

**Exploring Otherness in Sidhwa's "The Trouble Easers": An Examination from an Orientalist Lens**



Rimsha Qamar	BS student in English Linguistics & Literature at Qurtuba University of Science & IT Peshawar <a href="mailto:rimshaqamar030@gmail.com">rimshaqamar030@gmail.com</a>
Sahil Anwar	Lecturer in the department of Linguistics and Literature at Qurtuba University Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan <a href="mailto:sahil@qurtuba.edu.pk">sahil@qurtuba.edu.pk</a>
Yasir Ahmad	MS English Literature (City University of Science and Information Technology, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Lecturer in Government Degree College Kotha, Swabi <a href="mailto:yasirahmad897@gmail.com">yasirahmad897@gmail.com</a>

**Abstract:** *This study investigates and analyses the story of Bapsi Sidhwa, the Trouble Easer. The story focuses on the suffering of poor Muslim woodcutters and the effects of Zoroastrian angles in the short story Bapsi Sidhwa, The Trouble Easers. This study review investigates the prime work of Sidhwa, explicitly zeroing in on her conspicuous short story. This analysis shows how Muslims are otherized by Persians due to the war of the 7th century. This research used an analytical and descriptive inquiry approach, with the events and activities in the short narrative being analysed to finish the research. This study scrutinizes the otherness theory by Edward Said and Beverly Tatum. The discord between two religions worthy of attention highlights Sidhwa's marvelous artistry for Persians. The purpose of this comprehension analysis is to highlight the otherness of this very unique work. This study investigates the distinct religions, i.e., Pir Khurkain (a Muslim poor woodcutter), Mushkil e Asaan, and Behram Yazad (a Zoroastrian angel). The character of a Muslim was shown as poor but becoming rich and king by the grace of Zoroastrian angels. It is understood by studying the text that the writer highlights the relationship of Muslims towards Persians, but in trouble, even Persian angels helped the Muslims.*

**Keywords:** Otherness, Nothingness, Orient, Occident, Agenda

**Introduction**

The concept of otherness consists of two terms the others and are on or *they* and *us*, it is derived from the term "V versus other," which states that this notion may be represented as "the one who does not do as I do" or "the one whose body colour, size, and facial features differ from mine." She further describes that according to Gomez Mueller The "other" could be inferior, subordinated and suppressed, having no value in society because of the theory and mental setup of "we" and "they", this concept is also called the phenomena of ergo which means

consequences of thoughts. He also stated that "othering", based on multiple dimensions include religion, race, gender, class and disabilities. (Jilan Shash,2021)

Beverly Tatum In 1997 describes seven different categories of otherness in her book "The complexity of identity "who am I"?" that there are seven different types of otherness: race or ethnicity, gender, religion. sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, physical or mental disabilities.

The term of other means that one is separated

from the other at any perspective. The colonialism “other” describes separation between colonizers and colonized. It is used in philosophy, it indicates two things; one is “Being” and another is “Nothingness”, which evaluates a relation between “self” and “other” to make a difference between both either in identity or socially. Spivak Explains “other” as dialectical process which creates colonized as a colonial subjectivity for the colonizers. Edward said in his book used names for the colonizers and colonized in his book “Orientalism” that colonizers are the occidents because they considered themselves superior and the colonized were orientalist because they were inferior and suppressed by the dominancy of British. Othering is a result of applying principle that individual human being can be divided into two groups “then” and “us”. Otherwise his two sides like a coin, every group consider their self superior and the other down and vice versa. (Said,1978)The non-civilized of Danish are considered as wild, savage and unsocialized and were controlled by the civilized Danish people. (Cf.McLaren:1994)

Simone de Beauvoir in her book “The Second Sex”1997, Described how men are considered their selves as “self” and women as “other”. Calling the women is other creates subjectivity since from the day when women began existence in the world and their lives were shaped by their men. (Hughes & witz, 1997)

Lakan expressed two things about identity that language plays a major role in constituting identity and how a single person or non European struggle to gain the power just for to achieve his/her identity. Identity is gained through power.(Gingrich,2004)

Lister proposed the “Othering” is technique of discrimination and differentiation, it can creates a boundary line between “us” and “them”, between “firm” and “frail” groups. Othering is responsible for creating social distance. (2004)

An “Othering” is responsible for the creation of problems and inferiority complex, the suppressed group has shown inferior and down even in morality by the upper class. (Schwalbe et al.,2000,p.423).

Tatum in her book “ The Complexity of Identity “ Who Am I?”” depicted there Jean Baker Miller an author of “Toward a New Psychology of Women” stated that the elite group set rule for the frail and perform these rule upon them. On gaining power, the dominated group authorized their power in society and analyze it works through frails.Bapsi Sidhwa is the writer of Trouble Easers and at age of 26, she begin writing. Lahore is her favorite place that’s why her first three novels setting was Lahore. She became an American citizen in 1992. (Janet M. Pouers:1938)

### **Author**

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By religion she is Parsi and Persian ethos was her major subject in her work " The Crows Eaters”, partition is the major theme in ice candy man. (Rajan Julie 2004)

### **Story**

Trouble Easers is a story of Sidhwa, in which she shows that how a Zoroastrian Angles move towards the help of poor Muslim woodcutter. For first time when his family was hungry, so the Behram Yazad and Mushkil e Asaan gives him lots of jewels and stones. For the next time they helped him when he was in prison and from a prisoner, they make him king. Even though Muslim were spoil their identity and not kind towards the Paris. She puts historical illusion in the text that in 7th century how Muslim cruelly attack the Iran, and ended all the religious places of the Parisians. She shows Muslims as an “other” by putting historical illusion and proves herself as “self” that being badly treated by Muslims, but still our angles are helping them. Muslims were in power at the time, they take control over Persia and considered there selves something.( Their Love Language)

### **Literature Review**

Marxism is a social, political, and economic philosophy named after Karl Marx that

examines the effect of capitalism on labour, productivity, and economic development and assumes that the struggle between different social classes, specifically between the bourgeoisie, or capitalists, and the proletariat, or workers, defines economic relations in a capitalist economy and that this conflict will eventually lead to a revolution in which the working class will overthrow the capitalists. This research examines Bapsi Sidhwa's short fiction, *The Trouble-Easers*, while keeping Marxist principles in mind. In this narrative, the author focuses on Marxist perspectives, particularly those centred on labour and class conflict. Marxist characteristics include the importance of religion, classism, and rugged individualism. (Majeed, 2019)

#### **About Author**

In the article "Anxiety as a Source of Motivation: A Critical Study of Selected Novels of Bapsi Sidhwa" by Shraddha Dhal published in 2021, in *Journal of International Women's Studies* talks about Bapsi Sidhwa, that she is one of the first and famous author and writer, who rise voice for the Parsi's, to typifying herself on the behalf of her community and make an effort to conquer from their anxiety.

#### **About Theory**

Aliza Sadr and Leila Baradaran Jamilia's article (Occident Versus Orient in Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*) examines Virginia Woolf's *Orlando: A Novel* from the perspective of Edward Said (1935–2003), specifically his theory of orientalism, hybridity, and confrontation for the main character and the cultural events that occur for him/her. It is based on Said's feelings towards Orientalism. The Westerners come to comprehend, breathe in, and define the Orient primarily via their perspectives on the East. The West or Europe attempts to define itself using this notion of the 'Other'. *Orlando* is a prominent example of Oriental work in which Orientalism is demonstrated via Woolf's personal exploration of Western culture and behavior. In the narrative, *Orlando*, the main character, observes their culture and compares it to the other's (Eastern). Specifically, the researcher focuses on how Woolf characterizes

Orientalism, her own Britishness, and her critical attitude of the East and its odd and foreign culture. Woolf represents the main character in *Orlando*, demonstrating how his or her ultra-patriotic desires show the supremacy of the Occident over the Orient. (2014)

In this article, the researcher discusses Othering. Othering is the process of constructing and identifying the self, or in-group, and the other, or out-group, in reciprocal, unequal antagonism by assigning the other, or out-group, relative inferiority and/or radical alienation. The concept of othering moved from feminist theory and postcolonial studies to other fields of the humanities and social sciences, although it originated in Hegel's dialectic of identification and instantiation in the meeting of the self with another in his "Master-Slave dialectic." In the publication, the researcher stated that after analysing the philosophical and psychological underpinnings of othering, he distinguishes two types of othering: "crude" and "sophisticated," which differ in the logical structure of their underlying arguments. The key distinction is that the former is simply self-other instantiation, while the latter, like Hegel's dialectic, is partially dependent on self-other identification. While crude othering is closer to the paradigmatic notion of othering, sophisticated othering is closer to Hegel's, but so is quasi-othering, which is nearly identical in form to sophisticated othering but misses the defining feature of othering—attributing relative inferiority and/or radical aliens. Because Hegel's dialectic applies to any encounter of an interpreting self with some other, sophisticated or quasi-othering is at least potentially a very common occurrence in the interpretation of others, especially of those who do not belong to the in-group. Although othering is generally unpleasant, the Hegelian variants can give a "mirror" that can be utilized to develop understanding of both the other and the interpreting self, and the negative features of othering can be avoided via charity. (Lajos Barons, 2015)

Dr. Salah FAID (2021) append in his article (Otherness in Western Literature and Its Impact on Literature in Africa and the East) The ideas of Eastern and Western civilizations are

arbitrarily separated. The researcher's primary focus is on the culture of othering, which can be a natural outcome of the two civilizations' profound differences in origin. Critics nearly unanimously agree that Orientalism refers to the Orient in contrast to the Occident. The word Occidentalism is commonly used to refer to unfavourable attitudes towards the Western world. Edward Said has been accused of mischaracterizing the West. When addressing the characteristics of both Western and Eastern civilizations, it is critical to focus on a common quality that distinguishes one from the other. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the action of othering cultures happens when individuals are labelled or popularised as distinct because of features that set them apart from the accepted norm. In his classic book *Orientalism*, Edward Said stated that Western powers and significant individuals such as social scientists and artists dehumanised "the Orient." Ideologies frequently begin to evolve in language and then spread across society, taking over the culture, commerce, and political spheres.

In this article, researchers provide an analysis of the concept of Orientalism, as it is portrayed in Joseph Conrad's "Heart of Darkness." Orientalism, as defined by Edward Said, refers to the way in which the West has historically constructed and represented the East, often in a way that is eroticizing, stereotyping, and distorted. In "Heart of Darkness," this Orientalism is evident in the way that the Congo and its inhabitants are depicted by Conrad. The Congo is depicted as a place of savagery and barbarism, and the African characters in the novel are often depicted as childlike, irrational, and dangerous. This representation may be considered as part of a greater pattern of Western imperialism, in which the West has attempted to justify its colonisation and exploitation of other regions by presenting them as inferior and in need of civilization. Through its portrayal of the Congo and its inhabitants, "Heart of Darkness" exposes the ways in which the West has historically constructed and represented the East and serves as a powerful critique of imperialism and the corrupting influence of power. (Airou, 2022)

## **Research Methodology**

This study is qualitative in nature, with *The Trouble Easers'* text serving as the major data source. Researchers often employ one of two research methods while conducting a study: qualitative or quantitative. Qualitative research seeks to better comprehend a social or human problem from several viewpoints. Qualitative research is undertaken in a natural situation and necessitates the production of a thorough and accurate picture of the phenomenon under investigation. In general, qualitative data analysis is considered a human process in which the researcher relies on textual and content analysis. The objective for employing this technique is to achieve a true textual analysis that looks to be appropriate for investigating *The Trouble Easers'* otherness perspective.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This research work examines otherness between the Persians and Muslims characters in the selected novel from the perspective of internal orientalism. The binary division of West and East, or Occident and Orient, underpins Edward Said's *Orientalism*. The theory deals with otherness, othering, or "us and them." The concept of "internal orientalism" is based the binary opposition within a region or state, as one is considered superior and the other is inferior (Jansson, 2003). The inferiors are dealt with as "others" or "othering," as in the concepts of "occident" and "orient," or "us" and "them." The Eastern face otherness, or us and them, in West.

Many approaches can be used to analyze this story *Trouble Easers* by Sidhwa, but in this study the researcher focuses on the otherness in religious basis in Orientalism, proposed by Tatum and Said. The word "orientalism" has been used for othering within a state or outside. We can better grasp the variety of methods by which national identities are created.

Muslims constitute the biggest plurality, formed the state, and have dominated both the state and society. The Parisians are mostly suppressed in the novel because of the notion of them (otherness), and Muslims believe themselves dominant in Parsia due to their dominance in

Persia. In the chosen narrative, Muslims are represented as powerful, while Persians are repressed.

The internal orientalism in the selected story is evident keeping in view the Othering perspective. Therefore, retaining the original force of Said's theorization of Orientalism, this research work applies the framework of internal orientalism on the selected topic in the context of the Parisian perspective. In keeping with Said's Orientalism binary, this research uses Internal Orientalism as a theoretical framework.

### **Data Analysis**

In the book "Post-Colonial Studies" by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin stated that Orientalism is the style for representing supremacy and domination, reformation, and controlling and imposing one's own authority over the Orient.

### **Instance**

In the text of "The Trouble Easers" by Sidhwa, "Pir Khurkain is Muslim. Zoros don't go for Hajj to Mecca. I have just turned eleven. A touch of unease creeps into my mind. What are Zoroastrian angels doing messing around with Muslim woodcutters?".(P.6)

In these lines, the writer throws light through the character of the daughter to represent the Persian thoughts for Muslims when she heard about the angels and that they were helping the Muslim woodcutter, while they are the angels of Zoroastrianism, they are helping him? He was not a follower of their religion. She was considering Muslims as other, so it's not acceptable to her that the Zoroastrian Angel help the poor Muslim woodcutter. She was shocked when she heard about her religious angels trying to help another religion's believers. She's glorifying her religion as a separate believer, but still, Zoros angels helped him. In Rainbow Journal of Literature, Linguistics, and Cultural Studies by Karim M., Margawati P. discussed how otherness can make a person or a character inferior, powerless, poor, and restricted on all bases and traditions in general to control a person.

In the text "The Trouble Easers," Sidhwa writes,

"Think of us when your troubles are eased, and distribute some shelled chickpeas and sugar every Friday to remember us by. The wood cutter thought, what good will this fistful of sand do for me? I will throw it away as soon as they leave. But Behram Yazad and Mushkail Asaan could read what was going on in his mind. (P.4)

When Behram Yazad and Mushkail Asaan were trying to help the woodcutter, they also taught him that when all his problems of finance and poverty were sorted out, he would have to distribute some chickpeas and sugar every Friday to remember them. They were trying to control him and wanted some reward in return for their help. The angles also had the power to read the minds of humans. What the poor woodcutter thinks is that they also came to know about it. When Pit Khurkain planned that he would throw the first of stones, they directly told him not to throw it; it would have helped him a lot. Even the angles bound and restricted him for the purpose of belonging to the Muslim religion.

In the journal "The Arab World and the Occident: Towards the Construction of an Occidentalism Discourse" by Zahia Samil Salhi in 2021, it is stated that Orientalism is a style based on the thinking of difference between the Orient and the Occident. Occident represented the Orient in a negative way, considered them other from all perspectives, and considered themselves as themselves.

When she heard that her daughter was in prison, Pir Khurkain's wife ran to the palace gates, crying, 'O! How can I let my unmarried, chaste daughters stay all alone in prison? Put me in with her! 'So the king cast the woodcutter's wife also into prison. He confiscated Their property and all their possessions in lieu of the necklace. (P.8)

From this line, it is clear that rules and laws are always in the hands of superiors. The prominent and powerful are always playing with their regulations and legislation. Without any crime or reason for the woodcutter's wife, the king cast her as well into the prison. Only on what she said. On the other hand, it's trolled that never caused a person to enter prison without any proven or highlighting of crime. But the king's performance shows that the poor are always

suffered from and considered less by the powerful and authoritative. Only on accusation-based The king puts the daughter and mother into jail and takes all their property as well because she committed an unpardonable sin. It clearly proves that superiors can do everything easily.

In the article "Otherness Within in Doctor Faustus, King Lear, and Hamlet" in July 2022, Mélanie Flécharde Stated that otherness means to keep a person or community separate, to consider strangers and outsiders, which helps in defining oneself.

The woodcutter wept and cried: 'You have dishonored my family and disgraced my daughter! Who will marry her now?' Then the maker said, 'Would it please you if I married her to my son?' And so it came about that the daughter of a humble woodcutter was married to the King's son. (P.11)

In the story, when the woodcutter's daughter approved her innocence, the woodcutter wept in front of the king and said that he had tortured his respect and his daughter as well; now no one can marry her. On listening to the woodcutter, the king replied that his own son would marry her if the woodcutter wanted. In these lines, the otherness is shown. The king, being in power, considers even his own son other; without asking his desire, he tied him in the knot of marriage with the daughter of a woodcutter. It shows that proving oneself can do anything they want, as the king did.

In the article "Introduction to Orientalism" published in imperialism (2022), in it, It is claimed that said discuss about That it is significant advocated principles and positioned to impose over the Orient because the orient is weaker than occident's, and this weakness basis they are considered as other.

Now it so happened that the angels who relieve our troubles, Behram Yazad and Trouble Easer, were out for a stroll in the city that evening. While wandering through the streets they spotted Pir Khurkain slumped dejectedly in the shadows and asked him: 'why are you out here in the dark? Is anything the matter?' (P.4)

In the above lines of the text the Trouble Easers Sidhwa is trying to promote the Persian angels that they left their all duties and were wandering in the streets to stalk the problems and troubles of people. When Pir Khurkain went back for home, he waited in the streets just for darkness. On daily basis wandering the two Persian angels went him and ask about his trouble. Here sidhwa also shows indirectly that how Persian angels went for the help of Muslim instead of Muslim Angels and how they are good to solve the problems of others. She is indirectly shows Persian angels supremacy over God that it's the responsibility of God to look after his creatures but than angels was doing all.

### Conclusion

Bapsi Sidhwa is the most famous post colonial writer, author, novelist and short story writer. She is Persian by religion. She makes a great name in the literature of Pakistan. In her works she depicted the culture of Pakistan for example in her novel the bride, she represented the wedding ceremony of Pakistani culture. Edward said explain orientalism, it is a body consists of two soul, one is Orient and another one is occident. Orient are the colonized people who are always suppressed by the western people, not only the western people suppressed them but also their society elites as well. Occident are the colonizers or simply western people who are always trying to suppress the colonized people and show them barbaric, savages and unknown about how to survive their lives. Occident always considered their selves superior and says that they are civilized, well knowledgeable people and have rights to colonize the people. "The Trouble Easers" is the short story of sidhwa written in the anthology of their love language, where she focused end trying to promote her religion and proved her religion a superior then Islam because she is Zoroastrian. he study concludes that the theory of orientalism has been applied on the text of sidhwa "The Trouble Easers". In the story she highlighted the factors of otherness. She considered the Muslims as an other and Persians as a self. Firstly she threw light on the Muslim woodcutter who was poor in the story and he was very afraid that how arrange money for his

daughter to bring liver for her, he did struggle to cut woods to buy liver but all the three days the wood that he cut it was burnt. He was not in the face to face his daughter, he seated in the street and waiting for the dusk to go to home, to hide himself from her.

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