Hence Islam becomes the reason for such murders. Linking them to Islam is a distortion of it. Islam has no place for such transgresses (Javed, 2008, p. 9). Aslam’s representation shows such images repetitively that causes misrepresentation, such as, in Pakistan, a man has run over his sister-in-law many times, because; he thinks of her as debauched. Furthermore, Aslam shows these killings in other Islamic countries such as in Gaza (a father has killed his daughter for losing her virginity); hence, connects them to Islam.

Another nameless Muslim is *Mahjabin*’s husband. He is not a fully drawn figure and has been introduced to the readers through his sermon-like letter to *Mahjabin*. Several lines have been included here that speak volumes of his character, “*The television keeps informing us... that we have been defeated yet again [...]. They say we are defeated, irrelevant, finished. And the reins are now in the hands of those who neither say their prayers nor keep the fast [...]*” (p. 306). Who is he? Whose defeat is talking about? What prayer and fast are referring to? Religion has been related to the context of war. This passage suddenly evokes images of post 9/11 scenario of America’s raid of Afghanistan. At that time, news regularly informed about killing and surrendering of *Taliban* leaders in different places and about Karzai’s newly formed government. Pakistan was labeled as terrorist breeding country and Islam as a fundamentalist creed. It can be deduced that Aslam is referring to this man as one of the many connections of *Taliban* or terrorism in Pakistan. This man could be a terrorist as he is grieving the defeats of *Taliban*.

Maps suggests that Islam promotes patriarchy in which women has no liberty. *Mahjabin*’s husband feels that women are born to serve men and their place is home as he says, “*we, the men who were submissive to Allah, and women who were submissive to their men* (p. 308).” He thinks that Allah has given him permission to do anything with *Mahjabin* because she has been made to serve him. And what entails to be subservient to a Muslim is very clear from his treatment of his wife as he further adds, ‘*Remember the tip of my cigarette on your skin, Mahjabin? Keep that fire in mind. The fires of hell are a thousand times hotter? Remember the sewing needles in your thighs, Mahjabin?*’ (p. 306) He is a sadist who mercilessly tortures her and shows no remorse. Contrarily, he thinks that it is his wife who is at mistake in leaving him and tries to call her back by instilling in her fear of Allah because she is being defiant to him in leaving him. He thinks himself to be a lawful master of his wife who can treat her worse than animals.

Shamas’ elder brother is another fundamentalist personality who attends a mosque based on extremely stern teachings of Islam. The fundamentalist teachings have made him grave, severe and violent as ‘his jaws are working in rage and his eyes are aflame’ (p. 84). He is so intolerant that he spits in the plate if he does not like the food. Aslam is probably referring to terrorist breeding *madrasahs* and mosques in Pakistan that are capable of brainwashing people and change them altogether. He does not allow children to play with toys. Toys cause so much revulsion in him that for playing with them, he beats his child so severely that he becomes unconscious.

Contrary to aforementioned figures, *Shamas*, *Jugnu*, *Charagh*, and *Ujala* comprise another set of characters. A naïve mind might consider them as individual differences or liberal voices within Muslim community with potential to subvert stereotyped image of Islam. Therefore, it is essential to analyze how they view Islam. *Shamas* is an atheist. Islam is ‘repulsive’ (p.

226), for him. He drinks wine occasionally and commits adultery outside wedlock. Jugnu, his younger brother, cares nothing of Islam. He had several girlfriends before falling for Chanda and even gets a sexually transmitted disease from one of them. Like his brother, he drinks wine too and joking calls Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) as “merchant turned opportunistic preacher” (p. 38). Next is Charagh, a painter who feels Islamic way of life is too constraining for an artist. The last is Ujala, who started drinking at the age of twelve. He announces Islamic teachings as ‘idiocies’ (p. 302) and wants to renounce Islam. He relates Sharia to violence and sarcastically asks her mother, “Amputation, stoning to death, flogging-not barbaric?” (p. 322).

If read in the light of literature review (see), a fixed pattern is found between characterizations of postcolonial writers. There are two kinds of extremes: too much religion on one side (religious extremism: represented by Karim and Farid in Kureishi, Barra and Chotta, clerics and several others in Aslam) and contrary to it is irreligion (Pervez, and Shahid in Kurieshi and Shamas, his brother, and Sons in *Maps*.) My point, here, is that these characters are also types since types, says Said, provide the spectator with titles. Just like fundamentalist types, there again, humanity is reduced to few recognizable essences such as wine, sex, indifference to religion and could easily be provided with a name. They are vehicles of white ideology that, unmistakably, has basis in Western ideals of humanism and secularism. Hence they do not signify individual differences among Muslims and embody the kind of assimilation that the West wants. Such discursive images cause more damage to image of Islam as texts position them as liberal insiders’ voice on Islam; hence, affirming status quo of Islam as a fundamentalist religion.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, Aslam constructs reductive image of Islam because it is portrayed as fundamentalist and regressive religion. He is unable to break free from the centuries’ long sphere of negativity that has been built around representation of Islam and Muslims by European scholars. Influences of Orientalists’ discursive structures are visible in Aslam’s representation. Several strategies of representation have been used by him, for instance, typecasting, generalization, and East/ West split. Aslam, not alone, conforms to representational techniques; but, also reinforces typical images of Islam and Muslims. Images of demonical clerics and fundamentalist figures are in abundance. Islam and Muslims have been described in terms of violence, barbarism, superstitions, and low status of women that were specific of Orientalists’ traditions. Aslam represents a generalized view of Islam as no effort has been made to differentiate between Islam and fundamentalism. Aslam shows Muslims on two extremes: one has too much religion and the other has too much irreligion. If religion is to be followed (Islam or any other religion), certain restrictions automatically apply. Islam (or any other religion), for me at least, lie somewhere between these two extremes. Large pronouncements have been made in terms of Islam such as Aslam suggests that socializing with people of other religions is forbidden in Islam that portrays Muslims as isolationists. Moreover he carelessly lumps together Islam and honour killing. In Aslam’s text, Islam is the reason of North/South division as Charagh, Jugnu, and Ujala are fully capable of assimilation in West because of their indifference to religion. In short, this research shows that *Maps* generates negative images of Islam. Aslam’s discourse on Islam suggests that he has become product of western discourses.

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