

ISSN : 2347-503X

Research Chronicler

International Multidisciplinary Research Journal



Vol II Issue IV : May 2014

Editor-In-Chief

Prof. K. N. Shelke

www.research-chronicler.com

Research Chronicler

A Peer-Reviewed Refereed and Indexed International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Volume II Issue IV: May – 2014

CONTENTS

Sr. No.	Author	Title of the Paper	Download
1	Dr. Sherin Shervani	Analyses of the Identity of Muslim Women in Modern Non-native English Fiction	2401.PDF
2	Dr. B.V. Rama Prasad	Realization of the Distance between the Writer and the Focal Character in Vasudendra's Short Story "First Time at the Pinnacle"	2402.PDF
3	Jaisingh K.	Innovative Techniques in Language Teaching: An Analysis of the Computer Assisted English Language Learning Software used in most of the Engineering Colleges in India	2403.PDF
4	Mohammed Najmuddin Khan	Superheavy Elements: Its Annals	2404.PDF
5	B. Moses	Problems of equivalents and morphology in translating the Tamil novel "Helicoptergal Keezhe Iragi Vittana" into English	2405.PDF
6	Shram Mustafa Hama-Salih & Dr. Muktaja Mathkari	Women in Chinua Achebe's <i>Things Fall Apart</i> (1958)	2406.PDF
7	Shivani Jha	<i>The Hungry Tide: A Discourse of Disposessions</i>	2407.PDF
8	Prin. Dr. D.M. Muley	Political Impact of Reservation Policy on Scheduled Castes	2408.PDF
9	Dr. Smriti Singh	Identity and Ethnicity in Kiran Desai's 'The Inheritance of Loss'	2409.PDF
10	Dr. Muktaja Mathkari & Shram Mustafa Hama-Salih	Women in Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's <i>The River Between</i> (1965)	2410.PDF
11	Nisha. K. P.	Reflections on Research Studies in Stress and School Environment	2411.PDF
12	Dr. K. A. Attar	Displacement and Search for Home in Jean Rhys's <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i>	2412.PDF
13	Dr. Ashok Wagh & Dr. S.T. Gadade	Activity and Periodicity in Financial Planning and Performance in Colleges	2413.PDF
14	Dr. Muktaja Vikas	Pronouncing and Denouncing Motherhood: Rama Mehta's	2414.PDF

	Mathkari	<i>Inside the Haveli</i> and Margaret Laurence's <i>A Jest of God</i>	
15	Dr. Archana Durgesh, Md. Osama, Md. Ashraf, Md. Faiz, Md. Md. Kashif, Md. Ammaar	Revolution 2020 - Battle for a Perfect Life	2415.PDF
16	Mrs. Mishra Santwana Gopalchandra & Dr. K. L. Chincholikar	A Study of Correlation of Academic Achievement with Aptitude, Attitude and Anxiety	2416.PDF
17	Dr. Manju Lalwani Pathak	Economic Thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore	2417.PDF
18	Solanki Milind Kantilal	The Effect of History and Post-Modernism in Today's Indian English Literature	2418.PDF
19	Dr. Archana Durgesh & Dr. Pooja Singh	Communicating Across With a Touch & a Glance	2419.PDF
20	Anil Kumar Singh	Motifs of History in the Novels of Amitav Ghosh	2420.PDF
21	Dr. Franz Josef Gellert & Professor Dr. Hugo Velthuijsen	Gradual Retirement Schemes and Older Workers Social Inclusion and Employability in The Netherlands	2421.PDF
22	Dr. Raji Ramesh	Negotiating the Patriarchal Authority: The Magic Toyshop	2422.PDF
23	Jayasimha P.	Transmutation of Confession as Devotion: Cognitive Modeling of Saint Augustine's <i>Confessions of a Sinner - Book One</i>	2423.PDF
24	Bijayata Pradhan	Voices from the Margins: A Study on the Texts Based on the Life of The Tea Workers in the Tea Estates of Darjeeling	2424.PDF
25	Nivedita Ghosh	The Emerging Marital Trends in Indian Scenario	2425.PDF
26	S.N. Sithi Shamila	Redefining 'Quality' through Student Participation: A Holistic Perspective	2426.PDF
27	Isha Dhar & Zia Afroz	Bitcoin-A Historical Perspective of the Effects of the New Currency on the Global Economy with the Future Speculated	2427.PDF
28	Dr. Santosh J. Mishra	Painful Journey of Self Discovery through Different Cultural Spaces in <i>Desirable Daughters</i> by Bharati Mukherjee	2428.PDF
29	J. Kirubakaran & Dr. M. Dharmalingam	A Study on Impact of Financial Sector Reforms in India with Reference to Indian Capital Market	2429.PDF
30	Mr. Kailas B. Aute	Contesting and Voicing non-normative sexual Identity: A Critical Study of Shyam Selvadurai's <i>Funny Boy</i>	2430.PDF
31	Zia Afroz & Sumbul Fatima	Need of Entrepreneurship Development in Rural Sector in India	2431.PDF

Analyses of the Identity of Muslim Women in Modern Non- native English Fiction**Dr. Sherin Shervani***Director, Academy for Teachers Training, Ilyas Educational Institutions, Aligarh, (U.P.) India***Abstract**

This article is aimed at studying the cultural and social representation of Muslims in general and Muslim women in particular by the writers of the West and then a contrastive study is presented here of the works of the non-native English writers. The image of Muslims throughout the history of English literature is distorted and there have been many unrealistic myths created about the Muslim culture by the Western literary orientalists. The writers of the west had relied mostly on their imagination hence they depicted the Muslims with a prejudice, creating images of falsehood. The non-native writers in contrast gave first hand, realistic feel of the Muslim culture and depicted social evils and mal practices that led to the distortion of the images of the Muslims in general and Muslim women in particular.

Key Words: Orientalists, image of Islam, non-native English writers

Introduction

Centuries of ignorance, prejudices and misinterpretation of Islam and Muslims have led to the distortion and misrepresentation of Islam and Muslims in English literature. The writings of Orientalists have been full of misconceptions regarding Oriental culture, religion and people. The image of the "other" part of the world could not allow them to understand the Orient. Ignorance and prejudice led to the distortion of the image of Islam in the Western world at large. Some of the initial contacts of the Islam and its followers were through trade and commerce. The Arabs have been renowned traders and traversed many lands with their merchandise thus leading to the formation of this image. Apart from traders, the religious text, the Holy Quran was translated with many distortions and misinterpretations by its early Western

translators. Many travellers, including a number of Crusaders brought with them stories and legends; which were contrived to impress upon the people the holiness of the religious wars. Thus the history is full of distortions and misrepresentation of the Image of Islam and Muslims. The non-native writers have written over the past centuries and tried to bridge the gap. The writings span over different parts of history and cover many parts of the Orient but this study here is focused mostly on the non-native writers of the Indian sub- continent. Although a new generation of Arab writers in English has helped remove the barriers of malice and prejudice but here the focus is on some of the contemporary and post- colonial era. They have portrayed the culture and religion in a meticulous way. The representation of Islamic values and norms and the general practices of Muslims help understand the difference between the

Islamic jurisprudence and the general cultural practices of Muslims at large.

The history of English literature is full of distortions and mis-representation of Islam in English literature. The legends of the middle Ages were passed on to the writers of the Renaissance. The drama was rich in themes representing Muslim lands and characters, the most prominent being Marlowe's *Tamburliane*. This play portrays with fair accuracy the externals of Muslim life and customs but the religious allusions were vague. Shakespeare, the master of English drama touches on many of the popular notions about the Orient in his plays. In the *Merchant of Venice*, "the prince of Morocco is presented as a lascivious and greedy Prince who chooses the golden casket and loses Portia". In the *Tragedy of Othello*, "Othello, a Moor commits the barbaric act of murdering his wife". Shakespeare also followed the prejudice of his era in using the appellation of the 'Turk' to evoke the images of cruelty and treachery.

This prejudice against the Ottomans is also seen in other writers such as Philip Massinger's, *The Renegado* (1624), Thomas Kyd's *Soliman and Perseda* (1588), Thomas Goffe's *The Raging Turk* (1657). None of them however surpasses Christopher Marlowe in the false Orientalism presented in his play, *Tamburlaine The great I and II* (1587). The poets are found celebrating Christian victories over the Turks; and alluding to Oriental legends, characters, settings and costumes. Edmund Waller recounts in his poem "Of the Invasion and defeat of the Turks in the year 1683", the victory over the Turks. Milton speaks of the perfumes of Arabia in *Paradise Lost* (IV,

159 - 64). Samuel Butler's *Hudibras* (1663) contains several Oriental allusions. He describes the features of Bruin the Bear, as resembling those of the Muslims. William Congreve, in his *The Way of the World* refers to the Muslims as fools who live by 'heathenish rules'. John Dryden follows the popular trend of misrepresenting the Muslims and their world in his "The Hind and the Panther" (1687), and "Astraeu Redux" (1660). Dryden shows the Muslims as unobservant of the rules of their own religion and at another place he comments on the Turks drinking wine in order to forget their horrible crimes.

Orientalism in Restoration drama begins with Davenant's first English opera, *The Siege of Rhodes* (1656) and ends with Dryden's *Don Sabestian* (1689). Dryden's *Aureng - Zebe* (1675) is partly based on Tavernies' account, who presents the Orient as a battle ground where the four sons of the Mughal King, Shah Jahan fight against one another in their bid for the throne. In *Don Sebastian*, the historical background is the Battle of Alcazer fought in Morocco in 1578. Sir Roger Boyle panders to popular notions about the Orient in the *Tragedy of Mustapha, the son of Solymen, The Magnificent* (1668). The distorted image of the Orient did not disappear during the seventeenth century also in that derogatory allusions were made against Islam. Oriental matter was used merely as a decorative element in literary works.

In the eighteenth century English interest in the Orient grew stronger and more genuine. The seriousness of this interest may be observed in the development of Oriental scholarship in England and in the

enthusiastic reception of the English versions of traditional Oriental tales such as the Arabian Nights, and *Persian Tales* (1714) translated from French by Ambrose Philips, *Turkish Tales* (1708) rendered by Jacob Tonson, and *Mogul Tales* (1736) further strengthened the genre. The poets of the eighteenth century make several allusions to the Orient. But none produced what could be considered Oriental poetry. Alexander Pope, in his *The Dunciad*, alludes to the Phoenician coast as "The soil that arts and infant letters bore". In his *The Rape of the Lock*, Pope alludes to such Oriental objects as an Indian casket and Arabian perfume. Thomson makes graceful allusions to the golden city on the Tigris in his *Castle of Indolence* (1784). William Collins in his *Persian Eclogues* (1742) shows his interest in Oriental tales by painting his poems with Oriental names. The Oriental elements referred to are used for decorative purposes, especially related to Oriental customs and costumes. During the second half of the eighteenth century, references to Islam became less biased.

A remarkable play which is significant for its treatment of Oriental themes is *The Siege of Damascus* (1720) by John Hughes; a tragedy based on the Arab conquest of Syria. Another important play is Dr. Johnson's *Irene*. The tragedy is based on the story of Irene, the Greek captive who suffers the consequences of accepting glory instead of honor in the court of the Turkish Sultan Mahomet, which is described in Knolle's *General Historie of the Turks*. Islamic allusions in the play are absolutely inaccurate and the local color of the Orient is missing. Johnson's *Rasselas*, for the first

time, presents the real Oriental world inhabited by real people with their own customs and culture. The treatment of the Islamic world is vague, but it is important that it is not misrepresented in Oliver Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*; the Chinese philosopher is endowed with the knowledge of Islam.

In the later part of the 18th century another remarkable work contributed further to the growing popularity of literary Orientalism. William Beckford's *The History of the Caliph Vathek* (1786) surpasses Johnson's *Rasselas* in authenticity and Oriental details.

Many Romantic poets and writers kept writing about the imaginary Orient with distortions. They wrote without realizing how much they distorted the image of Islam and Muslims. They portrayed the people of the Orient as indulgent, uncouth and absolutely callous; living to relish and indulge. The twentieth century writers like E. M. Foster in his Passage to India portrayed that west could never come to terms with east. Realisations of disparity and discrepancies arouse out of malice and prejudices.

Modern Non-native Writers

The works of many non-native writers from the turn of the twentieth century led to the ushering of the new era. It helped get the true insight into the lives and life-styles of the Muslims and the true Islamic beliefs. *Twilight in Delhi* by Ahmed Ali opens a window into the lives of the people living over the edge. The glory of the past diminishes into the uncertain future. The culture and the values of the golden era are slowly vanishing and the new thought

process taking over. This novel depicts the situation of the Muslims in general and of the people of Shahjahanabad in particular: how things around them are changing. The image of the Muslims in the post-Mughal era is depicted well, how the idea of love marriage is forced on to the father by a young son. The norms and ways of the father are not haled but the ways of the young man Asghar are shown as revolutionary. The ethos of the novel captures the local colour. The pigeon flying, the kite flying matches, the beggars of various types, the buzurgs (the elders), the hakims and the pirs (the holy men) all add to the true flavor of the Delhi life. The lives of women in Mir Nihal's family show how they merely existed as remote controlled dolls but how they would break from their stereotypical roles and overrule the commands of their men folk. As Mir Nihal's wife, who underwent all the ordeals of life with tolerance and forbearance broke the norms and arranged her son's marriage and forced her husband Mir Nihal to accept it. The characterization of Mir Nihal's eldest daughter Begam Waheed also reflects the importance of women in Muslim societies, although she lives a life of a widow but commands respect and position both in her family and her husband's family. On the other hand, the presence of the solace provider in the form of a mistress also depicts the cultural realities of the life. It shows the hypocritical norms that the men would adapt in those times to build a particularly conventional image of their wives and lead a shallow life of poor man-woman relationship. The wife represented family honor and prestige of the family

where as the men tried to seek solace in the company of dancers and prostitutes. The tragic death of Mir Nihal's mistress cast such a devastating influence on him that he lost all interest in life, giving up his passion for pigeon flying even. Mir Nihal's characterization brings to life a true character of the fading era in the history of Indian Muslim life. Asghar his youngest son becomes symbolic of the new era ushering in, as he wants to go to study in an institution that has been set up with the objective of imparting modern scientific education to the Muslims. He also wants to break from the shackles of the conventions of the arranged marriages. He is the rebel and represents the new order and lives a life of a more modern kind, wearing foreign clothes and adapting the manners of the British who were highly influential at that time.

Qaisra Shahraz is the novelist of the new era, dealing with the issues of the modern society. Her novels give an insight into the life of the people of Pakistan in the modern times. Her novels give an understanding of Islam and Muslim society, as she has presented the basic faith of the Muslims and the principles of Islam. She has introduced "the vibrant Muslim world, its customs and rituals by taking them on a journey to four Muslim countries – Pakistan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia." She has presented her characters explicitly. She has set her novels in the modern day Pakistan, but her characters transgress time and locale that they are set in. The themes are so well interwoven. Both the novels- *The Holy Woman* and the *Typhoon* are mesmerizing and highly engrossing. The writer has dealt

with the most sensitive themes in the most subtle manner. She has a natural flow; she is able to evoke the curiosity of the reader. The insight in to the life of each character brings live the society that she has depicted in her novels. The rustic settings of her novel make us realize the complexity of life in rural Pakistan and its close knit society. Although her locale is basically rural but her characters have a universal appeal, going through the familiar feelings of love, agony, suffering, pain and tolerance. Human feelings are well identified by the readers and one tends to live by the joys and sorrows of the characters.

Qaisra Shahraz brings forth the norms of Islam. She has intertwined faith and religious practices in the fabric of her novels; they form the total ethos of her novel. Islam shows to its followers a particular way of life, so has Shahraz shown in every aspect of each character how he or she imbibes faith and follows it. She has thrown light on the issues of marriage, divorce, life, death, guilt and honor. She has depicted complex human emotions and their role in an individual's life. Her characters become living beings with whom the reader empathize and sometimes wonders about their fate.

Zarri Banno is a modern woman with University education, for whom traditions did not matter much. She is an open minded, outward girl of modern times. She shows tolerance and forbearance towards the patriarchal command and ardently takes up the religious teachings and denounces the tradition of the Shahzaddi Ibbadat (Holy Woman). The tradition of the Holy Woman ceremony is like a normal marriage

ceremony in the Pakistani culture but the big difference is that there is no groom; the woman is married to the Holy Quran. This tradition has been followed by some of the feudal families in Sind to keep their properties within the family and not pass it to legal heirs from outside the family. Shahraz has dealt with the delicate issues of love, marriage and divorce in Islam in a very sensitive manner. She has shown the effects of the threat of divorce on women and how it is abusively used by men to cover their flaws. Habib, threatens to divorce his wife Shahzada if she tries to defend the rights of her daughter Zarri Bano.

Zarri Banno is a typical modern day Muslim girl, who lives by the cultural aspects of the Muslim society but learns the true Islamic norms after she transforms her being in the garb of the holy woman. The tradition which has no basis in Islamic tenets leads her to learn Islamic rules for day to day life. Zarri Banno learns the laws of inheritance and the role of women in Islam and becomes a great scholar of Islam and realizes how unjust the modern Muslim society is.

A Golden Age by Tahmima Anam is set in the war time Bangladesh of 1971. It was the freedom struggle of Bangladesh to break free from the impractical association with Pakistan. It is a novel dealing with the predicaments of individuals divided by opinions on war and political, social and religious issues. The novel is a great insight into the lives of a Muslim community that is fed-up with false and hypocritical norms in the name of religion. The struggle of the young Muslim Bangladeshis at that time to find their own linguistic and cultural identity becomes the central force for this struggle of

independence. Although the religion is the same but the socio-lingual facts and disparities lead to unrest and final yearning to have an identity of their own. This unique struggle and socio-political revolution shows the life of Muslims in an unbiased way. Anam has been successful in depicting the life of the people of a particular country during a particular phase in a realistic way; her novel is influential and probes into the sufferings of the individuals. Although, Rehana is a modern Muslim woman with a flair for Urdu poetry, relishing life with her friends and thinking of nothing too substantial in her life; she lives a moderate life. But her young children Maya and Sohail are revolutionaries at heart, charged with political fervour. The novel becomes a complete journey through their emotions, passions and sufferings of the war. Anam portrays the identity of the people of Bangladesh which helps establish the true image of Muslims in the modern times and unravels the thought process of a community as natural and normal. The Bangladesh war of independence is like the modern day Egyptian revolution where the youth of the country want to establish their own identity as individuals in the modern era. This is an important point to understand, that how the Western media paints and mars the image of Muslim societies with doubt and prejudices. The reality lies with youngsters like Sohail and Maya who are worried about their identities and want to liberate their communities from bondage. The fact that Muslim societies have the same human sufferings and have same feelings and universal problems is important for the

dispelling of the wrong impressions in the Western minds.

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns* of Khalid Hosseini show the sufferings of Miriam and Leila in the war torn Afghanistan are also unparalleled examples of human suffering. The image of the Muslim women here becomes symbolic of universal human suffering in a country that has suffered war for more than 20 years. The predicament of Mariam and Leila show how women survive the worst of human atrocities and emerge as martyrs of faith and tolerance. The portrayal of Mariam and her mother's predicament as an out-cast and an illegitimate child reminds one of the character of Hyster Prynne and her daughter Pearl. The suffering and torture that women go through in both the novels are similar, the agony of looking for a place in the society, the status of a down-cast. The human sufferings and predicaments do not change even if the two novels are set in two different centuries and in different parts of the world. The women looking for basic rights and acceptance tell us how the struggle is universal and not only restricted to the Orient as portrayed by the West in many of their readings. Hosseini's characters are original and real, they evoke an emotional response from the readers. Mariam's life takes us full circle into the human predicaments. She is a child born out of wedlock in a society that has strong social norms. Her father keeps her mother and her away from the society. Keeping them on the outskirts of the city in a lonely cottage, to live a life secluded by him. Although he loves to play with her and spend time with her, telling her stories about his real life of which she is deprived. This is

a true portrayal of a society with double standards, where the class-system is so deeply inherent and it makes all important issues trivial. It makes human life minimal and treats women as miniscules. Mariam's mother Nana is poor woman working in Jalil's house as a maid, her crime is that she was born in a poor family. She does not get the dignity of a respectable woman. Mariam is married off to a middle aged man by her father as none of his three wives are ready to keep her after the death of her mother, in their house. She is forced to marry and leave for Kabul with an unknown man. Life has only hardships, cruelty and loneliness to offer to Mariam. Hosseini probes the Afghan society and lays bare the intriguing details of social conditions and the merciless, brutal deterioration of basic human existence under the long struggle through different political periods and ragging wars in the country. The Afghan society comes out in true colours through Hosseini's depiction and intricate portrayal of values and social systems through his women characters. He provides a deep glimpse into the different layers of the Afghan society. He paints the pictures of prosperous and happy times of early seventies and takes his story through the journey of the life of the two women into the era of the Taliban. Hosseini tells a tale of how the human life is a waste, how the hopes and sufferings toss in the daily lives of a human being. The futile values of the society take the toll of the individual lives. The men behind any groups whether the Taliban who, become the custodian of Islam and proclaim themselves harbingers of Islam and make themselves responsible for

restoring all Islamic values are themselves victims of all human fallacies. They abuse young boys and hold them captive for their lustful desires, where as they brutally punish people without any evidence and consideration of circumstantial evidence Brutalities and human degeneration is the practice of the men, who become symbolic of human suppression. In *The Kite Runner* also Hosseini had discussed a rich man taking a poor woman and not acknowledging his own child and the life of abandonment inflicted on the woman. The two half brothers Amir and Hassan form the mainstream theme of class and tribal differences. The Pushtoons and Hazaras coexisted in the Afghan society but with the typical relation of the suppresser and the suppressed. The experiences of Amir throughout the journey of his life are actually a journey through the soul of a culture. Hosseini's work brings to life the true Afghan spirit and values. He takes us on a journey of human joys, sorrows, pains, agonies, realizations, regrets and repentance. Hussaini takes the reader through the journey of the life of men, traversing through the futility of elements, realizing the futility of human struggles. The connection of people with their culture and their own roots does not die even after migrations and passage of huge time, Amir returns to Afghanistan to save his nephew Sohrab. The human bondage never fades between the apparently evident tribal discriminations.

Maps of Lost Lovers by Nadeem Aslam, is a novel about identity crises in a foreign country. Kaukab is from an orthodox Muslim family, who regrets the loss of her husband's and children's lost values. She

becomes representative of a culture who is never at ease with the English culture and values. Her approach is ambiguous and inconclusive. The ethos of Aslam's novel portrays the problems of different generations coming to terms with the reality outside them. The friction between Kaukab and her husband Shams shows the symbolic confusion of living in an alien land and yet never at ease. This struggle of identities throughout and coming to terms with the locale changes and changes due to the impact of different cultures shows the truth of life. It is hard to reach the conclusion and pick the right out from the wrong. The realistic images of life, undergoing changes at a more natural pace leaves a kind of a vacuum in the novel. He does not categorically uphold the Islamic values but evokes questions leading to most ambiguous and extreme situations, usually not met so frequently in real life. This novel gives the reader a scope to consider the ambiguity in cultural representations, it shows how fiction can represent the debate between reality and myth. The cultural identity and religious beliefs may be debated but not touched in the real sense. Aslam has successfully presented the differences of culture and its impact on the minds of two different generations. He gives a good opportunity to the Western literary analysts to go through the realities of the human struggle with their own identity. Different issues of identity, morality and honour are presented in a subtle manner.

Blinkers Off by Andaleeb Wajid has modern Muslim youngsters who try to make their mark in the world and discover the truth of life. The image of Muslim woman is

contemporary and not the typical stereotype of the suppressed Muslim women in the minds of the Western literary critics. The character of Noor gives a rare insight into the life of young Muslim women of modern India who are struggling with their day to day challenges to make a life of their own when the Muslim society is being usually stereotyped and looked at with the prejudice.

Year of the Tiger by Sohaila Abdulali is a novel that deals with the life of the young Muslims from India before the tragic happenings of 9/11. The mode of the novel constantly makes one feel the constant treatment of the people as aliens in a strange city. The twin brother and sister : Kabir and Zara along with their elder sister Salma explore the life in New York. As they land on the JFK airport they are met with harsh reality of their ethnicity. The struggle of achieving a decent career and living with an identity of an ethnic group brings live the experience of a stranger trying to grapple the reality of their life in an alien culture. Although, Sohaila has just described the experience of her characters as normal human struggle to get a good job and attain decent living but there is an inherent feel of the experience of Muslim characters adjusting to new values. Sohaila's writing does not touch on religious consciousness because she deals with the characters as modern individuals trying to get the basics in a land known for its development and progress; a land symbolic of worldly success and achievement. The dilemma of youngsters, away from their culture raises issues of morality and identity. They debate their belongingness day in and day out. Kabir looks for his identity in India where as

his twin Zara opts for life in the US. The eternal debate of the right and wrong, fair and unfair, just and unjust rocks the novel; giving an insight into the lives of the people living in America belonging to the Indian minority groups. It is a journey of struggle, realization and coming to terms with the reality of the harsh realities of belonging to a particular ethnic group. Sohaila touches upon the issues of sexuality and morality in a frivolous way; she does not raise the dilemma of moral righteousness or integrity. Kabir is a callous man and a womanizer, where as his sister Sara keeps her integrity as a precious gem. Nowhere does Sohaila raise the issue of sexuality in an Islamic perspective. Her work portrays ethnic crisis but she disregards morality and Islamic point of view, thus leading no scope for an insight into the Muslim identity of her characters. Her characters only bear the Muslim names but nowhere has she specifically discussed them as having a Muslim identity in particular.

Nafisa Haji's *The Writing on my Forehead* is a work which deliberates on the identity of modern Muslims in this new era. Her character portrayal is not only strong but has a deep insight. In *The Writing on my Forehead* the mother struggles to pass on the Islamic values and give a true cultural identity to Saira, her daughter but fails. Nafisa presents a real life situation, where the Asian immigrants to America face the identity crises. They are confused and face internal struggle; usually they are unable to adapt and are at logger-heads with their own beliefs and the culture around them. Saira and her sister Ameena are brought up by their mother in a staunch Islamic

atmosphere. Saira is a vivacious, independent spirit who wants to explore the world; she denounces the staunch disciplinary ways of her mother and steps out of the realms of protected life of her family and experiences life at its fullest bloom. Her life is a struggle with good and evil, she comes full circle in her life. Her rebellion finally leads to soul searching and she tries to comprehend the right and the wrong. Ameena, her sister, is an honest, simple minded, straight-forward personality, she treads the path propagated by her mother, she had adapted the veil and carried it with the ease and confidence of a pious Muslim, in the end Haji makes her veil symbolic of the hatred that the Muslims faced post 9/11. The struggle of identities goes on throughout the novel, Saira's uncle and father had both migrated to West and even her mother's father had been carried away by the Western fashionable values. Shabana's character as a mother and as a daughter is both complex and probing; she undergoes the conflicts of beliefs, compassions and different values. She does not forgive her dead father for abandoning her mother for a Western woman. Her hate is towards the very idea of breaking up relationships. She becomes an unforgiving person. In the case of Saira also she cannot accept the blasphemous decisions of her daughter. Saira misses the tenderness of her mother, her love and care and protection when she is no more in the world. The relationship of mother and daughter grows as the story moves on, Shabana learns to forgive and let go of her anger, she learns to treat people with more humanness. Saira's special relationship to big Nanima, her

mother's aunt is very interesting and takes us into an era when the women's formal education was in its cradle stage in the sub-continent. Saira idealizes big Nanima's personality; she feels that her spinsterhood is her symbol of independence. But big Nanima gives her wisdom of life and helps her mature as a personality, she gives her room to grow and mature as a person. Family is hailed and treasured by big nanima as well as she stands out as a symbol of women's independence and individualism, which was very rare and hard to achieve in the otherwise male oriented society. All the characters of Haji are well grounded and in search of their real identities, she has carried her story over three generations, starting from pre-partition to post 9/11. This period factor helps us imagine the human predicaments over different eras and different time periods. Haji's work is the present day treatise which helps the Western literary

analyst to take a more realistic view to the people of the east and helps look at the "Orient" in a more clear light. The real life experiences and the portrayal of complex human feelings and the struggle of existence show the existence of universal human feelings.

Modern non- Native Writers of English Literature have provided a broad perspective of view to the western literary Orientalists who have viewed the Orient with a prejudice and a blinkered vision. The probe into the writings of these novelists gives a wide view over the different aspects of lives of the Muslim women in different parts of the Islamic world throughout this century. All the women characters have been portrayed with their peculiar habitats and their own perspective of lives are presented with clarity and intensity to give the real image of life. The depiction of women is true and realistic in all these novels.

References:

1. Ali, Ahmed. *Twilight in Delhi*. New Delhi: Rupa Publications, 2011. Print
2. Anam, Tahmima. *A Golden Age*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2007. Print
3. Aslam, Nadeem. *Maps for Lost Lovers*. London: Faber and Faber Limited, Bloomsbury House, 2004. Print
4. Backscheider, P.R. ed. *Eighteenth Century Drama*. New York, 1979. vol. 39: 63. Print
5. Daniel, Norman. *Islam and The West: The Making of an Image*. Edinburgh: 1960. 45. Print
6. Dobree, Bonamy. Ed. *Five Heroic Plays*. London: 1960. viii. Print
7. Dunlop, J. C. *History of Prose Fiction*, ed. Henry Wilson, London: 1888. 226-27. Print
8. Haji, Nafisa. *A Writing on my Forehead*. New York; Arrow Books, 2009. Print
9. Hosseini, Khalid. *A Thousand Splendid Sons*. New York: Riverhead Books, Penguin Group, 2007. Print
10. Hosseini, Khalid. *The Kite Runner*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2003. Print
11. Hussain, Ahmad. ahmedehussain.blogspot.com/.../in-conversation-with-qaisra-shahraz.html Web. April 2011.

12. Kidwai, A. R. *The Crescent and The Cross: Image of the orient in English Literature up to 1832*. Aligarh: 1997. Print
13. Lewis, C.S. *The Discarded Image*. Cambridge: 1964. Print
14. Nicholson, R. A. *A Literary History of the Arabs*. Cambridge: 1969. 73. Print
15. Oueijan, Naji B. *The progress of an Image: The East in English Literature*. New York. 1996.11. Print
16. Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: 1979. Print
17. Samuel, Chew. *The Crescent and The Rose: Islam and England during Renaissance*. New York: 1974. Print
18. Shahraz, Qaisra. *The Holy Woman*. London: Black Amber: Arcadia Books, 2001. Print
19. Shahraz, Qaisra. *Typhoon*. London, Black Amber: Arcadia Books, 2003.
20. Shahraz, Qaisra. www.contemporarywriters.com/authors
21. Smith, B. P. *Islam in English Literature*. eds. S. B. Bushrie and Anahid Melikian. New York: 1977. Print
22. Wajid, Andaleeb. *Blinkers Off*. New Delhi: Rupa Publications, 2011. Print
23. Young, Edward. *The Complete Works: Poetry and Prose*, ed. James Nichols. 1968. Print

Dhanashree Publications

Flat No. 01, Nirman Sagar CHS,
Thana Naka, Panvel, Raigad - 410206



Research Chronicler

International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

www.research-chronicler.com