



## Re-Orientalising Partition: Internalised Trauma and Cultural Self-Representation in Between the Dust and Clay

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### ABSTRACT

Pakistani English literature often walks a fine line between staying rooted in local culture and appealing to international audiences, particularly in how it presents gender roles and traditions. Farroqi's *Between Clay and Dust* (2012) is a compelling example of this tension, portraying rural Pakistani society through the lens of anglophone writer. However, such portrayals raise important questions about whether they reinforce Western stereotypes or challenge them or present the general true picture of the society. This study examined the novel through the lens of Lau's Re-orientalism theory, to explore how Farooqi represent Pakistani culture in the context of internalization and self-orientalizing, hybridity and fluidity, commercialization and commodification. The research used textual analysis as method of analysis. The analysis showed that there are considerable evidences in the selected Pakistani novels that suggest that Pakistani anglophone writers are engaged in the act of Re-orientalism through internalizing, self-orientalising, presentation of hybridity and fluidity of ideologies and identities, and commercialisation and commodification of cultural tropes that are cherishingly devoured by western readers and are a commercial success at global level. The study ends with the recommendations that more novels could be studied from the said perspective in order to gather more evidence and certain other tenets of re-orientalism could also be added in future researches.

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## 1. Introduction

Said's seminal work *Orientalism* Said (1978) laid the foundation for understanding how the West has historically represented the East in literature, art, and academic discourse. *Orientalism* refers to the systematic stereotyping of the East by the West, portraying it as exotic, irrational, barbaric, and inferior in contrast to a rational, progressive, and superior West (Rehman et al., 2025). Said also stated that these images are power instruments which assist colonialism and excuse the domination of the West over Eastern cultures. Orientalism presents the West as being rational, modern, masculine, and strong and the East is presented as being irrational, timeless, feminine and weak. This was elaborated by Said. Historians, scholars, anthropologists, and colonial officials developed a solid pool of knowledge, which continued to hold them in power. It presented their rule as a civilizing mission and not exploitation (Said, 1978). This western narrative of power, which has been attempting to construct the East, is associated with Pakistani English literature. The concept of Orientalism helps to understand how this literature is produced, consumed, and the mechanism within it. The concept of *Re-orientalism*, developed by Lau (2009), expands on Said's *Orientalism* by focusing on how Eastern authors themselves contribute to *Orientalist* discourse. Unlike traditional *Orientalism*, which is imposed by the West, *Re-orientalism* occurs when Eastern writers reproduce, modify, or reinforce these stereotypes in their narratives. Lau (2009) argues that *Re-orientalism* is often market-driven, catering to Western readers who expect certain depictions of Eastern societies.

*Re-orientalism* is particularly relevant in the study of diasporic authors, who often write for a global audience and navigate between authentic representation and commercial appeal. It is also to be noted here that Eastern anglophone writers, besides stereotypical conditions of their societies, also focus on hybridity and fluidity, violence, commercialization and commodification, and these are the aspects that western readers seem to accept and devour for their satisfaction and pleasure. Many Pakistani authors writing in English, including Sidhwa, find themselves in this space (Waheed, Irfan, & Bashir, 2024). Their works are frequently published in the West and reviewed by Western literary critics, which influences how Pakistani culture is framed in their narratives. There could also be certain anglophone writers who are residing in the country of origin but also join the bandwagon in order to develop their careers and acceptability. Pakistani literature, in particular, has been subject to Orientalist readings in Western literary circles. Western audiences often expect depictions of violence, gender subjugation, and cultural oppression to perceive authenticity in South Asian narratives (Sadia, 2019). These expectations create a complex dynamism in which authors must negotiate between accurately representing their cultural realities and appealing to a global readership. It is also possible that the representation of realities may be accurate but the sole focus on those grim and violent realities may make the readers wonder as to the authenticity of the positive aspects of the society. There could also be raised questions as to the implied agenda behind specific descriptions. Farooqi's *Between Clay and Dust* Farooqi (2012) engages with many of the themes central to Orientalist discourse. Farooqi's novel, *Between Clay and Dust* (2012), set in the post-partition period also discusses the changing scenario in which there is a clear clash between culture and evolving social norms and preferences. Although feminist discourse is also developed in the novel but the major focus is the conflict that arises out of the character of Ustad Ramzi, a wrestler. The study of this novel from re-orientalist perspective has added to the existing body of literature in oriental and post-colonial studies.

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

The theory of re-Orientalism opines that many Anglophone South Asian writers tend to depict their native cultures through a lens that often aligns with Western expectations and stereotypes. Under the pretense of cultural criticism, this technique raises questions regarding the veracity of such depictions and if they support orientalist notions. Farooqi, a popular novelist, in his novel, *Between Clay and Dust* (2012), presents complex themes related to gender, traditions, cultural clash, identity, tradition, religion, control, resistance, and rural and tribal life in Pakistan. Nevertheless, invoking exoticism, violence, and patriarchy by means of re-orientalism family (internalization, self-orientalizing, agency, essentialism, commercialization, commodification, hybridity, fluidity, and emphasis on the New East/Global South) it is not clear that these images reflect the Pakistani society instead of being fabricated to satisfy the Western reader. This problem was analyzed with the help of the re-orientalism theory developed by Lau (2009) that examines how postcolonial and diaspora writers may reproduce orientalism trends.

### **1.2. Significance of the Study**

This study contributed to the broader debate on postcolonial and re-orientalism criticism by demonstrating the way South Asian writers address international literary demands. Not many studies have applied re-orientalism to Pakistani novels despite the fact that the Orientalism has been largely examined in South Asian literature. This paper provided new knowledge on the way market needs, cultural representation, mixing, and fluidity are formed to influence Pakistani English literature through *Between Clay and Dust* (2012). Its conclusions aid scholars of the South Asian studies, gender studies, postcolonial literature, and orientalism. The work also assisted in explicating the way the Pakistani writers who write in English associate the local and global narratives concerning culture, identity, gender, tradition, and autonomy.

## **2. Literature Review**

The concept of *Re-orientalism*, as introduced by Lau (2009), is central to understanding how Eastern authors contribute to and shape *Orientalist* narratives for global audiences. According to Lau, the concept of Re-orientalism differs from Orientalism by Said because native authors inside the Eastern world actively contribute to creating stereotypical images that portray their own cultures as exotic, romanticized, or victimized. The practice of Re-orientalism is frequently attributed to South Asian English language writers working from abroad because

they write stories to satisfy Western expectations (Qazi, Rose, & Abbasi, 2019). Many accounts from South Asian regions show India through images of gender subordination together with traditional social structures and cultural limitations. There exist divergent opinions regarding these representations because they demonstrate what happens yet they intensify Westernized ideas about South Asians and restrict the accurate presentation of diverse cultural identities (Alghamdi, 2020). The concept of re-Orientalism is fundamentally built upon Edward Said's (1978) thesis in *Orientalism*, which revealed the Western construction of the "Orient" as a static, exotic, and inferior Other to define the West's superiority and justify colonial domination. Following Said (1978) seminal question, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", complicated the issue of representation by arguing that even when the subaltern attempts to speak, they are often forced to use the hegemonic language and discourse of the imperial power that subjugated them, thus questioning the possibility of a purely "authentic" voice. By casting re-Orientalism as a more active and strategic process that is frequently buried within the frameworks of global cultural production, this conceptualization sets it apart from comparable ideas like self-Orientalism (Brouillette, 2007; Huggan, 2002).

Adiga (2008) *The White Tiger*, which has been criticized for offering a dystopian, exaggerated vision of India's "darkness" and poverty for Western shock value—a critique that places it in the category of "poverty porn"—is one example of how re-Orientalism appears in contemporary South Asian English literature through recurring tropes (Kumar, 2011). Conversely, the trope of the exotic, spiritual East is often seen in the magical realist use of spices, mythology, and mysticism in works like Divakaruni (1997) *Mistress of Spices*, which can be interpreted as catering to a Western taste for a commodifiable, mystical Indian-ness. Furthermore, the immigrant narratives of authors like Jhumpa Lahiri, particularly in *Interpreter of Maladies* Lahiri (1999) and *The Namesake* (2003), face criticism for focusing on a specific, privileged diasporic experience and presenting a melancholic, passive vision of cultural displacement that resonates with, and potentially reinforces, Western notions of the immigrant Other. Academic researchers have studied the ways South Asian female authors deal with contradictory cultural pressures. Literary scholar Bhattacharya (2020) establishes that South Asian English-speaking female authors must balance authentically representing their cultures with a consumer-ready approach by embracing Western feminism while dismantling patriarchal traditions. Narayan (2013) uses literary analysis to prove that *Re-orientalism* happens in storytelling because authors show excessive suffering by portraying feminist victimhood and creating traditional and modern binary oppositions. The study investigates *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, a novel by Khalid Hosseini to determine if the book breaks cultural stereotypes about Pakistani customs or if it upholds existing stereotypes based on Orientalist theories. The central concept that runs throughout Pakistani English literature reveals how women must negotiate patriarchal power alongside a post-colonial social framework.

These authors along with others in Pakistan examine in their literature the ways women function in societies where men hold power through the lens of Sidhwa. The oppressed woman narrative frequently appears as a critical issue within literature written in South Asian English. The narrative pattern displays women as helpless targets of patriarchal rules alongside imposed marriages and home violence situations (Mittra, 2013). Ahmad and Ahmed (2024) discussed Aslam's *The Wasted Vigil* (2008) from the perspective of re-Orientalism. They majorly focused on the role of diasporic writers in representing the East. Similarly, another study Ahmad and Ahmed (2025) of the scholars, highlights that how does the role of females has been re-Orientalized in Anam's *The Good Muslim* (2011). Western literature expands the portrayal of these narratives because they fit within global feminist views that analyze non-Western cultures for signs of female oppression. Zaitoon's experience in *The Pakistani Bride* (1990) serves as the perfect representation of the oppressed woman trope (Naqvi, 2025). Against her will, she ends up married to a tribal man and then suffers extreme domestic abuse before making her escape attempt which follows traditional narratives of female suffering. The novel shows tribal culture to be unkind and this helps create the perception that Pakistan restricts women's rights harshly (Sachdev, 2020). As mentioned above that Lau's concept of re-orientalism is comparatively new and has not been theoretically applied on many Pakistani literary novels. Farooqi's *Between Clay and Dust* (2012) is also one such novel. Although the novel was shortlisted for The Man Asian Literary Prize in 2012 but there have not been many scholarly works on it and the analysis of the novel from reorientalist lens is completely lacking. Hassan et al. (2025) analysed the novel from postcolonial perspective but that is an attempt to

understand the urban spaces as a paradox of modernity. Shakeel et al. (2022) conducted linguistic analysis of the novel by focusing on the aspect of code switching in the novel.

However, the re-Orientalism framework is not without its critics and nuances, leading to significant debates, such as whether the use of stereotype can ever be a form of agency through what Spivak conceptualizes as "strategic essentialism," a temporary use of reductive identities to achieve a larger political or cultural goal. A major counter-argument problematizes the very notion of "authenticity" itself, deconstructing it as a trap that critics can fall into by presuming to know what constitutes a real representation of an immensely diverse region, thereby imposing a new form of ideological policing on authors (Ganguly, 2016). Additionally, a significant portion of the discussion focuses on authorial positionality, often criticizing diasporic writers for being particularly vulnerable to re-Orientalism because of their cultural and physical distance from the subcontinent and the fact that their main audience is Western, even though this criticism can be essentializing in and of itself.

## **2.1. Research Gap**

The book by Farooqi, entitled *Between Clay and Dust* Farooqi (2012) has not been re-Orientalized. We do not know how re-Orientalism is used in the work of Farooqi, though much has been said about her work in the postcolonial literature. This demonstrates a gap in the current research. The re-Orientalist perspective would help in providing better and new insights about the Pakistani English fiction since the books are culturally oriented and address gender, identity, and power. This work intends to address that gap by providing a re-Orientalist reading of the *Between Clay and Dust* Farooqi (2012), and to take Farooqi work and the emerging debate on re-Orientalism in South Asian literature to the next level. This review concludes by stating that re-Orientalism is an influential prism that demonstrates how imbalanced global economic cultures continue to have an impact on the writers, and the difficulty the post-colonial writer has to struggle with. The post colonial author must live in a world that is filled with the ideas of Edward Said and the market. So re-Orientalism is not only of ill intent; it is a structural fact that compels authors to fulfill numerous opposing demands and ambitions. The further investigation should explore how digital publishing and social media alter the access and how the translation of local languages gains significance and how more comparisons with other postcolonial writers can be made to challenge and refine re-Orientalism.

## **3. Research Methodology**

This study is qualitative research grounded in Lau's theory of Re-Orientalism. It adopts an interpretive approach and employs in-depth textual analysis to examine Farooqi's *Between Clay and Dust* (2012) as it aims to evaluate how the novels interact with Western preconceptions about South Asian literature through its representations of identity and cultural elements and personal identity. Following interpretivist paradigm, this study is qualitative in nature with the view that there could be more than one interpretations of reality. Reality is a social construct and its various interpretations develop better and deeper understanding.

### **3.1. Theoretical Framework**

This study uses *Re-orientalism* by Lau (2009) which extends Said's *Orientalism* Said (1978) as its research framework. *Re-orientalism* studies Eastern authors who both consciously or subconsciously create or reshape Orientalist stereotypes found in Western accounts about the East. *Re-orientalism* represents an internal scholarly movement that rises from Eastern authors and filmmakers alongside intellectuals who deliver stories following Western literary market trends. The basic tenets of re-orientalism are: internalization and self-orientalizing, hybridity and fluidity, commercialization and commodification, hybridity and fluidity, and focus on the New East/Global South. This research work aims to explore and analyze the selected novels from the perspective of above-mentioned tenets of re-orientalism. According to Lau (2009), south Asian writers are particularly involved in internalization and self-reorientalising acts as they have been colonized for centuries and the western influence and culture has been internalized to such an extent that they may not be able to write without its expression. Hence, due to internalization of the western culture and identity, these writers do self-orientalising in the representation of the native culture and identity. The shaping of worldwide interpretations of South Asian literature depends heavily on Re- orientalism through its controlling influence on how cultural stories are built and shared. Numerous literary scholars maintain that South Asian writers using English language fiction tend to tout specific thematic repetitions because these

themes work well in Western literary markets (Kaushal, 2022). South Asian narratives tackling genuine cultural matters assist Western perceptions of Asian societies but they reduce the representation's complexity by upholding these established Western views. Re-orientalism, as discussed by scholars like Lisa Lau (2009), occurs when "oriental" subjects themselves perpetuate these orientalist stereotypes, often for a Western audience or market. It is a process of self-exoticisation and self-othering where complex, diverse cultures are reduced to monolithic, often archaic, tropes to satisfy external expectations and preconceptions. The native writer or artist, in representing their own culture through a lens calibrated by Western discourse, can inadvertently reinforce the very stereotypes they may wish to dismantle.

#### **4. Analysis and Discussion**

The most potent re-Orientalist strategy in *Between Dust and Clay* is its centering of the 1947 Partition of India as the singular, defining trauma of the Pakistani experience. Although the horrible migration of Muslims to Pakistan and the great tragedies that befell during this painful event have their own significance and trauma in the unconsciousness of Pakistani anglophone writers but it also seems that these events have been overwhelmingly discussed, described, presented and marketed to the Western audience which is a re-orientalist act in itself. Lau (2009) seems to opine that the international market of literature has great desire and lust to devour the sufferings, troubles and pains of the eastern hemisphere mainly those writings that show religious intolerance, mass violent acts, and injustices with the female gender. Farooqi has also chosen the event of partition as the central theme of the novel which also seems to satiate the desire of the western audience in seeing the pain of the east.

The novel takes up the event of partition in such a way that all subsequent events that follow seem to be influenced and affected by that one reality which is an arguable phenomenon. This is a form of strategic reductionism. The multifaceted politics of Pakistani identity—its class struggles, its regional ethnic conflicts (e.g., Baloch, Sindhi, or Mohajir narratives that are not solely defined by 1947), its urban modernity, its intellectual and artistic movements—are all subsumed by the overwhelming shadow of Partition. The characters' motivations, psychologies, and futures are almost entirely determined by this one event. For instance, the modern protagonist's sense of alienation and rootlessness is portrayed not as a contemporary global condition but as a direct, almost mystical inheritance of Partition's displacements. This produces a teleological narrative in which all paths lead back to 1947, depicting Pakistan as a country trapped in a painful past and unable to progress—a traditional re-Orientalist cliché that denies the country a nuanced, changing present (Khan, 2020).

Additionally, the novel's portrayal of violence frequently veers toward a sensual, almost artistic terror that runs the risk of turning historical tragedy into a literary extravaganza. Although historically accurate, the Western market also anticipates and consumes detailed accounts of train massacres, kidnappings, and sexual violence. Lau and Mendes (2011) (p. 9) can refer to the emphasis on the physical and horrific as a "voyeurism of violence," which is a crucial element of the re-Orientalist text and satisfies a lurid curiosity. The trauma is carefully chosen and arranged to have the most emotional impact on a reader who is securely removed from the historical period being discussed. The book serves as a vehicle for what Boehmer (2005, p. 9) refers to as "the consumption of the other's pain," enabling the international reader to feel a cathartic sense of sympathy and moral superiority without having to confront Pakistan's more everyday, structural, or modern political realities. It is safe to consume because the trauma has been sealed in the past.

*Between Clay and Dust's* setting is very important. The action takes place following India's horrific Partition, a time of great social upheaval, the fall of ancient feudal systems, and the emergence of a new bourgeois elite whose ideals are in line with modernity, trade, and a departure from the past.

The old patronage system that sustained both the akhara and the kotha has vanished. The arena of Ustad Ramzi is in such a state that it cannot be repaired anymore and there is a lot of economic burden on it. It used to be a place where physical and moral learning was in abundance but now the things have changed for the worse. For the rich people, the concern for the physical and moral development is sidelined as they see the akhara not as a noble place but only as a place which could render good money in real estate bargains. They view it just as an economically profitable place. They are unable to understand the cultural and spiritual

importance of the place. Recently, Ustad Ramzi's world had been shaken by the abolition of the princely states whose nawabs and rajas had traditionally patronized the wrestling arts. Many smaller akharas had closed down in consequence. The two surviving akharas belonging to Ustad Ramzi and his rival clan had also experienced the bite of hard times (Farooqi, 2012). In the same vein of events, the world of Tamami is also shattered. It used to be complete and replete with music, poetry and etiquette but now it was merely for entertainment and that too having sexualities. The new customers who came there only cared for their personal temporary entertainments rather than for the love of art. This shift in the landscape of the society is detrimental to the change that forces both the central characters of the novel i.e. Ustad Ramzi and Tamami to struggle to adopt the new world order where there are different values quite contrary to the ones they have been having for years. They are also at the same time engaged with the internal psychological conflicts for many of the new things affect them. They also have to internalize the new situations in order to move on with the society but that takes their toll.

The code of honour and traditions that Ustad Ramzi has been following and acting upon throughout his life seem to be outdated and he feels and experiences it clearly that the things had changed a lot. His internal conflict is the core of the novel's exploration of internalisation. He is painfully aware of the changing times and the disrespect shown to his institution, yet he is unable to adapt because to do so would mean betraying his very self. The external pressure to conform manifests as an internal crisis of meaning. The caricature of the pahalwan as a dying beast and the implied suggestion that in the eyes and minds of people the pahalwan's art and his world were doomed, were not lost on Ustad Ramzi. The wedge of antipathy that had slowly been driven between him and the world had left Ustad Ramzi unruffled; he had learnt to take in disparaging words without feeling outrage (Farooqi, 2012)(p. 07). The Committee's offer to purchase the akhara land is the primary instrument of this pressure. They do not see a revered Ustad; they see a stubborn old man sitting on valuable property. Their gaze reduces his life's work to a monetary value. Ramzi initially resists, but the constant financial strain and the humiliations that follow force him to engage with them. This engagement requires him to constantly justify his existence in their terms, terms he does not respect. He is compelled to use the language of the profane (business) to defend the sacred, a pointless endeavor that emphasizes his helplessness. This imposed irrelevance is deeply internalized as a result of this dynamic. He starts to question the basic basis of his existence. The story often explores his thoughts, showing a man plagued by the ghost of his past self and contrasting his current decline with his former splendor. This is an internalization of the Committee's conclusion that he and his world are worthless in the new scheme of things, not only nostalgia.

This is further demonstrated by his connection with Tamami, his potential but disobedient sibling. Tamami's success in the contemporary wrestling scene, notoriety, and patronage are all possible routes to relevance. But Tamami's strategies undermine the ethos of the Akhara. He aligns himself with the very ideals that are undermining the conventional world in his pursuit of personal glory and financial success. Ustad Ramzi struggles to balance his fear of the akhara's demise with his need for it to survive. There is a significant mental struggle when he reluctantly permits Tamami to participate in commercial fights. He is capitulating to the new system, internalising the idea that traditional values must be compromised for mere existence. His internal struggle is captured in his tortured silence and rigid posture: "He felt a strange disquiet, as if he had committed a grave error of judgment" (Farooqi, 2012)(p. 87). The Ustad's code is being eroded from within by the necessity of surviving in a world that rejects it. Furthermore, Ustad Ramzi's existence becomes a performance, a form of re-orientalising. He becomes a living museum piece, a symbol of a dying tradition. But the builders who wanted to purchase the land of arena did not care for his sport and attachment with it. They wanted to build something on the land.

Subsequently, it attracted the interest of builders. Aware of the news that the imposition of a higher property tax had added to Ustad Ramzi's financial troubles, the builders' representatives had approached him and offered a substantial contribution to the clan if he would agree to sell the land. They did not hide the fact that they planned to build on the site. (Farooqi, 2012)(p. 134). Although Ustad Ramzi tries to follow his code of life that he had learnt and wanted to remain the last true romantic figure of a pehlwan even if he had to be alone in the world. He seemed stubborn in his choice of living. He was in pain, there is no doubt about it but still he was time and again shaken by the financial pressures that hit him like the tax

amount issue. But still he wanted to internalize the changing conditions at the same time desperately trying to keep in tact his own likings. What Ustad Ramzi's girl of kotha, Gohar Jan, goes through is a condition of internalized shame which is more explicitly expressed and gazed by the people of that area. Such gender issues are also a great thirst for the western audience to see these burning in the east. This is also an act of re-orientalism. Her entire profession was based on a delicate balance of art and companionship, which has now been stripped away, leaving only the transaction of sexuality. The new clients, like the man who becomes her patron, do not appreciate music or poetry; they seek possession and control. Gohar is acutely aware of her fallen status. The external gaze of society, which once viewed her kotha with a mixture of allure and respect, now views her with outright contempt and pity. This humiliation is strongly internalized by her. Her internalization of the bourgeois and patriarchal ideals that condemn her is directly responsible for her yearning for atonement and a place in a respectable society. Because she accepts the very system that oppresses her, she yearns for marriage and social acceptance. The colonized subject's need for acceptability from the colonizer is a classic Fanonian moment. "I am tired of this life," she says to Ustad Ramzi. I aspire to be like other women (Farooqi, 2012)(p. 58). This statement demonstrates a deep sense of alienation from herself; she no longer considers her own identity to be legitimate and evaluates herself against a normative standard of female respectability that her previous environment did not adhere to.

Her relationship with the wealthy patron is a masterful depiction of re-orientalising. He does not want Gohar the artist; he wants Gohar the exotic fantasy. He installs her in a house, not as a wife, but as a kept woman, a living embodiment of the orientalist trope of the mysterious, available Eastern concubine. She is forced to perform this role for him. She must be the spectacle of the courtesan without the art that originally justified it. Her identity is completely hollowed out and repackaged for his consumption. Farooqi writes, "He wanted to possess the legend that was Gohar, not the woman she had become" (2012, p. 132). This is the essence of re-orientalising: the reduction of a complex human being to a consumable legend, a stereotype. Gohar actively participates in this performance. She understands the script she is expected to follow and plays her part, because it is the only form of survival available to her. She cultivates the mystery, the allure, and the subservience he expects. However, this performance is corrosive. The gap between the performed identity and her internal self, filled with shame, longing, and despair, widens until it becomes unsustainable. Her eventual complete mental and physical breakdown is the direct result of this unbearable psychological split. She has internalised the world's shameful view of her, and then been forced to perform a caricature of that shameful identity for a buyer. She is both the cause and the sufferer of her own re-orientalising, a terrible cycle that ultimately results in her complete demise.

Due to a strict code of family honor that keeps them from truly supporting one another, Ustad Ramzi and Gohar's relationship is frequently tense and aloof. An essential component of their internalization is this exact code. The concept of izzat (honour) is a traditional value, but in the new context, it becomes a prison. Ramzi cannot openly help her because it would shame the family name, a name that has already lost all its social currency in the world he is trying to navigate. He internalises this code so completely that it paralyzes him. He is unable to act compassionately towards his sister because he fears the judgement of a society that no longer judges him by any other metric. He is upholding a rule for an audience that has changed the game. Similarly, Gohar's desire for Ramzi's approval is a desire for validation from the patriarch, the keeper of that very code. She understands that if there would be any way of honour for her it would be through Ustad Ramzi. She sees her redemption through the character of Ustad Ramzi. But Ustad Ramzi has his own issues. Both of them seem to be stuck in the changing environment and their inner conflicts in such a manner that it is not very easy for them to get out of the changing system and make their mark of honour and respect in the society, the way it used to be for Ustad Ramzi, particularly. Ustad Ramzi is forced to be in an area of thoughts where in his own mind he is the true upholder of traditions and values whereas the realities of the world seem to disregard what he thinks of himself. His adherence to tradition becomes a re-orientalised performance for a world that sees him as a monument, not a man. Tamami's internalisation of shame leads her into a gilded cage where she is forced to perform a re-orientalised fantasy of the exotic courtesan, a performance that shatters her mind and body. They are both caught between the clay of their internalised identities—molded by the pressures of a changing world—and the dust of their performed identities—a dry, lifeless spectacle for others to consume. The title itself speaks to this fragile, unsustainable state. Clay

can be molded and shaped, representing how their identities are formed and internalised under pressure. Dust is what remains when something crumbles and loses its form, representing the ultimate result of their performative, re-orientalised existence—a meaningless disintegration. Farooqi's profound achievement is to show that the true tragedy of his characters is not that the world has changed around them, but that the change has entered them, convincing them of their own obsolescence and compelling them to perform it until there is nothing left but dust.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study was conducted to analyse the selected Pakistani anglophone novel, *Between Clay and Dust*, from the perspective of Re-orientalism by Lau (2009). The research problem was to understand and analyse if Pakistani anglophone literary writers are involved in re-orientalism, which is a form of self-orientalism having its roots in the philosophy of Edward Said. Lau (2009) opines that many Eastern anglophone writers, particularly diasporic writers are involved in the act of orientalism for their various interests. Chief interests are to gain western readership and satiate their thirst to present the east as exotic and bearing the similar characteristics of violence, injustice, women discrimination, patriarchy, tribalism, exoticism and disorientation at various cultural levels. Lau also presents various tenets of re-orientalism like internalization, hybridity, fluidity, commercialization and commodification that could be found in the works of the eastern anglophone writers. Adopting this theoretical lens, the researcher was interested to explore if Pakistani writers were involved in this act. With this research problem, the researcher developed the research objectives of exploring, finding and analysing the selected Pakistani novel to see the acts of internalizing, hybridity, fluidity, commercialization and commodification. The research questions were also developed keeping in view the research objectives.

Musharraf Ali Farooqi's *Between Clay and Dust*, a sparse and haunting novel shortlisted for the Man Asian Literary Prize, presents a seemingly stark contrast to the visceral, action-driven narratives often associated with re-Orientalist literature, yet a deep and critical examination reveals its profound and nuanced entanglement with the very mechanisms Lisa Lau identifies as central to the re-Orientalist project, albeit through a strategy of melancholic minimalism rather than sensationalist exposition. Farooqi's novel, set in an unspecified, decaying city in post-Partition Pakistan and focusing on the twin declines of a champion wrestler, Ustad Ramzan, and his courtesan, Gohar, engages in a re-Orientalist mode not through the graphic depiction of poverty or violence that characterizes some South Asian literature in English, but through its elegiac, almost anthropological, preservation of dying traditions, its construction of a timeless and apolitical cultural space, and its fetishization of a rigid, honor-bound masculinity and femininity that resonates with romanticized, Orientalist notions of a pre-modern, essentialized South Asian past, a process that Graham Huggan (2001) has famously theorized as the "postcolonial exotic," wherein cultural difference is strategically commodified for global consumption (p. 32).

### **5.1. Recommendations**

After having conducted this research work, the researcher can easily recommend that the topic being a new and vast area of study in the bigger field of post-colonialism can be analysed from various perspectives by adding new Pakistani anglophone works and also by exploring more tenets of Lisa Lau's theory of re-orientalism. The idea of re-orientalism can also be combined with the current literary age i.e. the age of post-truth and this study could be developed deeper. The researcher also recommends that other genres of literature i.e. poetry, novel, drama and prose could also be selected for analysis from the same theoretical perspective. The researcher also feels that new historical reading of Pakistani anglophone fiction with the same theoretical lens could also be conducted in which the researcher could study the literary works alongside real-time historical works in order to understand the authenticity of realities that are presented in the works. Moreover, there are also numerous theoretical propositions in the present times which could also be studied together with re-orientalism. One such proposition is metamodernism that discusses the oscillation between the modernism and postmodernism. Such study would also be helpful in understanding the techniques and strategies used for the very act of re-orientalism by the Pakistani anglophone writers.



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