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COUNTERING THE EMPIRE: APPROPRIATING NATIVITY AND RESISTANCE IN THE SELECTED PAKISTANI POETRY OF TAUFIQ RAFAT

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Abstract

Postcolonial writers appropriate native culture by presenting the colonized people in the central position. They create counterarguments to the colonial practices of the colonized natives. Poetry as a literary genre plays a crucial role in creating resistance against hegemonic practices employed by the powerful colonials. This paper aims to explore the Appropriation as a tool utilized by Postcolonial writers to establish counter-arguments against the malpractices of colonial orientalists. This study will also investigate colonial writers like Rudyard Kipling, who indulge in epistemic violence by misrepresenting the people of Eastern backgrounds while privileging the white colonial masters. Pakistani poets in English adopt a pattern of resistance to colonial hegemony by utilizing the philosophy of Appropriation. These writers like Taufiq Rafat rightly appropriate the native ideology into the same language of colonizers by bringing the native characters from the sideline into the mainstream. This study by using the method of Textual Analysis aims to draw a comparison of Rudyard Kipling, a British writer, and Taufiq Rafat, a Pakistani writer. It would see the approach of these two writers towards the portrayal of characters from Eastern and Western backgrounds. For analysis, the Postcolonial Theoretical Framework from the theory of Appropriation formulated by [Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths & Helen Tiffin \(2004\)](#) will be utilized.

Keywords: Appropriation, Abrogation, Postcolonialism Epistemic, Hegemony.

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Introduction

Postcolonial debate creates resistance to the hegemonic epistemic violence of the colonial empire by formulating of counter-argument. "This theory highlights the malpractices in colonial ideology and practice. In its practice Postcolonial is concerned with "colonialism, myth and history, language and landscape, self and other" (G. Sawant, 2011, P.01). These significant ingredients of Postcolonial discourse serve to establish the domain and themes of this ideology. Postcolonialism, therefore, offers a counter-argument to the colonial ideology in terms of representation, discourse, linguistic utility, distinct setting, and the dichotomy between the center and margin. (Niaz, 2023), the two significant countering strategies that Postcolonial theorists utilize are Abrogation and Appropriation, which deal with the use of the language of colonized masters in Postcolonial debate. This paper will investigate the appropriation of native ideology and language in Postcolonialism writings. It will also explore the epistemic violence of the misrepresentation of natives in the writings of colonial writers. The study also aims to promote models for decolonization. "Postcolonial literature responds to the intellectual discourse of colonization and addresses the problems and consequences of the decolonization of a country and a nation, especially the political and cultural independence of formerly subjugated peoples" (Quinto & Santos, 2016, P. 158).

Problem Statement

The misrepresentation of colonized people in literature by writers of colonial background is a serious problem. Due to this epistemic violence, people of colonial background are considered as barbarian and uncivilized. The indigenous writers realized this dilemma and started answering back to the Empire by engaging in counter-argument to the colonial practices. The solution to the problem of distorted portrayal is in the model of

Appropriation, therefore, this study would use Appropriation as a strategy of resistance towards malpractices by the Empire.

Significance of Research

This study is significant as it aims to uncover the hegemonic practices used by influential colonial writers. It exposes the approach of falsification adopted by colonizers in their misrepresentation of native characters and indigenous values. This study is significant as it uses the theory of Appropriation to counter the distorted images. This study significantly portrays the positive image of native culture, local values, and indigenous traditions. This study is significant for colonizers as it exposes their malpractices. It is also significant for the colonized people as it strengthens their beliefs on the positive utility of native cultures.

Research Objectives

1. Exploitation by colonials in misrepresentation of natives.
2. Counter representation in native poetry to the literature of Metropolis as a strategy of Appropriation.

Research Questions

1. How do the colonial writers indulge in epistemic violence and misrepresentation of natives?
2. Which models of Appropriations do the native writers adopt in writing back to the Empire in indigenous literature?

Research Methodology

This research work intends to investigate the poetic creativities of both colonial and Postcolonial writers in the backdrop theory of Appropriation. The researchers would utilize the Textual Analysis as a method for this research contribution. Textual Analysis being cultural also deals with cultural values and social prestige. Kathrine Belsey's Textual Analysis as a Research Method in English Studies "involves a close encounter with the work itself, an examination of the details without bringing to them more presuppositions than we can help" (Belsey, 2013, p. 160). This study in this regard would

deal with literary texts created by both the colonial and Postcolonial writers. Textual analysis as a method "poses the questions which research sets out to answer" (Belsey, 2013, p. 172). The questions that this type of research investigates are ontological therefore, Cultural criticism, using critical thinking exposes power centers. Thus, the text remains the focus of attention for understanding cultural orientation. "Since the project of cultural criticism is to understand the texts" (Belsey, 2013, p.172), Textual Analysis understands the utility of cultural aspects manifested through literary texts. (Ghulam, Kamran, 2023), Native writers appropriate the cultural codes in the text to establish counter counter-narrative to the dominant colonial discourse. By using Textual Analysis as a research method, this study aims to investigate cultural appropriation through the analysis of native codes embedded in the Text. So, this research would seek the application of Postcolonial ideology in the text of selected poetry.

Literature Review

Various studies have been conducted on Pakistani poetry from the perspective of Postcolonialism, which highlights the issues faced by the Pakistani people regarding colonial mentality. One such study is conducted by Kaneez Fatima Syeda (2015). She investigates Pakistani poetry in Urdu from the perspective of mental displacement and identity crises. She is of the view that "Poetry is purely the art of an introvert plummeting the depths of the human psyche and exploring the frontiers and wastelands of any felt experience" (Syeda, 2015, P. 51). She connects these poetic experiences with resource language and a fluctuation between grief and glee. She further explores the poetic masterpieces of Faiz Ahmad Faiz and Habib Jalib in her study, regarding the depiction of Postcolonial experiences. While writing about the interconnection of home and displacement in the dialectic of Postcolonialism, she writes,

that it is the feature of "all the colonized regions. Place, culture and language are the features directly influenced by the experience of colonization; the influence resulted in mental and emotional alienation" (Syeda, 2015, P. 51). Therefore, Kaneez Fatima in this study explores the role of dialectics, place, displacement, cultural orientations as outcome colonial experiences of Pakistani people as represented by Pakistani poets writing in Urdu. Likewise, Tayyaba Ashfaq (2022) in her study on the Poetry of Moniza Alvi investigates the discursive construction of gender identity in a Postcolonial context. She writes "A gesture of demolition against people and land becomes an act of violence and ferocity against their collective memory" (Ashfaq, 2022, P. 979). Thus, this study explores the problems faced by Pakistani people especially women in the dislocated land of colonizers, and shows the poetess's imaginative yearnings for the traditions of her motherland, Pakistan. In addition, Mahrukh Rana & Farkhanda Shahid Khan (2022), in their study investigate Pakistani poetry of Taufiq Raffat from the perspective of representation of indigenous culture. They credit "Taufiq Rafat as a nationalist poet, reformer, humanist and a lover of indigenous Pakistani cultures and traditions. Above all his affiliation with the masses and the country is evident in his poetry" (Rana & Khan, 2022, P. 567). Thus, this study investigates Rafat's poems as a representative of the native culture of Pakistan.

Research Gap

The previous studies indicate that the researcher attempted to mostly work on Pakistani Poets in Urdu and English from the perspective of identity crises, alienation, longing for homeland, dialectics of place and displacement, and representation of indigenous culture. While this study is different from previous studies in its framework and application as it presents a counter-argument to the narratives propagated by the colonials. This Postcolonial study presents the resistance

to the hegemonic practices used by colonial writers by the inculcation of Appropriation of Indigenous culture

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical underpinnings in the field of Postcolonial literature inculcate the ideological assumptions that investigate minute details of governing principles in this field. Appropriating the values and cultures of the native population requires rigorous exercise of knowledge and wisdom. The thinkers and philosophers while applying the process of appropriation investigate the matters related to the use of language. Bill Ascroft, Helen Tiffen & Gareth Griffith suggested four major Models of Appropriation for understanding the documentation of literary experiences and creativities in the fields of Postcolonial studies. In Postcolonial writing these models of appropriation appear to show a focus on the use of local culture and language. (Rehman, 2023), These models show emphasis on native inclusivity to bring natives back to discourse which once was completely controlled by the colonizers by being in the center while excluding the colonized individuals to the spheres of marginality. The first models of Appropriation deals with indigenous model "which emphasize the distinctive features of the particular national or regional culture" (Ascroft, Tiffen & Griffith, 2004, P. 14). Likewise, the second models of appropriation are "race-based models which identify certain shared characteristics" in distinct native literature of different nations with a focus on certain shared ethnic values (Ascroft, Tiffen and Griffith, 2004, P. 14). Similarly, the third models of assimilation are based on comparison of complex characteristics that investigate "particular linguistic, historical, and cultural features across two or more post-colonial literatures" (Ascroft, Tiffen & Griffith, 2004, P. 14). Furthermore, the fourth detailed model that insert, "hybridity and syncreticity as constitutive attracts elements of all post-colonial literatures" with the aim of merger for

achieving a distinct newly constructed piece of literary creation by keeping the indigenous culture alive" (Ascroft, Tiffen & Griffith, 2004, P. 14). This fourth model is more inclusive on ontological parameters as it permits the merger of linguistic appropriation into achieving new cultural identities. This study will utilize the framework of Appropriation suggested by Bill Ashcroft et Al. (Uddin, Anwar, 2024), In this framework the writers suggest that colonial ideology can be countered by replacing the culture of colonized rulers with that of colonized subjects. Therefore, this study for exploring epistemological and axiological values of the portrayal of native cultural ideals would use the wide-ranging model of Appropriation.

Analysis

This section presents the textual analysis of poetry created by the colonial and Postcolonial indigenous writers. The researchers explore the misrepresentation of natives in the poetry of colonials and Appropriation in the poetry of Indigenous poets. The background framework and variables selected for this study emerge from the theory of Postcolonialism proposed by Bill Ascroft, Helen Tiffen & Gareth Griffith *East as Barbarian and West as Civilized*.

Pakistani poetry in English presents a counter-narrative to the colonial ideology. In colonial portrayal, the writers having colonial backgrounds exploit the natives by presenting them in disfigured images. (Rehman, Shahid, 2024), The colonials think of natives to be uncivilized and barbarian due to their different cultures, languages, and religions. This ideology stems from Western Eurocentrism. "The History of the World travels from East to West, for Europe is the end of History, Asia the beginning" (Hegel, 2001, P. 121). Hegel the renowned European Philosopher declares, that Asia is old, and Europe is modern and contemporary in this type of binarism. Due to such deep-rooted thinking people from Western backgrounds reason that non-European people are barbaric, primitive, and

uncivilized. Owing to this ideology of supremacy the Europeans started the expedition of colonial enterprise in the territories of non-white countries. "The reason was simple: India was governed for the benefit of Britain. Britain's rise for 200 years was financed by its depredations in India" (Tharoor, 2016, P. 24). The colonizers overpower and subjugate the colonies with a clear agenda of making themselves more stable and powerful by the utility of resources of the dominated people. Rudyard Kipling, a prominent English poet and a novelist presents a glorifying picture of colonizers by calling their adventures the holy quest when he declares it, The White Man's Burden to go into exile for fulfilling the needs of the captives. "Take up the White Man's burden Send forth the best ye breed Go, bind your sons to exile to serve your captives' need" (Kipling, 2013, P. 61). Kipling presents this colonial adventure in a manner as if the colonialism in a holy pilgrimage. The colonials like Kipling indulge in Hegelian epistemic violence of misrepresentation of Muslims. He writes, "Blessed be the English and all their ways and works. `Cursed be the Infidels, Heretics, and Turks!" (Kipling, 2013, P. 81). Kipling here prays for the blessings of the English and appreciates the ways of the colonizers and at the same time appears to be cursing the non-Europeans by declaring the subjugated colonized people as infidels. These writers of colonial background considered it as their social responsibility to use their colonial legacy to misrepresent the colonized people. Because of such encounters, colonials can create such stereotypes that result in paving the foundation place for stereotyped colonized people as represented by Kipling.

Postcolonial Counter-argument

(Soomro, Shayan, 2023), Postcolonial literature revolves around the cultural diversity that allows the inculcation of Indigenous cultures into global cultures using English/english, as a discursive practice with the aim of the appropriate native values. It

revolves around the colonial discourse by questioning the colonial mentality. (Amna, Mubasher, Hafza, 2024), The primary aim of postcolonial discussion is to develop the counter-argument against epistemic violence of stereotyping. By encountering the colonials, the Postcolonial writers bring colonized people to the center, therefore, in this way the amalgamation of local culture also takes place. The text portrayed in Postcolonial literature presents the hybrid binaries of colonial and postcolonial ideologies. The texts created in the context of a Postcolonial backdrop might have features of race and native culture, therefore, such "text contains the seeds of 'community' which, as they germinate" allow the readers to "crack asunder the inescapable dialectic of history" (Ascroft, Tiffen & Griffith, 2004, P:34). One of the strategies of resistance adopted by Pakistani Poets in using Indigenous identities, of which using the local name is one. Naming is one such strategy that creates common ground for inclusive in-membership. "By involvement, they mean paying attention to others, claiming in group membership, using first names, or to show that the speaker is closely connected to hearer" (Majeed, 2009, P. 511). Pakistani poetry uses this strategy of naming when Taufeeq Rafat says "My Uncle would be always amused. Mansab a poet, my munshi can write much better" (Rafat, 1988, P. 41). The poem documents the rivalry between the two old friends when they engage in healthy competition. The poem uses the first group where characters engage in a naming strategy to identify themselves with Pakistani culture. The names Mansab and Munshi are Pakistani names that the poet incorporates into the English language. "By using innumerable ways to convey in-group membership, S (speaker) can implicitly claim the common ground with H (hearer) that is carried by that definition of the group. These include in-group usages of address forms, of language or dialect, of jargon or slang, and ellipsis" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, 107).

Taufeeq uses the words 'munshi' (accountant) and 'Mansab khan' from local jargon as munshi is a local terminology to present a competition to the use of 'infidels', 'captives', and 'barbarians. Colonials used vocabulary associated with degenerative connotations while Postcolonial like Taufeeq used words with positive connotations for the same colonized people.

Appropriation of Indigenous Culture.

English as a language of the center retained its privileged status by keeping cultural Ethnocentrism at its core. Because of such treatment English retained its significant value. This model gets its counter from the process of appropriation and use of abrogation. Abrogation is the first stage of "denial of the privilege of 'English' involves a rejection of the metropolitan power" in the usage of discourse as a mode (Ascroft, Tiffen & Griffith, 2004, P. 47). After the exercise of abrogation, the strategy of appropriation is used for "reconstitution of the language of the center, the process of capturing and remolding the language to new usages" which leads to distinction from the privilege language of the Empire" (Ascroft, Tiffen & Griffith, 2004, P. 47). Postcolonial discourse rejects the value centrality of English as a pure language of the center. Due to such treatment, the sanctity and prestige that English enjoyed get transformed into english (english with a small 'e'). The language of the appropriated work restructures English into new patterns to allow the incorporation of nativity. By inculcation of local semantic entities into English language, the discursive power of local English carries a new identity and outlook. Appropriation as a process is utilized by which "the language is taken and made to 'bear the burden' of one's own cultural experience" (Ascroft, Tiffen & Griffith, 2004, p.38). With postcolonial discursive practice, the values and customs of local culture get entry into the world of English to make it appear like English. Pakistani poetry in English successfully adopts the model of

Appropriation by inculcating the native characters, local setting, and indigenous themes from native culture. Taufeeq Raffat in his poetry incorporates the indigenous values of Pakistani culture. The poem "The Kite Fliers captures the images and context of native culture. Taufeeq in this poem says "Kite-flier, pigeon-fancier, wit, and poet, landlord of six hundred bighas of the richest land in the district. Taufeeq Raffat. (Rafat, 1988, P. 40). The poem portrays the thematic values of natives of Pakistani villages. People in Lahore and other cities fancy kites and actively engage in enjoying this sport. By engaging in thoughts and activities of flying kites people feel connected to the value system. "The kite-fighting remained lively throughout all favorable months with slogans, drum beating, and music, in grounds and upon rooftops of the city" (Pervez, 2018, p. 139). Kite flying and fighting present the images of festivity across Punjab in spring. The title of the poem is also interestingly native as it says, "The Kite Fliers (for Shakir Ali)". The dedication shows the writer's intentions of the writer to incorporate the native characters and cultures. The concept of kite flying is eastern in its ontological nature. "Kites were invented in China. They first appeared 2,000 years ago. China had all the right tools to make a kite. It had silk. Silk is very strong and very light. It had paper. It had bamboo" (Simone Ribke, 2018, p. 01). China being a part of East Asia introduced these sports to the world and in the region of Pakistan, it is a popular sport even in contemporary days. The capital of Punjab "Today, Lahore is considered as the main hub of celebrations associated with Basant. (Pervez, 2018, p. 135) Basant {kite Flying} or Vasant etymologically "goes back to its origin in the Sanskrit language where Vasant means spring season. Owing to its popularity and social involvement, the Basant itself was raised as a notable cultural event of Punjab, specifically to mark the end of winter season and to welcome the spring" (Pervez, 2018, p.

134). Therefore, Kite Flying has its great significance in the lives of Pakistanis as we grow older with this sport. Our imagination is enhanced with colorful images of beautiful Kites flying and fighting in the blue sky. Most of the Pakistani boys can easily relate to the festival of Kite flying. That is why Taufeeq Rafat also realizes and documents the vital significance of this sport through the characters of villagers in his poetry. The models of indigenous identity proposed by [Ascroft, Tiffen & Griffith \(2004\)](#) relate to the ideology and discourse in the context of Pakistani culture. The native culture in the 'english' language is synchronized in such a manner that the recognition is visible, and the effect of inclusive cultural harmony is achieved. Language in Postcolonial studies as a tool is utilized in various creative ways in the expression of distinct cultural experiences. These distinctions are fundamental in different cultures which appear as similar in their pragmatic practices. For in one sense, all Postcolonial literature produced in ex-colonies is cross-cultural as they negotiate a space between 'worlds' from different distinctive backgrounds, therefore, a gap appears, where the simultaneous exercise of abrogation and denial of colonial mentality and appropriation of Postcolonial ideology on consistent basis strive to redefine their practices. This literature of Postcolonial background therefore, is created out of the conflict between the abrogation of the received colonial English language which writes from the center (master/colonial), and the act of appropriation in the shape of Postcolonial challenge which brings it under the impact of a vernacular discourse, "the complex of speech habits which characterize the local language, or even the evolving and distinguishing local english of a monolingual society trying to establish its link with place" ([Ascroft, Tiffen & Griffith, 2004, P. 38](#)). "Every afternoon he sauntered down the lane in an embroidered muslin kurta with his favorite quail in his fist and four or five companions" ([Rafat, 1988, P.](#)

40). The native culture is reflected through the dressing style, social interaction, and social inclusion. Taufeeq a Pakistani thinker and poet counters the policy of exclusion of natives and brings back the natives into the mainstream by providing them with culture and strong values. The character of the narrator's maternal uncle is full of life and jazzy in his appearance by wearing colorful clothes, having a lovely quail, and the company of confidantes. This strategy of bestowing classy characters to a native character runs counter to the colonial hegemonic practices of misrepresentation. ([Afsana, Naz, 2023](#)), Pakistani poets writing in English adopt a route that shows more of Pakistani as compared to the English Poets. Pakistan has a rich legacy in Urdu Poetry too in the shape of poetic masters like Ghalib, Iqbal, Faiz, and many others. Because of the richness of the tradition of Pakistani poetry in Urdu, poetry in English also follows a strong tradition of representing the true value of the native spirit. Rafat in his poetry by incorporating the native ideology brings to the limelight the familiar culture practiced in the rural areas of Pakistan. "In the baithak they arranged themselves in a reverent semicircle around him, praising his verse with haunches raised from the ground and uplifted arms and cries of "enchore" ([Rafat, 1988, P. 41](#)). These lines indicate the sense of social connectivity of Pakistani people when they meet each other in a leisurely time. These gatherings have their fun and passion as the discussion usually entails poetic competitions between friends. The participants in the audience express their exuberance, admiration, and appreciation through gestures, cries, and joyous shouting. "A couplet could set them swaying for hours. My uncle was always amused" ([Rafat, 1988, P. 41](#)). The uncle and his companions used to listen to his rival Mansab. This reflects the fact that Pakistani people even despite having strong differences treat each other with respect and admiration. Rafat in his poem shows the fondness and admiration of the

narrator and the Mansab despite their rivalry. Appropriation of local culture by using the concept of hybridization is also one such technique to inculcate the local culture, values, and tradition. Postcolonial literature groomed through the exercise of various stages can be witnessed to correlate to stages of Indigenous or national "consciousness and of the project of asserting difference from the imperial center" (Ashcroft, Tiffin & Griffith, 2004, P. 4). The project of Postcolonial aims to achieve a national identity that only possible by abrogating the colonial practices of falsification as was done by Kipling while Rafat here presents counter-argument by bringing the cultural dresses in the poetry. "he sauntered down the lane in an embroidered muslin kurta" (Rafat, 1988, P. 40). Mansab khan wears the embroidered muslin Kurta which is a presentable appearance that reflects the lively image of native culture. The word "Kurta" is a long shirt that is a typical Pakistani style attire that natives wear in their daily lives. This is not a simple untranslated word rather it allows the hybridity of native culture into english language. Various words process "the untranslated words, the sounds and the textures of the language" might be retained to express the power of the native culture they signify "– to be metaphoric in their 'inference of identity and totality'" (Ashcroft, Tiffin & Griffith, 2004, P. 51). Words from the native culture that are left untranslated in literature are used as a strategy in the Postcolonial literature. Thus here, Rafat has successfully been able to show the power and the presence of Pakistani culture, and 'kurta' as a metaphor signifies the consciousness of the indigenous of Pakistani Punjabi culture.

Conclusion

This study, therefore, aims to analyze Pakistani Poetry written in English from the perspective of incorporating the native culture. This study intended to apply the theoretical model of appropriation as suggested by Ashcroft, Tiffin & Griffith (2004). The model allows

the use of the language of colonial masters (British English in this context) to represent the true color of native values, culture, and people. By using the English language as a tool, the native scholars incorporate an appropriate nativity. Because of this appropriation the true shape and color of native norms, come forward before the world that remained overshadowed and hidden hitherto owing to the process of Orientalizing. In this study, we analyzed the poetry of Rudyard Kipling as a representative of colonial English culture where he indulges in epistemic violence by marginalizing and relegating the native to the levels of barbarianism. On the other hand, Taufiq Rafat as a representative of Postcolonial resistance writing engages in counter-argument by bringing the significance of indigenous culture to the limelight. Rafat glorifies the significant tradition of kite flying and fighting. He also shows the value of regional and national language by inculcating the words like 'baithak' and 'muslin kurta'. He expresses the deep care and regard of villagers for each other despite apparent differences. Such inclusion of native traditions also become the tool of resistance in the hands of literary writers and native scholars. Thus, this study explores the appropriation of native ideology as a tool of resistance to the hegemonic practices utilized by the colonialists.

Recommendations

The recommendations for the future researchers are:

- The researchers can work on the use of epistemic violence in other genres of literature like Prose, short stories, drama, and novels.
- Future researchers can investigate the theory of Appropriation in other genres besides poetry.
- Appropriation as a framework can be used to develop other related frameworks for the study of the significance of indigenous values and traditions.

- Future researchers can use Postcolonial theory to strengthen local cultures in other genres like Digital Literature, Science Fiction, and Postmodern literature.

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