

Meatless Days: A Post-Colonial Study of Overlapped Identities, Migrations and Memories

Hari tanpa Daging: Studi Pasca-Kolonial tentang Identitas, Migrasi, dan Kenangan yang Tumpang Tindih



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Abstract

This research paper aims to critically analyze the political, lingual and religious identity crises of the people of the third world. For that purpose, the primary text selected is Meatless Days written by Sara Suleri. The theoretical framework employed to provide character analysis is post-colonialism of Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak. Throughout this research, the concept of "the orient" and "the occident" (Selden et al. 220) given by Said is invoked in addition to the concept of "anomaly" given by Spivak. Firstly, the primary resource is analyzed from the theoretical lens of Said and Spivak in order to provide a wider commentary on the political, lingual and religious identities of the people of the third world. Secondly, this research divests the myths, established by the Western philosophers regarding "the orient" (people of the Global South/East or third world) as irrationally religious, apolitical and amoral, through the primary resource. Lastly, this research paper establishes a case for fluidity of identities, of characters presented in Meatless Days, as a result of dislocation and migration..

Keywords: *post-colonialism, the western historicism, political discourse, hybridized identities and hegemony*

Abstrak

Tulisan penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis secara kritis krisis identitas politik, bahasa dan agama masyarakat dunia ketiga. Untuk itu, teks utama yang dipilih adalah Meatless Days yang ditulis oleh Sara Suleri. Kerangka teori yang digunakan untuk memberikan analisis karakter adalah post-kolonialisme Edward Said dan Gayatri Spivak. Sepanjang penelitian ini, konsep "orient" dan "Barat" (Selden et al. 220) yang diberikan oleh Said dipanggil di samping konsep "anomali" yang diberikan oleh Spivak. Pertama, sumber daya utama dianalisis dari lensa teoritis Said dan Spivak untuk memberikan komentar yang lebih luas tentang identitas politik, bahasa dan agama masyarakat dunia ketiga. Global South/East atau dunia ketiga) sebagai irasional religius, apolitis dan amoral, melalui sumber daya utama. Terakhir, makalah penelitian ini menetapkan kasus untuk fluiditas identitas, karakter yang disajikan dalam Hari Tanpa Daging, sebagai akibat dari dislokasi dan migrasi. .

Kata kunci: *pascakolonialisme, historisisme barat, wacana politik, identitas hibridisasi dan hegemoni*

INTRODUCTION

This research employs Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak's concept of post-colonialism in order to provide comprehensive analysis of *Meatless Days* written by Sara Suhleri. At the core of debate would be the identity crisis of the parents of Suleri, her Dadi and friend. To expand the contentious issue of identity crisis, the primary focus of the paper would be on the dislocation, migration and refugee identity of the above characters and their associated complexities. Given the division of the world into developed countries, developing countries and underdeveloped countries, a parasitic world order has come into existence because of which discrimination based on color, race or religion has got deepened across the world. This entrenched attitude of the well-flourished occident based on the Western historicism against the orient(people of the third world, the Global South , the East as mentioned in this research) has resulted into a discriminatory attitude of the Western scholars who have been writing about the people of the third world with pessimistic connotations. Their narrative is a tilted, biased and generalized version of the solid realities of the Eastern people for the fact that they are producing knowledge about the third world from the position of power. Blinded by superiority complex, they dehumanize the people of the East by generalizing their identity as people of lesser value. To clarify this conundrum, this paper intends to demystify the tilted political discourse written by the Western scholars who have miserably failed to connect their contextual analysis to the actualities of the people of the third world.

What is more important is the fact that this paper deploys the concept of “ the occident” and “the orient” given by Said and the concept of “ an anomaly” given by Spivak (Selden et al. 220) respectively in order to expose prejudiced analysis made by the Western scholars from a privileged position of Eurocentricity. In doing so, this paper is inclined towards rehabilitating “the orient” by providing a critique on the Western political thought which has been founded on biased claims such as the Eastern people are lazy, deceiving and irrational for they are living in an Islamised Arabic World (Selden et al. 220). By the Arab world, Said implies the people of the Global South. Conclusively, this paper, amid placing the political realities of identities of the people of the third world at the core of discussion, will address the following questions:

1. How troubled are the individual identities of the people of the third world vis-a-vis the identities of the people of the first world?
2. How has Suleri addressed the identity crises of characters in *Meatless Days* such as her paternal grandmother (Dadi), father, mother and friends from the lens of unedifying migrations?
3. How has dislocation impacted the regional, religious and national identities of her characters in *Meatless Days*?

Objective of research

The objective of this research is to question the Western historicism so as to dismantle the generalized narrative deliberately produced by the Western scholars so as to intellectually cripple “the orient” who are specified as the people of the Global South, the East or the third world (Selden et al. 220). They have been successful to some extent given the Western scholars and their writings are widely read across the world even today. Before the late 20th century, people were largely unaware of the political discourse that the Western scholars had been writing to brutalize the people of the Global South. But as Said has pointed out their flawed concepts based on tilted political discourse in his book, *Orientalism*, the reverse process has started as people have started noticing the impact of the prejudicial discourse, especially by those who have gone to the Western World for studies such as Suleri and Spivak. Having noticed that, they begin to write a new narrative about the people of the Global South with a focus on their unique position in the world. Hence, the aim of this research is to bring to fore that new narrative using the concepts of post-colonialism, a theory given by Said and Spivak, with the help of the literary text, *Meatless days*, written by Suleri.



Significance of Research

The significance and originality of this research paper lies in the fact that this literary text has not been comprehensively deconstructed from the point of view of character analysis in the existing scholarship. Though some scholars have employed the theory of postcolonialism to analyze *Meatless Days*, however, they have not discussed the issue of various identities of people living in the Global South. This paper has thus brought forth the debate of hybridized political, religious and national identities of the characters presented in this text in order to provide a scathing commentary on the irrationally biased identity formation techniques of the Western scholars, especially, of the ones engaged in the Western historicism.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs qualitative research methodology which is based on textual analysis and furthermore, on character analysis of the literary text, *Meatless Days* where the text is to be explored from the lens of post-colonialism. In doing so, the aim of the research is to expand on the hybridized identities of Suleri's characters so as to provide a comprehensive analysis of the text for the contemporary readers of English Literature. Given that the discourse on the identity formation is in the hands of the Western scholars, the purpose of this textual analysis is to recover that power to identity formation from the stranglehold of the Western scholars so as to empower the subaltern narrative formation of the writers from the Global South such as Suleri, Spivak and Said.

Theoretical Framework

Edward Said, in his book *Orientalism*, has debated on the question of the identity of Palestinians and argued that the Western philosophers have developed a poor understanding of "the orient" such as labelling Palestinians as "the others". Taking help from "images, stereotypes and general ideology," the Western philosophers have constructed a narrative that speaks for "the laziness, deceit and irrationality of the orient" (Selden et al. 220).

Moreover, Said clearly points out the fact that the relation between "the occident" and "the orient" is of imaginative geography and is inescapably political (Selden et al. 220). By calling this relation political, Said has questioned the historicism of the Western scholars. He questions how they can synthesize knowledge about "the orient" whom they have been oppressing not only through menacing narrative formation that "the orient" is not only lazy and deceitful but also through saying that "the orient" is apolitical. The reason behind this claim, as Said puts it, is that they are commenting on the people of the third world from the perspective of imaginative geography and therefore they miserably fail to patch up their analysis to the ground reality. It is again a sign of superiority complex of the Western scholars that they consider themselves sophisticated by weaving a political narrative based on tilted understanding of the Global South, the East, and the third world.

Similarly, Said uprightly rejects the scholarship of the Western philosophers for the fact that they have been narrativizing "the orient" to create a homogeneous identity. That is why, in order to bring out the third world people away from the brutalized homogenization of the Western scholars, Said has asked for "decentered thinking" (Selden et al. 221) in order to liberate "the orient" from the potential clutches of the Western domination.

While discussing the colony of Egypt, in his book *Orientalism*, occupied by Englishmen Said wrote that it was not just a triumph of the British Imperialism but also it was a big win of the English knowledge (47). Having said that, Said has brought forth the lingual domination of the Western scholars as they portray English as the language of modernity at the expense of the languages of the colonized world.

Said in one of his essays *The World, the Text and the Critic* has explored the worldliness of the text (Selden et al. 221). By that terminology, the worldliness of text, Said means that there is of course a natural

connection between the text and the actuality. Ironically, though the Western philosophers consider the first world people high profile, educated and tolerant vis-a-vis people of the third world, they fail to do justice to the realities of "the orient." Considering their imaginative thinking as a reality, they have mistakenly reduced "the orient" to stereotypes such as a coterie of lazy people with an innate element of deceit and fabrication. To divest this kind of understanding of the West, Said brings to fore the idea that the Western scholars cannot comprehend the pragmatic realities of "the orient" until they are stopped by a counter critique of their philosophy that is extremely shallow and superficial. Thus, to rehabilitate "the orient" the critics of the West should come forth, with their techniques of narrative formation which though discriminatory in nature, and reasonably explain themselves, as done by Said and Spivak about their varied religious, regional and personal identities so as to reveal the shallowness of the Western scholarship.

Moreover, though the post-colonial understanding of Spivak is similar to Said's, her scholarship is mainly focused on identity of women of the third world. Calling herself a marginalized person in the American society, she feels her identity is meaningless, and a kind of "anomaly" which cannot be fit in the Western world (Selden et al. 223). Nevertheless, she has spent a considerable time in America and lived side by side with the Western scholars, she is often represented as a woman of the third world. Being a professor in a reputable institution notwithstanding, she is hardly treated with respect for she is unlike them; in fact, she is a convenient marginal identity (Selden et al 223). Having been fed up with such a treatment, she begins to point out the oppressive knowledge formation methodology of the West which is entirely based on discriminatory attitudes. Similarly, with unflinching determination and quest, she has called out "the oppressive structure of violence" imposed by the Western liberalism and puts a big question mark over the construction of the English Literature by the Western scholars completely opposite to the people of the Global South by enfeebling their identity and self as the manageable others.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Suryawati and coauthors in their article Third World Subaltern Women in the Review of Feminism Theory Postcolonial Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak while elucidating the concept of the third world women by Spivak mark the fact that the unconscious hegemonic attitudes resulted in various kinds of hegemonic attributes which the Western scholars used to denigrate women of the Global South (88). That was why she endorsed the subaltern (colonized) to protest against these hegemonic attributes which had constructed during the era of colonialism. Having been oppressed in America as a subaltern body, she calls herself an "anomaly" (Sheldon et al. 223) as a protest against hegemonic powers and their fabricated tags so as to destroy the chain of slavery that is largely ideological than a material thing. Hence, Suryawati's article supports the thesis statement of this research that the Western scholars denigrate the people of the Global South as religious sometimes and other times as poorly guided people who cannot think for themselves without their theoretical assumptions.

While studying Orientalism, a book by Said, Samantha Glass and co-authors in their article Orientalism: Trapped in Time have brought forth the point that the West has been able to belittle the culture of the East by negatively portraying them since they have hegemonic power over the narrative (1). Operating from the position of power, they have authority over the narrative formation which they then use against the people of the Global South so that they can maintain their power over them. Historically speaking, the first world had established its hegemony over the third world for raw material during the era of colonialism for industrialization (1). It is continuing even today for people of the third world have failed to develop their own narrative about themselves and their identities. That is why the tags invented by the Western scholars are still being used against them. But given Suleri's work on themes such as religion, culture and history in this memoir Meatless Days she has not only challenged those tags but also exposed their negative connotations. That is why this research paper aims to



deconstruct those negative connotations of the Western scholars that Suleri has intricately mentioned in her memoir.

While writing the review of the memoir *Meatless Days*, Inderpal Grewal, a professor of women's, gender and sexuality studies at Yale university, has described the nature of memory and how it functions regardless of chronology for memory is always metaphorical(509) and relative to events occurring in real life. Memory, as she understands, thus is neither reality, nor a falsehood. It is the combination of both [reality and falsehood] metaphorically as well as literally. Hence, Suleri's memories, according to this review, regarding her characters, act more in terms of metaphor than reality as they bring out a rich experience to the idea of race, color and creed. It is this reason every character has to tell a unique story of dislocation, migration and separation. Moreover, what is interesting in this memoir as pointed out by Grewal is that Suleri has written *Meatless Days* against the Western notion of writing biographies based on a single character/person. She has quashed this notion by multiplicity as well as decentralizing her characters using a post-structuralist notion of identity. She has done so to bring to light the migrant experiences from Asia and Africa into words so that cross-cultural lives, their immigrant narratives and identities can be understood without any generalized tag popularized by the

Western scholars. For that reason, Grewal is extremely fond of decentralizing identities, as done by Suleri, in her memoir, by using a post-structuralist approach (509). This review is thus complementary to this research since this paper also decentralizes the characters of Suleri but using Said's critique of post-Colonialism. Anita Mannur, an associate professor of English at Miami University, in her research paper *Culinary Nostalgia: Authenticity, Nationalism, and Diaspora*, has discussed the food related stories that Suleri has written in memoir to geographically locate her in the third world. Incredibly, she has brought forth the point that, food for Suleri, is a kind of identity that locates her position in the American society (18), meaning that she always remember the taste of foods that she has grown up eating in Pakistan. Secondly, another reason for why food is an identity for Suleri is that knowing that *Kapura* are not sweetbreads as told by her mom, she still wants to remember it with the same name as changing its name means changing her memory, identity and nationalism. Having discussed the above points, Mannur has intricately treated food in relation to nostalgia and nationalism. Thus, this piece of writing is quite helpful for this research for the reason that it also draws a lot on memory and food.

While commenting on the genre of writing autobiography in her article *Self-*

Representation in Sara Suleri's *Meatless Days*, Najia Asrar Zaidi, a professor of the university of Baluchistan, has said that it is the best form of writing for women for they can discover their relative identities according to their context liberally without any restriction (117). Suleri's memoir perfectly fits in this category for the fact that she speaks for herself from a relative position using her characters one by one (118). Though Suleri wants to discover her personal identity having migrated to New Heaven(America) but she seems to be hiding behind her narrative for quite often she invokes her characters to put words in her mouth. Thus, to bring out

Suleri in the open, Zaida has given the following arguments. First of all, Zaidi says that Suleri always relies on her elder sister, Iffat, for information for instance Suleri is unaware of *Kapuras* that they are testicles before Iffat breaks out this story (120). So Suleri's self is relative in the sense that she cannot be cited alone without reference to stories of members of her family. It is this reason Suleri seems a relative figure for the fact that she seems like water for she always escapes containment (119) as she flows endlessly but with the help of her characters. Secondly, Suleri's relation with Tom, her friend, is ambiguous for Suleri asks imaginatively from herself that though she has spent 5 years with Tom in New Haven, she is still unaware of his blood group (130). This instance again reinforces the statement of Zaida that the true self of Suleri is seeking a place to hide behind her characters as a relative figure for her relation with Tom and everyone else is so ambiguous that one fails to understand Suleri as a character. This relativity of Suleri's nature is thus helpful for this research for it also talks on the relative identities of Suleri's characters from different angles (religious, political and lingual identities).

Discussion

Usually the Western philosophers as explained by Said look into the identity of the people of the third world through their generalized lenses. They categorize varied people of the other world with sweeping names such as people-of-the-third-world meaning therefore that they are insensitive to the identity crisis, shifts in personal identity and geographical changes of the third world and its people. Consequently, they fail to understand or completely grasp the essence of the identity of the people living in the third world.

The Identity Crisis of Suleri's Paternal Grandmother (Dadi)

Suleri has quashed the generalized understanding of the first world and its researchers by briefly sharing her Dadi's national, regional and religious identity. Dadi shared abhorred sentiments against the partition that had created distance among people (2). Though she migrated to Pakistan under the compulsion of her time, she could not be categorized as only a woman of the third world. Her identity was not that sweeping as she was Indian as well as Pakistani if one looked at her identity with a nuanced approach based on her geographical locality. Until the Western historians understand this, they would be generalizing the national identity of the people of the third world sometime as "Muslims" and other times as "Arab" (Said 93) with sweeping arguments. The post-colonial thinkers of the Western World not only generalize the national identity and culture of people of the third world as 'the other' or 'the orient' (Selden 220) but also as irrationally religious who, according to them, cannot think and form an ideological basis for themselves as they are taught rigidity through religious indoctrination. Thus, without understanding the norms and culture of the third world, they staple all people with their generalized ideologies. That is why, for a better comprehension of the local culture and the influence of religion in the third world, the West needs to shed its preconceived notions. Until that happens, they may not be able to reconcile with the people of the third world. It can be exemplified through the religious identity of Suleri's paternal grandmother. She often prays to God whenever she sits to dine (3) which is of course a cultural practice and a way to thank God Almighty for the blessings. It does not imply that her paternal grandmother is illogical or traditional of any sort.

Rather, it indicates her grandmother is disciplined and well-versed in her religion Islam. Failing to understand the traditions inspired from religion Islam, such as praying to God before breaking bread, the Western scholars jump to their often-repeated tropes (Burney 23) which they use to depict the national identity of the people of the third world as irrationally religious. Of course, Said therefore rejects the Western scholarship as saying that the Western philosophers are hardly able to do "decentered thinking" (Selden et al. 221) about the people of the third world.

Rather than thinking out of the box to define the religious identity of the people of the third world, the Western scholars assume that they are lazy (Sheldon et al. 220), superstitious and irrationally religious (Pick 6). Given this corrosive thinking, they are failed to grasp the meditative dimension of religion Islam. Religion, just like meditation, works as a way of releasing frustration. Suleri's paternal grandmother's relation with religion is one of such kind.

To release her frustration, she blames Satan for the death of her daughter Ayesha and her son's marriage to a Welsh woman (3). Whatever goes wrong in her life is not because of anyone but because of Satan is her belief. It is her way of coping with the frustrating moments of life where she befriends God and envies Satan. Thus, it is proved that religion to Suleri's grandmother is a way of releasing her anger and being religious is not a curse. Had the Western scholars done "decentered thinking," as is suggested by Said, they would have a balanced view of the religious identity of the people of the third world and may have been savvy enough to connect their analysis with the realities on ground rather than stapling people with tags.

The relation between "the occident" and "the orient" (Selden et al. 220) is quite a subtle one. It can be explained from the example of Suleri's mother's distaste for the killing of a baby goat on the day of Eid-Ul-Azha (4). Her grandmother happily brings a young goat to home - which is the first pet of Suleri's siblings Iffat,



Shahid and Nuzhat- for sacrifice. Surprisingly, all of them are quite happy that they have got their first pet to play with; however, Dadi has had a different plan as the purpose of early buying of goat is to fatten it so that it can grow and develop a healthy meat for the Eid day. However, the momentous happiness turns bitter as Dadi calls in the butcher to spill the sacrificial blood (5). The sadness of losing the pet overwhelms everyone at home, especially Suleri's mother. Coming from the Western culture, she has been deeply aggrieved at the sacrifice. Perceptibly, it seems morally right to sympathize with animals for they are part of one's ecosystem but the spilling of blood on Eid-ul-Azha is a religious ritual. It should not be taken as an excuse to paint the people of the Global South in ruthless or amoral colors as the Western scholars do. Instead, it should be taken as a ritual and a part of religion, Islam. It is thus necessary for the Western scholars to seek close knowledge of the East if they really want to make sense of their lives. Otherwise, as mentioned by Said, they keep stereotyping discourse of the religious identity of the Global South with sweeping name such as "Muslims" or people living in the "Arab" world (Schmidt 137).

To sum up, the identity of Suleri's paternal grandmother is purely that of a woman of the third world for the fact that she is religious as well as conservative as per her Islamic system of living. Yet, it is wrong to categorize her with obscene generalization as a woman of the Global South with conservative and irrational religious inclination. It would be entirely wrong to paint such a woman's religious inclination towards religion with generalized lens of the Western scholars who has seen partition and coped up with its ferocious ruthlessness where people have lost members of their families and homes and suffered arson and mayhem amid migration. If observed, she is a woman of dual nationality - India and Pakistan. Moreover, her identity is religious as well as migratory which changes with time and is multicolored. To analyze people of such a difficult geography, one should be extremely meticulous. Intoxicated with superiority complex, the apolitical or amoral generalizations of the Western scholars can worsen the already polarized or conflicting identities of the third world as is perfectly explained by Said in his critique of post-colonialism where he says it is hardly possible for the Western scholars to understand the East from the positions of power (Glass 1). To understand the people of the third world and their religious inclinations, they have to experience the ground realities rather than relying on fabricated assumptions based on mere generalizations as mentioned in the section on theoretical framework.

The National and Political Identity Crisis of Suleri's Mother

What is more, the theory of post-colonialism has many flaws but the most important of its flaws is that it does not take into consideration the people of the first world who have moved to the third world and live there. The case of Suleri's mother falls into this category. She is from Wales and has moved to Pakistan after her marriage. Recounting the tragedies of her life, Suleri expresses that her mom has lost her familiarity to her native land while living in Pakistan.

Interestingly, her mom has started feeling about the familiarity with her native land in the following words "it is just that familiarity is not important really" (Suleri 12) meaning that she is quite used to her changed national identity in Pakistan, losing the pivot of her previous identity. The migration and the pangs of adjustment to the new environment in Pakistan have changed her completely. Can such a woman be generalized and termed as a woman of the Global South since she is apparently living there? Can such a woman be called Pakistani or Welsh? Can she be called Welsh as well as Pakistani? Should she be recognized with both the identities or single one? The answer to these questions is very simple if one allows the critique of Said to explain post-colonial fabrications. According to him, one should avoid relentless homogenization of the identity of people of the Global South. Nobody on earth belongs to a single identity. Everyone lives in a particular place in a particular context of time. Within that context, they are given an identity to be recognized. Yet, this is not to say that their other identities are quashed. Rather, they are the sum total of all of their identities. If applied this conception of identities to Suleri's mother, she can be called Welsh as well as Pakistani. Hence, people of such identities should not be generalized on account of where one lives for the sake of bringing their motley experiences of life into construction of their unique identity. Otherwise, it would be greatly unjust not with the people of the Global

South only but also with people of the first world such as Suleri's mother who has migrated to Pakistan after her marriage. Thus, the national identity of such people should not be seen from the lens of hegemonic discourse constructed by the Western scholars (Suryawati et al. 88) so as to distort their national identity.

Suleri's mother's love for literature, especially for Jane Austen and her writings is itself a rebellious act in a conservative polity of Pakistan. It is not that she is simply inclined towards reading Austen's works but also she teaches Austen's works to her students of the English

Literature of Punjab University. Interestingly, she has a big collection of books of different writers such as Tom Jones, Madame Bovary and Jane Austen (Suleri 151). Counting these British writers' books in the shelves of her mom, Suleri referring to Austen mentions that her mom cannot do anything without Austen meaning that Austen is instrumental in remembering her national identity- Welsh. Her attachment to her literature symbolically reflects her national (Welsh) identity that is why Suleri being one of her literature students says:

For she was teaching Jane Austen. Whenever was there such a perfect match, thought entranced, between teacher and the task? Task and teacher seemed wedded as a voice marries thought, making it impossible to discern at which point one revealed the other's reticence (Suleri 153).

So, it is clear that teaching Jane Austen is not a task that she has to perform but at times it becomes a symbolic representation of herself. Thus, it is wrong to generalize people of the Global South as monotonous, tasteless, deceitful and lazy for they are equally rebellious for the fact that they read the progressive literature mentioned above. Also, it is wrong to generalize them for there are always dissenting voices in every part of the world. Given this memoir, the institution that is Punjab University is symbolised as a dissenting space where Suleri's mother feels at ease in expressing her thoughts compared with her domestic space where her husband or her mother-in-law dominates the space.

Suleri's mother persistently faces trouble to explain her national identity and outlooks. Silence prevails over her face. Given Suleri's father's taste for reading on politics and history, he always looks up to his wife for advice and whenever he reads something she is the first with whom he shares his thoughts. Oftentimes, he shows her writings of different writers printed on the paper so that she can contribute to it and increase the flavor of the read with her knowledgeable comments. Owing to the exchange of views on politics and history, Suleri expresses that "Mamma was more political" than her father who writes on politics (168). Yet, Suleri's mother repents that she does not publish herself for the fact that she begins to love silenced history. She wears her history in the form of anger as expressed by Suleri because she is not given the space and freedom at home. Purposely, Suleri depicts this story of her mother to unfurl her migrant national identity in Pakistan. Though Sara's mother is from the West, her identity has been transformed due to migration to Pakistan after marriage. Just like any other women of the Global South, she has adopted to the environment and turned passive, lethargic and inactive, as is told in the theory above by the Western scholars, for she does not explain herself and the politics of her native place- Wales- unlike her husband does. This is not to say that her identity is autonomous. She is still Welsh and Pakistani at the same time. She is a mixture of both of them. One ought not to dominate her using the Western historicism techniques and its methods for she is living in Pakistan and she willfully hides her Welsh identity. Rather, her identity as a person of dual nationality should be respected - which is in flux. To give voice to such people travelling around the world, Said speaks and laments distortion of their national identities though Said speaks for the people of the third world in his criticism of post- colonialism. If applied this theory to Suleri's mother, she can be categorized as "the orient" in Pakistan for the fact that she is suffering marginalization at the hands of her husband who can be termed as "the occident."

The National Identity Crisis of Suleri's Friend - Mustakori

Mustakori is a good friend and classmate of Suleri. She is a perpetual migrant just like other characters of this writing who have been travelling from place to place and fail to cope up to reconcile with their migratory identity whether it is her mother, her paternal grandmother or her father. Born in Tanzania, she has travelled to



Ireland, to Pakistan and many other countries. With changing places, she learns new knowledge (51). But she always feels that her national (native) language Swahili makes her nostalgic about her home in Tanzania (Suleri 5). Nevertheless, unfortunately, she remembers very little of it. Her's is a story of dislocation, torn memories between places that can be put the following words: We are all refugees from our childhoods. And so we turn, among other things, to stories. To write a story, to read a story, is to be a refugee from the state of refugees. Writers and readers seek a solution to the problem that time passes, that those who have gone are gone and those who will go, which is to say every one of us, will go. For there was a moment when anything was possible. And there will be a moment when nothing is possible. But in between we can create (Hamid 429).

Mohsin Hamid is true to say that "we all are refugees of our childhood". Therefore, one always remembers past nostalgically so as to weave one's real story. Suleri does the same so does Mustakori when she tries to remember her home in Tanzania. But unfortunately though Mustakori's forefathers belong to Pakistan, she is hardly accepted as a Pakistani by her friends in her college, Kinnard College. Suleri's sister, Iffat, calls her Mowgli to make her realise that she is unlike them. Just like Mowgli of Rudyard Kipling's book *The Jungle Book* when returns to human society is not accepted as member of their community (Suleri 49), same is the case with Mustakori in Pakistan, Spivak in America and Suleri's mother in Pakistan. Having been dislocated, one way or other a part of their national identities suffers the oddity of migration.

Mustakori is thus "anomaly" (Selden et al. 223) in the society of Pakistan in the same manner as Spivak in America. Both of them try to assimilate in the culture of their host country but unfortunately they are always made aware of the differences. Hence, a part of their hybrid identity always suffers, making them pariah forever. While illustrating the identity of Mustakori, Suleri writes "We've noticed that, if not actually roots, then she has certainly begun to dangle filaments from her elbows and her wrists"

(71) meaning that Mustakori has lost connection to a spatial continuity as she has persistently been travelling to Tanzania, Dublin, Devon, Kenya, Pakistan, Beijing, and the United States and many more countries. The purpose of Mustakori's travel to Pakistan is to discover her identity as her forefather belongs to Pakistan. However, she is hardly treated as a Pakistani for she has lost spatial attachment to a particular land as she has been travelling across the world since two years of age. Thus, for a recognized national identity one must have spatial continuity (Milligan 382); else, once one's relation to a permanent place is lost, as is in the case of Mustakori, one suffers the identity crisis wherever that person travels to. Hence, the act of permanently changing places does not only dislocate one, apart from making one Mogwli as is expressed above but also one's sense of belonging. Conclusively, such a state of life makes one lonesome and confused. It forces one to psychological issues of failing to assimilate into a single culture. Ultimately, one becomes a prisoner of permanent refugee state of living having lost spatial or temporal continuity. At reaching such a state of life, either one faces homogenization of identity as is expressed by Said or one faces permanent state of hybridity of identities failing to locate in a single culture which Spivak calls "anomaly" (Selden et al. 223). In both cases, one risks being a pariah among his friends and neighbors.

It is true that "names have powers" (Riordon 137). One is represented or known by one's name, character or any other feature. Of course, it is the norm of the world to name people so that they can be recognized. The purpose of giving someone a name is to recognize that person by giving him/her an identity. Also, names do have geographical connections as well. That is why different people from different geographies have different names and naming styles. But the case of Mustakori in this respect is immensely volatile. She is known by as many names as possible. Suleri has used "Faze Mackaw", "Fancy Musgrave" and "Congo Lise" (45) to name Mustakori. From this treatment meted out to Mustakori in the prose of Suleri's work seems deliberate for Suleri may have wanted to give a perfect representation to Mustakori a permanent state of refugee identity. Similarly, in order to bring to fore the confusion of mind and body of Mustakori, Suleri writes: For what little Perin Cooper had really detected in Mustakori's desperate lolls was her deep allegiance to the principle of radical separation: mind and body, existence and performance, would never be allowed to occupy the same space of time (49).

The belief of Mustakori on the "principle of radical separation" proves that she is a refugee forever as she concedes the difference between "mind and body" as she fails to cope up with her migratory memories. She

lives at one place physically and mentally at another place for memory does not follow chronological timeline (Grewal 508). Failing to relate her mind and body, her names and her malfunctioning memory in-congruent to the outer environment as when Mustakori starts acting in Kinnaird College Lahore, she is an “anomaly” living there as is explained by Spivak for her identity crisis as “she realizes she appears as ‘an anomaly: sometimes regarded as a third-world woman and thus as a convenient marginal or awkward special guest, the eminent but ‘visiting’ American Professor” (Selden et al. 223).

The Political and Lingual Identity Crisis of Suleri's Father

“If culture is a house, then language was the key to the front door; to all the rooms inside. Without it, he said, you ended up wayward, without a proper home or a legitimate identity” (213), writes Khaled Hosseini to emphasize the lingual identity of people because language is the reservoir in which everything is stored. In fact, it provides one a sense of belonging to people of a particular area and thus provides them a lingual identity. It is therefore important for all people of the world to protect their native languages by writing in it which is the only way to preserve a language. But given the rapid globalization of the world with changes in technology and scientific learning, indigenous languages are significantly marginalized at the behest of market forces that propel English. Suleri’s father, Ziaudin Ahmad, also laments this fact that since he is a writer, journalist and an avid reader of history, he has to learn English even though he loves his native language, that is, Urdu. By showing the market trend that promotes English, Ahmad has exposed the hypocrisy of the world that it marginalizes other minor languages. It is one way of showing the superiority complex of the native speakers of the English language and another way of showing a disparaging attitude that is brewing against indigenous languages as they are losing their values vis-a-vis change in technology and modern ways of learning. In the words of Said, the lingual domination of English language is not just a way to marginalize the indigenous languages, it is in fact a win of the English knowledge (Said 47).

By invoking the reference to the Now and Never pamphlet produced by a group of students in Cambridge to support the Pakistan movement (110), Suleri tries to bring out the political struggle of her father who has been a part of that movement throughout his life. He has not only written articles for various papers but also has written a number of books such as *The Road to Peace and Pakistan* and *My Leader* (Suleri 115). The former is about the Pakistan movement while the latter is about the political struggle of Quaid-e-Azam for the same movement. In this way, Ahmad is a dedicated person who always fights for a Muslim country in the subcontinent. He is not all apolitical. Instead, he is always a political agent throughout his life. It is thus wrong to depict people of the third world as apolitical by producing a biased knowledge from the position of power that Said puts in the following words “how knowledge that is non-dominative and non-coercive can be produced in a setting that is deeply inscribed with the politics, the considerations, the positions and the strategies of power (Selden et al. 220).” From the example of Suleri’s father, Ahmad, it is clear that the West has been producing coercive and dominative knowledge so as to politicize people of the Global South. They are unaware of the political struggle of the people of the Global South such as the father of Suleri who has not only written books on the political struggle of the Muslim of subcontinent for want of a country but also has practically participated in it. It is this reason Said is against the generalization of political identity that is related to national struggle of the people of the Global South as apolitical at the hands of the Western scholars for the fact that they are operating from a dominating position of power (Glass 1) and so is their narrative that is rooted in fabrications and lies (Said 90). Also, the Global South is a different political arena that should be contextualized given its nature and based on reality instead of sitting in the West and assuming different political tags for the people of the Global South from the position of power so as to construct the orient from using different tropes (Burney 24).



Suleri's Identity Crisis as an Emigrant

The Western scholars have always written about the people of Global South in the vaguest of terms. They have identified them as pretentious, uncultured and traditional. It is reflected in the writings of Suleri as well when she describes the story of Kapura. She does not know that Kapuras are actually testicles and is being deceived by none other than her mother so that she can eat it (Suleri 22). She comes to know about this very long after her elder sister, Iffat, visits her in the United States. Suleri feels that “there is nothing more deceptive than the obvious fact” (Doyle 154) when she gets this information from Iffat that Kapuras are testicles not the sweetbreads as told by her mom. The fake story of Kapura aside, Suleri has mentioned that Pakistani newspapers are filled stories of adulterated food which according to Mannur informs the locality of Suleri in American society (18). However, when truth is revealed to her, she begins to distrust her knowledge she has learned in Pakistan. Even though she now knows that Kapuras are not sweetbreads but she still thinks them as sweetbreads in nostalgia. By invoking this brief event, Suleri has reflected the perception of the Western writers regarding the people of the third world as deceitful as is mentioned in the section of theory. But it is not the exact cultural reality as Kapuras are special food and people of the indigenous land immensely like it. However, it is the culture of the Global South that they do not openly talk about male or female genitalia with their kids. Instead, they form a likeable narrative regarding sexual organs or its related biological complications to share information to their kids so that they can fit in easily within the established norms of the society. For that reason, Suleri's mother may have lied to her so that she can learn to eat Kapuras as it is the healthiest food considered in the region. This, therefore, does not mean that people of the Global South are hypocritically deceiving. Rather it means that they have their own expressions to express things which are slightly technical such as using the name of sweetbreads for Kapuras. Thus, the Western scholars need to understand the moral standards of people of the third world as they cannot openly say that they are eating testicles to their kids because it can sexually impact their kids. In other words, it is a moral compulsion, more like a cultural thing.

Not only does the Western society has the white racism in its political thought but also there is rampant racism against people with brown skin. To depict the racism of the white people, Robert Washington in his article Brown Racism and the Formation of a World System of Racial Stratification has said that “the virtual silence about brown racism is not only curious; it is harmful” (209). A similar issue has been buoyed by Suleri in her memoir Meatless days. In London, when Suleri's father asks her about her friendless life whereas Iffat, her elder sister, has so many friends, she bluntly replies that it is because of the fact her sister is white whereas she is a brown girl. This brief event has brought forth the debate of the white racism against the brown people and their identity as the hatred against the brown people is not only cultural but also historical in the Western part of the world. It is also because of the political and social commentary written by the Western scholars indulged in the Western historicism as predicted by Said. It is unfortunate that the people of white race think of the people of brown race, generally speaking, of the people of developing world as undignified and their identities as meaningless.

Perhaps, it is the influence of this narrative that is being felt by Suleri as she is made a pariah in the society of London. Hence, there is no hope that a change would come to the political discourse regarding the political identity of the people of the third world, had the Western scholars remained insistent on portraying people of the East with a single brush without shedding their preconceived notions. Until that happens, it is the responsibility of the scholars such as Said and Spivak to highlight the tilted political discourse being written by the Western scholars from the position of power (Glass 1).

CONCLUSION

This research indicates that Meatless Days is a seminal text to explore the theory of post- colonialism from the narrative point of view because it speaks for dislocated people who are trying to make sense of their identities through nostalgia or memories. Interestingly, all the characters of Suleri's work are going through the

tough time of identity crisis of various kinds (political, religious, national and lingual identity crisis). Re-imagining past memories, they are trying to find some solace or to make sense of their lives. What is more interesting is the fact that not only Suleri who is writing this memoir is endeavoring to find her anchor but also all of her characters are going through a rough and tough time along with her. To discover herself, Suleri ends up discovering a coterie of people - so as to label herself and her characters with a relative identity according to the context of the third world (Zaidi 118) - who have come and gone in her life. In doing so, she has exposed the biased narrative formed by the Western scholars so as to treat the people of the third world as people of lesser value. She has shown her paternal grandmother religiously rigid not only to expose the Western World as biased but also she has done so to inform the world that being rigidly religious does not mean being irrational. Similarly, she has talked about her mother as a marginal national identity (Welsh) who fails to cope up with the patriarchal culture of Pakistan and always agrees with her husband's political views. Hiding herself behind the daily chores of home, she, as Suleri marks, begins to love silent history.

By silent history, Suleri means getting angry but not in a violent way. In other words, it is about hiding behind one's anger. By silent history also means not expressing one's political view as does by Suleri's mother whenever her husband motivates her so. Her's is thus a compromised national and political identity as she never speaks for her Welsh identity and the political issues of Wales anywhere in the text. In the same vein, Suleri has mentioned the political struggle of her father during the Pakistan movement to show that the people of the third world are political contrary to the conception of the Western writers. Furthermore, commenting on her friend's identity, Mustakori, she has highlighted the temporal dislocation of people, losing a permanent identity to a single place. Finally, commenting on herself, she has mentioned the duality of the third world and its culture of double meaning associated with a single thing not out of hypocrisy but out of moral compulsion when she shares the story of Kapuras. Having done so, she has established a strong case of criticism against the Western writers and their scholarship that they have misconstrued the people of the third world whether it is their religious, cultural, national or political identity.

This memoir is also important for the fact that it speaks for hybridity of identities, challenging the narrative of the Western scholars who have divided the world into two identities: The first and the third world. Highlighting this issue, she has done a great justice to her characters particularly to the national and migratory identity of her mother and friend, Mustakori. She has thus hybridized her mother's national identity as a Welsh as well as Pakistani, going against the narrative formation techniques of the Western scholars. In the same vein, she has spoken for the African as well as Pakistani identity of Mustakori for her forefathers do belong to Pakistan. Having done so, she has nullified the conception of the Western scholars and their scholarship of dividing the world in to rigid categorizes such as developed and developing countries.

Most importantly, against the geographical continuity argument of identity formation, Suleri has made an attempt to give herself and all of her characters a fluid identity that, according to her, is the most important aspect of one's life in this age of global village. It is therefore necessary for the Western scholars to depict the unique identities of the third world and its people not in the simplistic arguments because they are rather complex mix of culture and religion; in the case of Suleri and her family and friends, they are increasingly complicated by migration and nostalgia. Thus, any generalization on the part of the Western scholars about the hybridity of identity of the Eastern people is unacceptable and condemnable. Moreover, given the rapid changes of the world through globalization, fixed identity is no longer applicable as all humans are part of an integrated world unit. Henceforth, hybridity of identities is the future of the world.

Thanks to Suleri, Spivak and Said for becoming the voices of "the orient", the voiceless ones!

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