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A Critical Discourse Analysis of Selected Pakistani Novels

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ABSTRACT

This research paper conducts a critical discourse analysis of two Pakistani novels, namely "Home Boy" by H. M. Naqvi and "The Blind Man's Garden" by Nadeem Aslam. The primary objective is to gain an insider's perspective on the ideological frameworks and power dynamics within these texts through a comparative analysis. The study explores the language used in the novels to observe shifts in the political system, with a specific focus on evaluating American public rhetoric and prevailing discourse post-September 11. The qualitative research utilizes purposively sampled data from post-9/11 literature by Pakistani writers, employing Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive approach of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyze the selected data. This approach emphasizes the cognitive dimensions of discourse interpretation and development. The findings of the study reveal a notable shift in political and social discourse after 9/11, characterized by stereotypical attitudes, ethnic prejudice, cultural variations, power abuse by elites, and resistance by dominated groups. The novels illustrate that Muslims become victims and legitimate targets of hate crimes, derogatory media perceptions, disappearances, physical beatings, and racial discrimination post-9/11. The research also observes how assimilation transforms into alienation, focusing on the characters in the novels. Additionally, the paper discusses the general social representation, including knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, norms, values, and ideologies of language users in the context of the analyzed novels.

| **Keywords:** | 9/11, Dominance, Discourse Analysis, Ideologies, Islamophobia, Socio-Cognitive Approach |

Introduction

This research paper explores the significance of discourse in diverse aspects of life, transcending language to influence social, political, and cultural patterns. As a social phenomenon, discourse delves into the representation and explanation of understanding, behavior, subjects, and occasions through statements, assumptions, perceptions, and shared ideas. Utilizing Critical Discourse Analysis as a framework, it aims to comprehend the world through language, with a particular focus on cognitive dimensions. In the realm of discourse analysis, which serves as a platform for studying language in real-life contexts and as a social practice, the research reveals how meaning is generated and conveyed through vocal, written, or sign language. It sheds light on how discourse either reproduces or criticizes social and political injustice, power misuse, or supremacy.

The study narrows its focus to two novels, particularly those post-9/11, recognizing fictional works as avenues for insights into various facets of life, fostering cultures, ideologies, and raising awareness. The examination highlights how the tragic events of September 11, 2001, spurred a surge in novel-writing, resulting in a significant shift in

context and themes. These novels, often termed "9/11 novels," delve into themes such as inequality, stereotypes, racial discrimination, and political upheaval.

The aftermath of 9/11 have been addressed specifically, accentuating the intensification of Islamophobia, stereotypes, and challenges to Muslim identity in America. Categorized as historical and war novels, the selected works explore the issues faced by Muslims, accentuating racial differences, cultural predicaments, and identity crises. The anticipated outcome of these novels is to offer a nuanced understanding of post-9/11 discourse, contributing to the broader conversation on societal, cultural, and political dynamics.

Literature Review

Discourse encompasses spoken or written communication that extends beyond individual sentences to convey meaning in various contexts. Discourse Analysis (DA) involves critically examining language, written, spoken, or gestural, in its social context. It aims to understand how discourse is utilized in real situations, allowing researchers to uncover meaning beyond individual sentences. DA encompasses both written and spoken language, with the written form often being more intricate.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) stems from a critical language theory that views language usage as a type of social practice. Recognizing that all social practices are influenced by specific historical contexts, language, as a social practice, not only shapes or challenges existing social relations but also advances particular interests. This perspective prompts inquiries about interests, such as the text's positioning, whose interests are served or denied, and the consequences of this positioning. These inquiries link discourse to relationships of hegemony, dominance, and power. When analysis seeks to comprehend how discourse is entwined with power dynamics, it falls under the umbrella of Critical Discourse Analysis.

Versluys (2007) suggests that identity encompasses the sameness of an individual or object across various situations, emphasizing the selfhood and distinctiveness of a person or thing. The concept of identity involves people's understanding of themselves and their sense of belonging. The imperative to define oneself also leads to the concept of 'otherness.'

Van Dijk asserts that ideologies serve as worldviews shaping social cognition. He states that a language user's ideology becomes evident through language, which offers the means to express views on different aspects of the world. Social scientists, by analyzing the language that embeds ideology, explore how language users either legitimize the current social status and ideology or challenge it.

Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Approach

The Socio-Cognitive Approach, developed by Teun A. Van Dijk as a part of Critical Discourse Studies, focuses on the cognitive aspects of how discourse is produced and understood. It suggests that there isn't a straightforward, linear connection between discourse systems and social structures. Instead, discourses operate through cognitive interactions involving the mental representations of language users, both as individuals and as representatives of their social groups.

In simpler terms, this approach within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) emphasizes the significance of mental representations and how various discourse structures can only be fully understood by considering cognitive factors like individuals' knowledge, perceptions, and understanding.
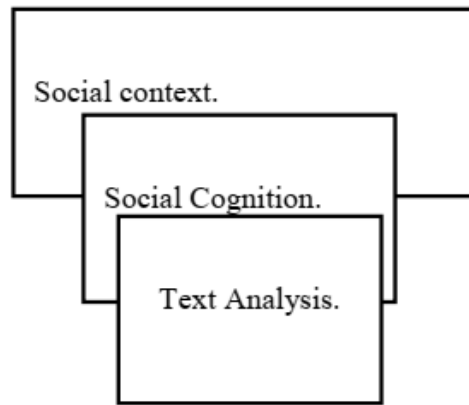
Figure 1: Critical Discourse Analysis Model of van Dijk

The Socio-Cognitive Approach is rooted in social constructionism, a broader theory positing that social and political realities are constructed by members of society. In this approach, discourse is viewed as a form of social practice, and it highlights the interconnected nature of society/culture, cognition, and discourse or language. These three elements, Discourse, Cognition, and Society, are central to the socio-cognitive approach.

Discourse: Refers to spoken or written language used in a social context, essentially conversation or speech. To analyze discourse, it's essential to examine how language is used within a particular social setting or environment.

Cognition: Refers to mental processes such as thinking, perceiving, remembering, judging, and problem-solving. These cognitive processes influence various aspects of life, including discourse and interactions, as they play a role in understanding, learning, and making decisions.

Society: Encompasses social groups, sub-groups in constant contact, or broader social entities inhabiting the same geographical or social territory, often subject to the same political power and cultural norms. It also encompasses the dynamics between social groups, including issues of inequality and dominance, as well as global, political, and societal structures.

This three-aspect analytical model is applied to reveal hidden ideologies, power dynamics, shifts in political structures, and the dominant official discourse evident in the language of novels post-9/11. It enables an examination of the macro-level of discourse, including power, dominance, stereotypes, discrimination, and inequalities among groups, and helps uncover general social representations such as knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, norms, and cultural values.

The socio-cognitive approach is grounded in the understanding of ideological structures and power relations deeply embedded in discourse. It views social power in terms of control and sees sideologies as the basis of social group representation. This approach is used to conduct critical discourse analysis of selected novels, uncovering the ideological dimension of "Us versus Them."

Crucially, by exploring various notions and ideologies, the socio-cognitive approach allows for the analysis of social, cultural, and political differences between Eastern and Western societies. It provides a detailed examination of the social relations between these two regions and explains how the events of 9/11 transformed the world, particularly in the context of Muslim representation in the selected novels "The Blind Man's Garden" and "Home Boy." This three-aspect model also helps define power relations and inequalities experienced by the characters in these novels, illustrating how they become victims of enduring hatred and oppression.

In these novels, various textual references emphasize the recurring themes and ideologies concealed within the narratives, providing a deeper understanding of the complex issues that emerged in the aftermath of 9/11.

Material and Methods

The study employed qualitative approach to interpret the ideologies shaping discourse. Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Approach was used to critically analyze the text. The primary sources are the novels "The Blind Man's Garden" and "Home Boy," supplemented by secondary data from online sources and research papers addressing post-9/11 political and literary discourse.

Results and Discussion

The 9/11 event was not just a tragic incident that fueled hatred between East and West but also a life-altering moment that shook the Muslim identity and challenged their global image. It reshaped the world's perspective, subjecting Muslims to religious, ideological, and sociopolitical pressures imposed by Western powers. Muslims were unfairly stereotyped as terrorists, and this led to the introduction of ideological narratives in Western political discourse. The radical assumption of them being a threat to peace, coupled with ethnic prejudice and identity crises, had a significant impact on how Pakistanis and Muslims were perceived worldwide.

A comparative analysis of two novels, "Home Boy" by H.M Naqvi and "The Blind Man's Garden" by Nadeem Aslam, demonstrates that "Home Boy" serves as a counter-narrative to Orientalism in Western discourse related to 9/11 and terrorism. It deconstructs Orientalist narratives of "othering" and "stereotyping." On the other hand, "The Blind Man's Garden" responds to the prevailing racial discourses stemming from the "war on terror" and is set in the post-9/11 period, exploring various conceptions of justice based on different power ideologies. Both novels explicitly depict the ideological East-West divide.

The effects of 9/11 extended beyond racial profiling of Muslims, leading to stereotypes as terrorists and various forms of harassment, alienation, prejudice, and discrimination. This resulted in a clash of ideologies and civilizations, highlighting issues like cultural differences, oppression, political injustice, stereotyping, inequality, tyranny, power abuse, Islamophobia, and misuse of power. These themes, evident in both novels, illustrate a world where humanity is no longer respected, and people are mistreated, disrespected, and even killed.

The analysis includes numerous textual references to highlight these concealed themes and ideologies in the texts.

Otherness

After 9/11, Muslims were labeled as "Others," emphasizing their distinctiveness. This notion of otherness reflected American superiority and the radical ideology that portrayed Asians and Muslims as inferior and barbaric. Their notion of *Other* justified their means to marginalization and violence. The Muslims and the whole so-called victimized west are mass ***ideologies*** and actors that exemplify us/them binary. Muslims faced personal alienation, even from peers, as illustrated by Duck's statement: "There was something in the tenor of the phrase... the Duck wasn't the same."

Despite integration into US culture, U.S. officials portrayed Pakistani Muslims as "Other," resulting in profound loneliness and social bigotry. "*You could feel it walking down some streets: people didn't avert their eyes or nod when you walked past but often stared, either tacitly claiming you as their own or dismissing you as the Other*" *(Naqvi, 210, p. 45)*.Chuck's

sense of otherness became the basis for the existence of the terrorist other. President Bush's use of "we" and "us" in speeches furthered this division.

American media, acting as a political institution, perpetuated the radical assumption of otherness, as seen when Chuck watched a news bulletin in "Home Boy." While the FBI determined that Mehmood had no terrorist goals, an inquiry revealed that he had assisted some friends who had overstayed their visas, making him liable for harboring illegal immigrants. Since Chuck's visa was about to expire and he, too, was assisting friends, this incident serves as an objective correlative to his circumstance. It absorbed the projected "dehumanizing myths", leading to Chuck's anticipation of a similar treatment by American society.

Terrorism

The aftermath of 9/11 saw the creation of a stark division between 'Them' and 'Us,' leading to the emergence of the term 'terrorist' to describe those seen as massively destructive opponents of America. "*You're in big fucking trouble. That's what's going on. We're holding you under the Material Witness Stature. Know what that is? That means that you're a material witness to a crime" (Naqvi, 2010, p. 106).* This division led to imprisonment, accusations, and interrogations, causing immense distress. Post-9/11 America witnessed intensified racialization, repression, and discrimination, especially targeting American Muslims. *"We were from the FBI, Trig reported and, after a pause, clarified, "The Federal Bureau of Investigation." (Naqvi, 2010, p. 99). "We received an anonymous tip last night that there's been soon suspicious activity." "We were told that a cab –a New York City yellow cab- has been standing outside all night, and these days we take these things seriously." (Naqvi, 2010, p. 101)*

The novels highlight how American policies were driven by religious profiling and racial suspicion, unjustly accusing Muslims of terrorism. The word 'terrorism' became an ideology in itself, with people of Muslim faith being treated as terrorists. . *"Things are very hard since the conspiracy of last September, and people like us are being accused of sowing something called Terror." (Aslam, 2013, P. 233).* "*The Americans pay $5000 for each suspected terrorist." (Aslam, 2013, p. 174).* This narrative underscores the post-9/11 redefinition of terrorism to encompass all Muslims and those who resembled them, creating a pervasive climate of fear. Additionally, the disappearance and targeting of Muslim men based on their appearance and cultural norms, particularly Afghan and Pakistani men, is portrayed not only through language but also through images drawn by American children, found on prison walls. These images symbolize the prevailing prejudice and profiling faced by Muslim men in the post-9/11 era. "*Why are there pictures in the corridor?" Mikal says. "Their bright colours had   pained   his   eyes. They are from children in America.' "Drawings of butterflies, flowers, guns shooting at men with beards and helicopters dropping bombs on small figures in turbans."(Aslam, 2013, p. 210)*.

Islamophobia

Following the terrorist attacks in the United States, a body of work has developed focusing on the ideology that Muslims are inherently linked to terrorism, characterizing Islamophobia. This phenomenon manifests in everyday interactions, occasionally escalating into aggressive and abusive incidents, reflecting a global, religious, and social issue that goes beyond mere disapproval.

Islamophobia, a historical yet persistently relevant ideology, has become prevalent in Western societies. Muslims face mistreatment due to their cultural identity and distinct religious values. There's a pervasive belief, exemplified by statements like Bush's claim that Muslims are "traitors to their own faith who are trying to hijack Islam" and the discovery of Arabic books and bomb-making manuals, that associates Islam with violence.

Moreover, American institutions, including the government, police, Metropolitan Detention Centre (MCD), and the FBI, reinforce this view. They appear determined to detain and marginalize Muslims, driven by allegations of terrorism and stereotyped anti-Western sentiments.

Islam is not the sole concern; there is also fear of Pakistan's nuclear capabilities, which leads to the widespread degradation of Pakistani Muslims. This fear drives a desire to possess what they refer to as an "Islamic Bomb." These elements reflect the deep-seated prejudices and suspicions against Muslims and Islam in Western society.

Stereotypes

The novels illustrate the insidious impact of political ideology in perpetuating stereotypes about Muslims. They portray Muslims as terrorists, their compatriots, and potential suicide bombers, while also labeling Pakistan as "Bumfuckistan," reflecting derogatory attitudes. This prejudiced narrative fosters anger, negativity, and hatred toward Muslims, Islam, and Pakistan.

By distinguishing individuals from the pack, Home Boy defies **Orientalist assumptions and stereotypes** regarding Muslims. The post-9/11 discourse emphasizes the oversimplified image of Muslims, simplifying and homogenizing diverse cultures. *"I'm trying to understand why Muslims terrorize." (Naqvi, 2010, p. 116).* The West has grouped all Muslims under a common stereotyped concept of Islam, simplifying and homogenizing diverse and dynamic cultures. Language, particularly by American media, constructs Muslims as potential enemies, with stereotypes associated with beards, terrorism, and danger. *"Drawings of butterflies, flowers, guns shooting at men with beards and helicopters dropping bombs on small figures in turbans."(Aslam, 2013, p. 210)*. It's the American stereotype that a person with a beard is a terrorist and a ruffian. FBI interrogations, as seen with Chuck, reinforce these stereotypes and connect Muslims to terrorism. People associated with alleged Muslims, like cab owner Abdul Karim, face mistreatment and interrogation, reflecting an exaggerated fear, hate, and animosity toward Islam and Muslims. *"The FBI came into my house…treating us criminally." "They were asking "what's your relationship to the Shehzad boy?" "You are knowing he is a terrorist?" (Naqvi, 2010, p. 184).* This fosters racism, bigotry, and the marginalization of Muslims from various aspects of society.

The political influence in these narratives, as exemplified by AC's speech, perpetuates the stereotype of Muslims as terrorists, with a shift in image from "Mujahideen" to the "Bastard of War," i.e., the Taliban. These stereotypes depict "others" as primitive and radical, reinforcing prejudice and bias against Muslims.

Power and Domination

Aslam's narratives depict a region marred by corruption, ideological divisions, and the presence of both violent terrorist organizations and failures of the Pakistan government. The irony is highlighted as the United States, while claiming to protect fundamental human rights, deprives innocent prisoners of these rights. The presence of corruption and oppression is exemplified through the quote, *"Hundreds of thousands of poor defenseless Afghanistanis have been murdered by the Americans in cold blood." (Aslam, 2013, p. 113)* The struggle for control over territory and individuals is a recurring theme, with both the Taliban and the United States vying for power. This is expressed in the statement, *"Whoever has power desires to hold on to power. That is the case both with the Taliban and the West." (Aslam, 2013, p. 99), underscoring* the dominance of powerful forces.

The narratives also shed light on the pervasive fear and power abuse faced by individuals like Mikal when they are transferred to America. The vivid description of the helicopter ride and the conditions in the American prison reveal the horrors of war and

oppression. The presence of American forces is inescapable, leading to endless violence and constant man-hunts.

Aslam employs metaphors to illustrate the changing discourse in post-9/11 East/West relations. The imagery of boot marks, sandy terrain, and relentless man-hunts symbolizes the militant domination and the transformation of Afghanistan into a violent, despised area.

The use of weapons not only represents destruction but also symbolizes power abuse and control, as expressed in the quote, *"Noises from the mouths of humans and the mouths of the guns. In the form of screams, in the form of the bullets, as if the men are shouting at weapons and the weapons are shouting back." (Aslam, 2013, p. 73).* The constant violence becomes an integral part of life.

Lastly, Americans' sense of superiority and their treatment of others based on their religious, cultural, and political identities are evident. The prisoners' refusal to escape out of fear for their families exposes the arrogant attitude of Americans and their belief in their own superiority.

Marginalization

"The turn of the century had been epic."(Naqvi, 2010, p. 3). "It was time to forget, time to be happy" (Naqvi, 2010 p, 6). "We'd become Japs, Jews, Niggers. We weren't before. We fancied ourselves boulevardiers, raconteurs, renaissance men, AC, Jimbo and me. We were self-invented and self-made and certain we had our fingers on the pulse of the great global dialectic" (Naqvi, 2010, p.1). It signifies the cultural vulnerability that defined America and the American dream. But in post 9/11 things have changed. Americans' broadness turns into narrowness. Chuck reveals that they were bold New Yorkers but soon after 9/11 they are categorized as Japs, Jews, and Niggers. They were classified by their ethnic background and identity. Chuck, a Pakistani Muslim, is thrown into a phase when he and his fellow countrymen will be viewed with distrust, just as the Japanese were in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor. His self's relation to these ostensibly oppressed citizens is emphasized, in the novel and its ramifications seem to be amplified. They looked down upon with suspicion and hatred. *"I looked away when people looked at me." (Naqvi, 2010, P. 12).* Similarly, the novels indicate that the destruction of the Twin Towers was indeed a notable change in the history of the world. The 9/11 attacks were a turning point that reawakened the perception of danger. It was considered as the beginning of the cycle mental stress, alienation, and marginalization. Post 9/11 serves as a genesis of discrimination, hatred, and suspicion against Muslims. The US government took immediate actions including rescue operations at the World Trade Center site and the grounding of passenger aircraft, and long-term including raiding, inquiries, legislative reforms, military action, and reconstruction projects. Americans' radical ideologies, their innate beliefs, mistreatment, and the power of political institutions have turned Muslims into marginalized groups. In a world of differences, Muslims were uncertain, alienated, and rootless without knowing what to do with their lives. Chuck is fighting a nervous breakdown and feeling as though he is about to pass out. *"I was teetering on the ragged edge of the universe. One misstep, one slip, and I would totter, I would fall" (Naqvi, 2010, p. 199).* It mirrored the situation faced by Muslim especially young Muslims after the catastrophe of 9/11.These all actions by the USA highlight their ways to marginalized others.

Identity Crisis

Identity crisis is a central theme in these narratives, with characters grappling with their sense of self and belonging. The quote, *"You aren't American!' he fired back. 'You got no fucking rights." (Naqvi, 2010, p. 107). "I didn't know where or who I was" (Naqvi, 2010, p. 26).* reflects the suspicion and inability of Americans to fully accept individuals like Chuck as part of their identity, intensifying their quest for a clear sense of belonging. Chuck, torn

between his Pakistani and American identities, *"I regarded myself in the mirror. I looked like the waking dead" (Naqvi, 2010, p. 134),* experiences inner turmoil and alienation, leading to a psychological and social disconnect in the post-9/11 world.

Aslam's work further delves into the complexities of identity during interrogation. The character Mikal's use of different languages and cultural references exemplifies the hybrid nature of his identity, reflecting the borderland's complexity. *"We know you can speak. You spoke in your sleep. Sometimes in the language of an Afghan, sometimes in the language of a Pakistani. Are you a Pakistani, an Afghan, or an Afghan-born and raised in Pakistan?"(Aslam, 2013 p. 201).* Questions about whether he is Pakistani, Afghan, or an Afghan born and raised in Pakistan underscore the struggles individuals face in defining their identities in the post-9/11 landscape.

The impact of post-9/11 policies and discrimination is evident in Chuck's story, where his American dream is shattered, and he undergoes a significant identity transformation. The challenging circumstances lead to a shift from being a banker to a cab driver and a constant search for a new job, mirroring his quest for a clear sense of identity and belonging.

Cultural Variation

"In a changed America, it seemed anything could happen. I could abide the cursing and spitting and casual violence, but the threat of systematic brutality stirred a profound sense of panic." (Naqvi 2010, p.112). "*New World was so unexpectedly new." (Naqvi 2010, p. 126).* The quoted passages vividly depict the significant transformation in America following 9/11. They reflect the trauma experienced by Muslims as their lives changed dramatically and cultural differences emerged, leading to profound injustice. Chuck's statement about the "changed America" and the sense of panic he felt due to the threat of systematic brutality underscores the new, charged atmosphere. The narratives show how innocent Muslims were unfairly treated solely because of their cultural and religious identities, leading to suspicion, scrutiny, questioning, and imprisonment.

The portrayal of Chuck's appearance, with his beard and cultural markers, highlights how post-9/11 America associated certain cultural attributes with criminality. The beard, in particular, symbolizes religious identity and unique Pakistani cultural elements. Post-9/11, these cultural markers became synonymous with "otherness," resulting in the mistreatment of immigrants with distinct backgrounds. The narratives effectively capture the experiences of immigrants who were once valued but suffered due to their unique cultural and religious identities in the post-9/11 climate.

Racial Discrimination

In the post-9/11 era, a disturbing new form of discrimination emerges, where people are judged based on their appearances, mannerisms, skin color, facial expressions, and clothing. Dark-skinned individuals are particularly subjected to disdain. Chuck's experience of being severely beaten at Jake's bar by a gang of brawlers highlights the racial discrimination and ethnic prejudice that deepened during this time. Chuck and his friend are derogatorily referred to as "A-rabs," and they face a barrage of expletives, with the brawlers depicting Arabs and people with brown skin as backward, exotic, and uncivilized.

This prejudice is further exemplified when Chuck and his friend find themselves segregated into teams based on skin color and ethnic origin at Dodgeball Alley during lunch. This separation intensifies the notion of Americans perceiving Muslims and Asians as alien, primitive, and inferior. It reflects the racism and discrimination against Muslims, where only they were arrested, suspected, and interrogated.

Chuck's reflections and the experiences of Muslims in this context underline how Americans' preconceived notions and rigid mindsets made life challenging and miserable for those who were perceived as different. The discrimination is exacerbated by the belief of American superiority and the categorization of the East as primitive and inferior.

Social Factors and Ideologies

The discourse in these novels is heavily influenced by local and global social systems, which shape cognitive mediation through shared information, ideologies, and societal mental models. Ideology is a significant concept in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and it serves as a cognitive system that underlies social representations shared by group members.

The impact of the 9/11 catastrophe on people's lives is depicted vividly in the novels. It showcases the attitudes of U.S. citizens towards Pakistani Muslims, where humanity is disregarded, and people are subjected to disgrace, violence, and a loss of freedom due to their differing beliefs. This tragic event has resulted in trauma, particularly for Muslims and Pakistanis, due to their conflicting religious identities, as explored in the novels. Both novels aim to probe issues of racism, discrimination, stereotypes, and assumptions against Muslims.

History is a recurring theme, with Aslam emphasizing its importance in understanding the events leading up to 9/11 and the destructive consequences of the war on terror. The impact of historical beliefs on contemporary events and the enduring effects of the 9/11 catastrophe, including pessimism, despair, and disappointment, are highlighted. *"But she cannot jettison her fear completely, because 2001 had begun on a Monday, a sign according to the almanacs that the weak would suffer greatly at the hands of the strong and the unthinking during these twelve months." (Aslam, 2013, p. 84).* The aftermath of 9/11 has given rise to numerous myths, ideologies, assumptions, and stereotypes against Muslims and Orientals, leading to discrimination in various aspects of life, including business, employment, and education. *"Nobody knows what's going on, but "but everybody's busy parceling myths and prejudice as analysis and reportage" (Naqvi, 2009, p.90).* People are marginalized based on political, religious, social, and economic differences.

The novels also delve into the Taliban's ideological structure, which manipulates religious ideologies to justify violence and maintain power. Their use of religion to rationalize their actions, even when expressing concern for innocent children, is depicted as a means to perpetuate their dominance.

Perpetual Violence

The aftermath of 9/11 in both novels takes a grim turn, where the cycle of physical, psychological, and verbal violence becomes an integral part of American ideology. The impact on Muslims is profound, with a sense of helplessness and victimization, as they feel marked and threatened. "*Each man is dying ten, twenty, or thirty deaths." (Aslam, 2013, p. 74).*Both Jeo and Mikal are thrust into a chaotic world filled with destruction, explosions, and darkness, highlighting the violence and brutality that has become prevalent in their lives. *"Jeo hears what he has never heard before, the awful crump of tank shells, explosion, and gunfire in the far distance". (Aslam, 2013, p. 56). "The Black guy pinned me with a knee. You like that? he inquired. Get the fuck up!... I was dragged down one corridor and then another, slipping and scraping against the linoleum." (Naqvi, 2010, p.112).*

The novels reveal how Americans perceive Muslims and Asians as outsiders, primitive, and inferior, resulting in racism and discrimination. The "us/them" binary is exemplified, creating a tense global situation and hindering the construction of one's identity. Innocents, like Mikal, face humiliation and the most heinous forms of emotional and physical violence, a consequence of systematic brutality justified in the name of national security. The novels depict the enduring effects of this violence on humanity, as it cripples

civilization. The social and political change brought about by 9/11 destabilizes the global order and leads to uncertainty, terror, psychological aggression, and chaos in the lives of ordinary people, as evident in Chuck's interrogation in Naqvi's novel. *"My mouth was dry, my saliva warm, vicious." (Naqvi 2010, p.113). "I could have been silly or paranoid, but it was the first time I had felt this way: uneasy, guilty, criminal." (Naqvi, 2010 p. 76).*

Children, too, suffered the consequences of violence, with their lives disrupted and, in some cases, tragically ended. *"Yasmin said he had been shot eighty-six times" (Aslam, 2013, p. 351). T*he perpetual violence and inequality compound the suffering of Muslims, who are treated as subhuman and subjected to torture and abuse. *"He is made to lower himself onto his knees and hold out his arms at the sides. He stays in this position for thirty-five minutes." "Attach a chain to his wrist, asking him to raise his arms above his head. Every time he falls asleep the arms shackles to ceiling wrench him awake." (Aslam 2013, p. 204) "Mikal's neck pressed against the concrete under the man's boots". (Aslam 2013, p. 212)*

These excerpts underscore the lasting impact of post-9/11 violence on Muslims, both in the United States and in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the devastating consequences of these acts on the individuals and communities.

Irrational Suspicion

The aftermath of the September 11 attacks had a profound impact on how Pakistan was perceived by the West, particularly the United States. The attacks gave rise to a deep-seated border of suspicion and anger between the East and the West, fostering irrational mistrust, hatred, and misconceptions. Muslims, in general, were unfairly blamed for the destruction resulting from the 9/11 attacks, leading to pervasive stereotyping and discrimination.

In Naqvi's "Home Boy," this prejudice is evident as characters like Jeo and Mikal embark on a journey to Afghanistan with the intention of providing help to the injured. Instead of being seen as compassionate individuals, they were immediately suspected of being American spies, highlighting the deeply ingrained suspicion that Muslims faced.

The stereotypes and preconceived notions of Islam and Muslims have only been exacerbated by the events of 9/11. The novels, "Home Boy" (2010) and "The Blind Man's Garden" (2013), delve into the political dynamics of domination, hegemony, and power. The imperialists' objective in stereotyping Muslims is to maintain control over the "other." The United States, in particular, has reinforced its dominance by perpetuating a false narrative that portrays Islam as an extremist religion, which, in turn, justifies its involvement in foreign relations.

These novels shed light on the deep-seated discrimination, power abuse, and stereotypes that have become prevalent post-9/11. Ideologies, as abstract representations, have enduring effects on individuals' personalities and character development, as well as on marginalized groups. They also shape social cognition, including awareness, beliefs, attitudes, norms, and values. The titles of the novels themselves reflect the inner struggles of the characters as they navigate a world marked by discrimination and seek to find their true destinations.

Conclusion

The impending and devastating event of 9/11 deeply shook the entire world, leaving a lasting impact that continues to shape our global perspective and daily lives. The tragedy of 9/11 had far-reaching effects on all aspects of society, including social, political, economic, religious, and educational institutions, profoundly affecting humanity. It also left its mark on language, influencing how media, including print, broadcast, and online media, convey information.

Following the 9/11 catastrophe, authors' narratives took on a pivotal role in shaping public perception, challenging stereotypes about Muslim nations and their inhabitants, with a particular focus on Pakistan. These authors began to explore entirely new themes, with two dominant thematic strands emerging in post-9/11 discourse: fiction with political undertones and fiction addressing identity issues. Additionally, writing about ethnic backgrounds became a prominent theme in post-9/11 fiction.

A comparative analysis of two novels sheds light on the transformed world after the events of September 11, 2001. Both novels explore the complex scenario, the challenges faced by ordinary individuals, and the socio-political upheavals that followed 9/11. They do so with distinct tones, styles, literary techniques, and rhythms. In "Home Boy" by H.M Naqvi, a dark comedy, the novel primarily delves into the social and political fluctuations following 9/11, especially in Islamic states. It highlights issues related to anti-Muslim prejudice and discrimination. Despite the passage of time, many Muslims, especially the youth, continue to grapple with the trauma caused by conflicting religious identities. Naqvi's work reflects the thoughts and emotions of those affected by 9/11, individuals thrust into an identity crisis. The narrative underscores the transformation of America from a symbol of beauty to brutality, from optimism to pessimism, and from familiarity to strangeness.

On the other hand, Nadeem Aslam's novel, "The Blind Man's Garden," combines linguistic fluency and suspense with a nuanced deconstruction of foreign sociopolitical conflicts, offering a somber portrayal of their impact on local communities. This novel reveals a deep understanding of a globalized environment influenced by American political and economic interests. The war narrative ultimately showcases the resilience inherent in our basic humanity when confronted with these challenges.

Both novels provide readers with a unique perspective on the post-9/11 world, as seen through the eyes of Pakistanis and Afghans, offering a compassionate recognition of a side of the world often overlooked by Westerners. They offer valuable insights into the "war on terror" and shed light on life in a dynamic, conflicted, and often violent region.

By applying Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach, it becomes evident that the entire American community is influenced by the political landscape and policies, leading to the prevalence of influence, supremacy, hegemony, and ideology. This approach also reveals that Muslims are often stereotyped and portrayed in a particular manner, making it difficult for them to escape these preconceived notions. The themes of terrorism and fundamentalism have become integral to academic and media discourse since 9/11.

Islamophobia has grown as a self-constructed perception in Western discourse, evolving into hostility and prejudice against Muslims and Islam. This negative portrayal of Muslims and their faith is rooted in Western perspectives and ultimately results in a binary division between "us" and the "other."

In conclusion, Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach helps uncover the deep-seated political, religious, and ideological structures within both novels. These structures, intertwined with societal power dynamics, shape discourse patterns and relationships. The findings highlight stereotypical attitudes, ethnic bias, cultural differences, power imbalances, and the resistance of Third World countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan against American misconceptions and suspicions. It is clear that social structures and discourse constructions are intertwined and deeply influenced by individuals, their thoughts, and perceptions.

Recommendations

In light of the comprehensive evaluation conducted in this research, guided by the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), several recommendations emerge for future investigations. Firstly, the researcher proposes a nuanced examination of the novels from a

feminist perspective, aiming to delve into issues of women's oppression, marginalization, and gender discrimination. This avenue of inquiry promises to enrich our understanding of the complex dynamics within the narratives. Secondly, the study acknowledges a gap in its exploration of themes such as religious devotion, history, and nationalism. The researcher advocates for an investigation into these themes, emphasizing the historical approach and the experiences of other characters, thereby broadening the scope of research. Lastly, recognizing the current research as a critical discourse analysis of the novels, the researcher suggests that future studies could benefit from a stylistic analysis. This includes an examination of literary devices, irony, imagery, and other elements that contribute to the aesthetic and artistic dimensions of the novels, thereby enhancing the depth of scholarly inquiry.

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