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The Empowerment of the Classy Women in Kamila Shamsie's Salt and Saffron

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Abstract

Western feminists have utilized the power they have acquired from their position in inactive discourses to cast third world women as victims who need the assistance of their western sisters. Structuring third world women in a category or one dimension of analysis as suppressed, savage, subjugated, pawn, helpless, and dependent, have outraged many non-western writers to enhance the exact image of women relying upon their different experiences and resistance methods to the gendered oppression of female and originating empowered examples of women in their literary narratives. The Pakistani-British author Kamila Shamsie offers a fresh perspective on third-world women by highlighting their struggles, contributions, and ordeals as well as their fight to live and fulfill their potential. By incorporating transnational feminist theory as a radical theoretical model to expose and define the west's hegemonic practices, transcending nation-state boundaries, and addressing inequalities globally, this study aims to demonstrate how Shamsie challenges western ideas and stereotypical images.

Keywords: Third world women, Transnational feminism, Kamila Shamsie, Salt and Saffron.

Introduction

Women's literature in Pakistan is a neglected field, unlike its male counterparts. As a practice, female narratives are marginalized, for the patriarchal philosophy that permeates Pakistani culture makes it difficult for women to express their feelings in such a repressive environment (Swamy, 2019). In Pakistan, Muslim women are often anticipated to be quiet, reticent, timid, and cautious while interacting with any man other than their husbands. Furthermore, they should keep a plausible physical distance, speak in a low voice tone, use decent language, act in a cultural way, and preserve an appearance that does not suggest any signs of immorality, promiscuity, or sexuality. They are also supposed to maintain a humble gaze, wear appropriate clothes that hide their body and wear a veil that completely covers their head and chest without evoking the sexual desires of males (Safdar, 2021).

Kamila Shamsie, the author of *Salt and Saffron* was born in Pakistan in 1973, and she now lives in London. She owns the credit of remarkable novels that all were shortlisted for prizes: *In the City by the Sea*, *Kartography*, *Broken Verses*, and *Burnt Shadows*. In 1999, Shamsie won the Prime Minister Literary Award and the Patras Bokhari Award in 2004, both rewarded by the Pakistani Academy for Letters (Shamsie, 2000). Her work *A God in Every Stone* was included in the shortlist for the 2015 Walter Scott Award. Further, she was listed among the top 20 young British writers by Granta (Swamy, 2019). Also, Shamsie was named by the Orange Prize for Fiction as one of the 21 authors of the 21st century (Cilano, 2007). She attended university in the United States after finishing her schooling in Karachi and eventually settled in the United Kingdom, although she has houses on each of the three continents (Zahoor, 2015).

Shamsie was fortunate to come from a loving, well-educated family at a time when women were supposed to stay at home and be good spouses and mothers. She was reared in a cultured family surrounded by influential generations of women; her mother, Muneeza Shamsie, a renowned literary critic, and her grand-aunt Attia Hosain, a well-known Indian author (Swamy, 2019). In all of her novels, Shamsie presents a positive, vital third-world woman's image. Her female characters are exceptional in their quest to question patriarchy, give a detailed account of the past and history, and bring serious issues to be discussed. All of this is due to the dynamic environment she grew up in; this environment influenced most of her works, and that reading the heritage and works of her family empowered Shamsie to follow the same path of activism. (Shamsie, 2009).

Shamsie's fiction demonstrates how Pakistan had a turbulent history and how its literature still carries traces of the socio-political changes that shaped the nation's temporal and geographical landscape. History in Shamsie's writing is neither literary nor rhetorical; it is a collection of political and material situations

that the individual strives to make sense of (Zahoor, 2015). Political-historical works are a significant part of her originative identity. Shamsie's novels can truly be described as a sociocultural document of a time of despair and optimism in her country. Likewise, she displays a trajectory of conflicts and human sentiments driven mostly by politics (Hasan, 2013). Her novels address the diversity of ideologies, official history, and the political and intellectual scene. Thereupon, Shamsie subverts and criticizes the myths and official history in favor of a much more authentic history that was compiled from often ignored sources. She offers alternate perspectives for readers on beliefs, history, and legends that the majority of people take for granted (Shoaib, 2019).

Pakistan, as a Muslim Orthodox society, restricts "women's space in every sense of the term," and for some female authors, it is difficult to express their ideas in writing (Hasan, 2013, p.13). Writing for women in Pakistan helps those writers to reclaim their identity and maintain their sanity in the middle of all the gloomy, depressing circumstances they are obliged to confront daily. Instead of only writing from a feminist standpoint, Shamsie offers a divergent variety of voices, a voice of a country attempting to comprehend its nature, "coming to terms with its self-destructive mechanisms," and fighting the opposing forces (p.14). She has not depicted women as impotent victims as they are frequently presented to be, but rather as powerful, independent, and individuals who embrace their uniqueness unconsciously (Hasan, 2013).

Shamsie's *Salt and Saffron* (2000) weaves narratives of the once famous Dard-e-Dil family with an account of their modern descendants deeply affected by the incidents of 1947 in particular. Similarly, it creates post-colonial histories of politics, class, and shifting identities limits (Nyman, 2009). The novel explores the family's history, and the quest to know the reality about family is connected to reconsidering crucial questions of why and how Pakistan was created (King, 2011). Throughout the different tales about the heroine's aristocratic Pakistani/Indian family's life and stories of not-quite-twins, Shamsie points out the larger narrative of a divided nation. Through her tale, she makes a connection between historical facts and Dard-e-Dil family's history (Zahoor, 2015). The way Shamsie tells the story of partition is a highly effective technique to make the readers aware of particular historical facts about the exile and culture of several communities (Ansari, 2019).

Shamsie grew up close to the partition, in that she remembers some of the aftermaths as half of her family is in India. The split of her family is very similar to the family's story in *Salt and Saffron*; the siblings of both of her parents were divided into two groups: those who stayed in India and those who moved to Pakistan (Cilano, 2007). To have her voice heard internationally, she chose to

write in English; her books provide readers with a better understanding of non-western cultures (Zahoor, 2015).

Shamsie stands on a highly rich ground to have constructed a mindscape that integrated the best of both traditions since she belongs to a family of authors and comes from a nation with very strong Urdu storytelling history, for Urdu has a longstanding history of *Dastangoi*; storytelling. Shamsie undoubtedly has enjoyed reading these inherited manuscripts, which she used as the basis for her current novel. She is enthralled by the way storytelling forms up novels that transcend borders and promote cultural progression (Hasan, 2013). Throughout this storytelling, the author sheds light on the history prior to partition, that of Muslims, Hindus, Moghal empire, and the British forces, to blend these facts with her outstanding fictional characters and stories.

Muslims' first arrival in India was in the eighth century; they dominated the sub-continent though they remained a minority. Muslims' rule was supported by Moghal Empire, but this did not last as the latter was challenged by the British force with their continual victories in both battles and rebellions, especially the colossally overpowering of Muslims and Hindus rebellion in 1857 that marked the disintegration of the Muslim rule in India. Many attempts were raised to bring back the glory of Muslims; two trends or schools were notable, the first by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and the second attempt flourished with the Deobands and Berelvis in the scholastic center; these trends heralded Muslims reawaking in India (Mumtaz & Shaheed, 1987). During this time, Sir Allama Mohammed Iqbal, a prominent philosopher, academic, and poet advocated for a "practical and modern view of Islam" that the revitalization of Islam in India could lead to a free Muslim state (p.6). Thus, it was Iqbal's vision to form a consolidated Muslim state and to divide the content. Three Muslim students schooling in Cambridge in the year 1933 sought the division of the Indian sub-continent between Hindus and Muslims, whereas Barkat Ali, one of them, coined Pakistan's name for the suggested Muslim state. In 1940, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, a leader in the Muslim League, presented the theory of two nations in Lahore in one of the Muslim League's annual meetings (Mumtaz & Shaheed, 1987).

In 1947, two independent nations were born; India and Pakistan (Menon & Bhasin, 1998). One in four of the 95 million Muslims who lived in India at the time of partition became Pakistanis, while the 35 million remained in India; "the largest number of Muslims in a non-Muslim state." (p.4). The partition brought the displacement of millions of people that 50 years later still 1,100 displaced individuals in India in what is named 'permanent liability homes.' Those who migrated to Pakistan were unaware of their new location; Pakistan was a separate independent country, even after years of living there. Homes loss was more tolerable and less heartbreaking than friendship loss (Menon & Bhasin, 1998).

The scenario of 1947 was repeated in Pakistan in 1971 when a third nation was born in the separation of East Pakistan to Bangladesh in a bloody war of independence and liberation (Osman, 2020).

The emotional distress which emerges from departing past security that is symbolized by family, home, Karachi, and friends is a major theme in Shamsie's novels. The affluence of her fiction is found in the way where diverse themes and tales are interconnected, layered, and part of one another throughout a book. This allows the story of a couple or a person to be seen within a broader, more socially intense context (King, 2011).

The novel emphasizes the diversity of agency and subjectivity of women as it is formed by mobility. It offers to show its female characters in a different way, attaining various sources of empowerment and utilizing strategic and pragmatic use of their knowledge, global connectivity, awareness, cultural exposures, and virtual and physical travels to create an agentive performance of their communal identities and also pursuing their own ambitions. Their subjectivity becomes fluid, multiple, and non-fixed (Safdar, 2021). Additionally, Shamsie lends her characters a realistic presentation, not only employed to fulfill their role but to inspire and strike readers (Cilano, 2007). She begins to portray autonomous, authoritative women due to the changing times and her desire to enlighten readers about the 'new woman.' She exhibits a new offering of Pakistani women that they are not overlooked, and off-staged; on the contrary, those women are able to abandon the rigid, historical roles (Sohail, 2021).

Literature Review

Kamilia Shamsie's *Salt and Saffron* (2000) is a pleasant narrative that acclaimed exceedingly fine views for it details a broad range of concepts; womanhood, culture, class, history, emancipation, conflicts, etc. Many researchers and writers have "started depicting and talking about feminism in their works but Kamila Shamsie and her novel *Salt and Saffron* are best to take into considerations as she keenly observes the realistic presentation of Pakistani patriarchal culture where women are still in struggle to be free from the stereotypes". (Sohail, 2021, p.54) Numerous well-known authors, critics, and scholars endeavored to analyze this piece with different approaches, concepts, and techniques.

Sadia Sohail (2021) "Observing Representation of Women in Pakistani Context: A Postmodern Feminist Study of Kamila Shamsie's Novel *Salt and Saffron*" the research suggests the notion of a woman's empowerment, including the changes she may be doing to obtain the ideal femininity for herself and the efforts necessary to realize these aspirations. Furthermore, questioning the static values and standards imposed upon Pakistani women in the light of Postmodern

Feminism. According to Muhammed Safdar (2021) “Beyond the Binary of the Religious and the Secular: Mobility- shaped Agency of Muslim Women in Kamila Shamsie’s Fiction” the researcher aims to examine how Muslim women’s agency is shaped by mobility upon evaluating the protagonists of Shamsie’s novels *Broken Verses* and *Salt and Saffron*. Additionally, it shows how Muslim women's mobility permits them to reinterpret modesty and situate themselves against it without associating with secularist or traditionalist religious viewpoints. Khan Touseef Osman (2020) “The Struggle of Memory against Forgetting in Kamila Shamsie’s *Salt and Saffron*” The ethics of remembering and its capacity for transformation are examined in this essay. Besides, it relates to a common experience of rupture after the horror of Partition and what it would mean to face and change the major influence that this collective memory has on everyday lives.

Ubidullah Khan, Muhhamad Uzair, and Shaista Zeb (2020) “Construction of Cultural Identity through Language: A Study of ‘Salt and Saffron’” The scholars in this article investigate the ways in which Pakistani characters in the novel are given cultural identities through the cultural related words and themes that were present in the novel. Kaisarjahan M Ansari (2019) “Trauma of being nothingness’ in Nadia Hashimi’s *The pearl that Broke its Shell* & Kamila Shamsie’s *Salt and Saffron*.” The goal of this research is to examine how the fictional works *Salt and Saffron* by Kamila Shamsie and *The Pearl that Broke its Shell* by Nadia Hashimi depict Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) after the shocks and riots of division. This study makes an effort to understand how inner alienation persists as a result of certain discourses and occurrences in the lives of the characters and their varied cultures. Muhammad Shoaib (2019) “Revisiting Indo-Pak History, Gender and Power Relations through Food Tropes in Kamila Shamsie’s Novel *Salt and Saffron*” examines the intricate and complex role that food and cuisine play in the novel, where history, power, class, race, gender, and cultural identity all produced through culinary negotiations. The article will clarify that, like mythology and history, food has been a focal point for certain discourses on gender and power dynamics.

Quratulain Shirazi (2018) “Revisiting History and Reconstructing New Forms of Belonging and Identity in Kamila Shamsie’s *Salt and Saffron*” It will demonstrate the way family tales in the novel illuminate national history and how the protagonists both support and reject the prevailing nationalist ideology. This article will also claim that women are restricted to the confines of the private realm of the home, which is separate from the public sphere of modernity and progress due to the gendered dimension of the nationalist discourse. Asma Zahoor (2015) *Kamila Shamsie’s Fiction: An Analytical Study of Diaspora*. This dissertation reflects upon the diasporic consciousness, which is founded on Shamsie’s personal identity as a member of the contemporary global diaspora that shown in her novels. The discussion is applied to three novels, namely: and *Burnt*

Shadows, *Kartography*, and *Salt and Saffron* within the Critical Analysis Discourse as a framework to comprehend language use as a social practice. The work displayed a wide range of diasporic characters as well as the diverse conflicts in Afghanistan integrated to the consequences of her events. It reveals how power structures and power practices intended to uphold the hegemony of certain people over others which results in displacement. Thus, it also determines the identity problems brought on by displacement, whether it is due to forcible expulsion or voluntary migration.

Humaira Riaz and Ruzbeh Babae (2015) "Inner Alienation: Diasporic Consciousness in Kamila Shamsie's *Salt and Saffron*" look at the diasporic awareness of the fictional characters in the novel. The researchers in this article make an effort to understand the inner alienation that exists via certain discourses and occurrences in the lives of the fictional expatriate characters in the narrative. Quratulain Shirazi (2014) "Tradition and modernity in Kamila Shamsie's *Salt and Saffron* (2000)" examines the evolving globalization and contemporary tendencies that alter societal and personal views. Further, the article places the story of the aristocratic family in the narrative in the theoretical framework of globalization and post-colonialism. Sadia Hasan (2013) *The Novels of Kamila Shamsie: A Study In Themes And Technique* in this thesis has concentrated on the topics and literary devices found in Kamila Shamsie's works, where the researcher has shown exceptional substance of Shamsie works' political themes, remarkable attention to details, capacity for handling very long periods of time, place, and feelings. The thesis conducted five novels of the Shamsie, *Salt and Saffron* and *In the City by the Sea* to focus on the sagas in these tales. Also, *Broken Verses* and *Kartography* to bring to light the dark history and ethnic violence of 1971, and finally *Burnt Shadows* to tell about the nuclear war and the fear looming over the modern age.

Munazza Yaqoob (2012) "Changing Images of Pakistani Women in Kamila Shamsie's *Salt and Saffron* and *Broken Verses*." The study offers different images of women in both narratives by using critical analysis to disclose the actual presentation of Pakistan's patriarchal culture where women still struggling to break free from the static molds. Ruvani Ranasinha (2012) Resistance and Religion in the Work of Kamila Shamsie. In Rehana Ahmed, Peter Morey, and Amina Yaqin (Eds). *Culture, Diaspora, and Modernity in Muslim Writings*. The chapter in this book highlights a leading information of Shamsie's life and Career, as well as a detailed clarification of Shamsie's fictional texts (concerning religion and resistance)— *Broken Verses*, and *Burnt Shadows*. It tells how the political agencies incarnate in government and parties have manipulated religion and its interpretation throughout the history of Pakistan. Further, it shows the outstanding movements and resistance of female characters to the abusive regimes and conflicts.

Bruce King (2011) “Kamila Shamsie’s Novels of History, Exile and Desire” this paper suggests to delve into the challenges of leaving a familiar social environment or home and the need of using historical knowledge to address the current problems. Politics influence and other factors in people’s loss all handled to be elaborated in a set of her novels; *Burnt Shadows*, *Broken Verses*, *Kartography*, *Salt and Saffron*, and *In the City by the Sea*. Nyman Jopi (2009) *Home, Identity, and Mobility in Contemporary Diasporic Fiction*. This book tackled a chapter entitled “Narratives of Diaspora and Trauma in Kamila Shamsie’s *Salt and Saffron*” to discuss how trauma is handled in the narrative in relation to various settings, including those of home and diaspora, language, and class. It demonstrates how the novel depicts the nation and the catastrophic results of its dissolution within the concept of the family. Muneeza Shamsie (2009) “Sunlight and Salt: The Literary Landscapes of a Divided Family” combines criticism and memoir to compare the evaluation of Partition, colonialism, class, gender, and history in two Partition narratives from the same family; *Salt and Saffron* by Kamilia Shamsie and *Sunlight on a Broken Column* by Attia Hosain, Shamsie’s grand aunt.

Muneeza Shamsie (2008) *An the World Changed: Contemporary Stories by Pakistani Women*. This book specified a section to bring a brief biography of Kamila Shamsie, and offers the smallest passage of her prose “Surface of Glass” and the most stunning. Kamila Shamsie demonstrates in only few pages in why she is regarded as one of Pakistan's top young authors. The story tells the narrative of a maidservant in a rich family’s household, and concentrates on the disadvantages poverty cause to poor people in Pakistan. Rehana Ahmed (2002) “Unsettling Cosmopolitanisms: Representations of London in Kamila Shamsie's *Salt and Saffron*” this article concerned to examine how Britain’s space operates in Shamsie’s novel, yet, the main focus is on Karachi-Pakistan as well as the class system there. Likewise, the study draws on Marxist spatial analysis (Lefebvre, de Certeau) to detect an ideological suppression of the social structures that define London’s space in the narrative. It suggests that the abstraction of space beyond the Indian subcontinent serves as a disguise to draw attention away from the novel’s prominent representation of the ‘West.’

Shamsie’s *Salt and Saffron* was almost fully adopted to be analyzed from various perspectives, themes, theories and methods. The humanistic and literary studies were the prevalent ones, while linguistic studies rarely detected. Feminist studies of Shamsie’s work accounted in a limited scale and did not analyze the piece from a Transnational Feminist lens. Accordingly, this comes to assure the gap in literature to fulfill the present study and look at it with transnational feminist paradigm. The theory used to understand and reveal the unfavorable attitudes of western feminists against their peers in the third world. It is a radical framework that utilized to speak to the links and disparities situated between the global north

and south. Since Transnational feminism is not used before with Shamsie's novel that is employed in this study, it assures the uniqueness of the current discussion that aims to represent the actual image of the strong women of third world throughout the three novels. The study is original in that it will deepen the idea of women resistance with their various ordeals against the mainstream universalization of the first world women in a transnational feminist lens. The present work contributes to enrich third world women literature; it intends to empower third world women and engendering new feminine assertion by showing how Kamila Shamsie uses her craft to create multiple portrayals of third-world women, reflecting varied and vivid images of women's activism in the light of Transnational Feminist theory.

Methodology

This research falls within the wide area of literary thematic analysis since it focuses on the ideology of third-world women, conveying their real struggles, varied experiences, and authentic identities. Transnational feminist theory was used as the study's framework since it perfectly matches Kamila Shamsie's novel's subject matter. The main objective of this approach is to challenge widespread preconceptions of the classist, white, and western feminists against their counterparts in the developing world. It also refutes the idea that people from different places share the same subjectivities and experiences. Transnational feminism resists unrealistic ideals of global sisterhood while simultaneously working to provide the groundwork for more beneficial and equitable relationships between women across borders and cultural settings. It is responsive to activism that is not limited inside the confines of nation-states. Shamsie's Salt and Saffron, which focuses on third-world women, provides the material to be used in this analysis since it discusses a topic that is appropriate to be investigated with a transnational feminist lens. Further, the discussion concentrated on the narratives and storytelling of the female characters presented by Kamila Shamsie's novel to demonstrate their powerful role, various stories and ordeals, and engendering a new picture of those women who stand for the rest of third world women as a response to the passive categorization by their western sisters. Eventually, the examination of this research is further reinforced by a number of critical insights on both the approach and the narrative, so demonstrating the validity of the study.

Theory

Feminism as a movement is for people seeking change beyond and across national borders, "not of representatives of nation-state or national governments" (Bunch, 1987, p. 301). Transnational Feminism signals a movement in respect of scrutinizing how western nations are for better or worse, for instance, the United States involved in global affairs that influence women's lives (Tunç, 2013). The

term Transnational is an overarching concept that engendered as a method to address the dramatically expanding flows of things, ideas, people, and images across national boundaries in an era of globalization (Conway, 2017).

Transnational feminist study is a radical framework with the capability to speak to the disparities and connections amongst the Global North and South, and to set one's face against the histories and current practices of nationalism, imperialism and colonialism and their impact on women, sexuality, and gender matters, as well as to unsettle Eurocentric and liberal feminist beliefs and theories. Decentering the western epistemologies is what the transnational perspective in feminist studies attempts, in addition to destabilizing the basis of western countries notably United Kingdom, United States or Europe focused feminist frameworks that are frequently taken for granted. It seeks to shake the embedded hegemonies "of nationalist ideologies, in all of their heteropatriarchal" manifestations (Hundle et al., 2019, pp. 1-3) so that transnational feminist as a theory seeks not only to construct new standards distant from the rigid temples that have been put up by the aforementioned states but also to delineate the authority of those states.

Transnational Feminism was evolved by Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan who published *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices* in 1994, which established transnational feminism as a theory. Grewal and Kaplan's book (project), stems from their work on theories of travel "and the intersections of feminism, colonial and postcolonial discourses, modernism, and postmodern hybridity" (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994, p.1). Transnational Feminism arose from postcolonial and women of color feminism, together they questioned the concept of 'global sisterhood'. Nevertheless, Transnational Feminism argues that the benchmarks of sisterhood which assume the white, middle class feminist subject situated in the Global North decried and neglected the differences among women both globally and locally (Nadkarni & Gooptu, 2019). As a result, transnational feminism straightens out to divulge western feminists' denial of their peers colorful stories, contributions, adventures, and lives within the same universe.

The binarism of "global-local" is often "indefinable or indistinct" because these divisions quietly infiltrate each other. Therefore, Transnational as a term used to problematize the "purely locational politics" which neglected gender issues. Thus, in a rebuttal appeal feminists saw to challenge the "inadequate and inaccurate binary divisions" of "global-local or center-periphery". These divisions are serious, due to this, it is inadmissible "makes no sense at all" as it may "erase the existence of multiple expressions of local identities and concerns and multiple globalities" (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994, pp.11-13). Likewise,

diversity and difference are essential values here to be respected and acknowledged, not erased in the process of building alliances (Mohanty, 2003).

Power is seen and used considerably in the discourses of contemporary western feminists, this needed to be identified and challenged. The western feminist discourses about Third World Women must be viewed in the perspective of the “global hegemony of western scholarship”. The picture of typical woman in Third World is constructed with the homogenous understanding of women’s persecution as a group. The “average Third World Woman” results in a truncated life founded on her third world status- uneducated, destitute, victimized, ignorant, tradition-bound, family oriented, and her feminine gender of being sexually restricted. On the contrary, western women (implicit) self-representation as modern, intellectual, free to make their own choices, and having the authority over their own bodies. Women bind together under the framework of *sameness* of their struggles and oppression which articulated by the sociological notion. With these assumptions, women:

labeled powerless, exploited, sexually harassed, victims of male violence, universal dependents, victims of the colonial process, victims of the Arab familial system, victims of the Islamic code, and Victims of the economic development progress (Mohanty, 2003, pp. 20-23).

The term representation according to Spivak indicates two different meanings. On the one hand, political representation: getting the right to vote, and “having politicians who speak for their various constituent groups.” On the other hand, visual or textual representation: “the ways that various groups are portrayed in society through stereotypes, as well as counter-narratives and resistance to stereotypes.” (Scott et al., 2017, p.8). The representation of transnational feminist movements work across local and global configurations, in general, they are dedicated to solidarity across distinctions and shared values. They also aim to change structural injustices and the growing negative effects of globalisation on race, gender, class, and ethnic relations. (Baksh & Harcourt, 2015). Transnational feminist networks which others “refer to as women’s international nongovernmental organizations (WINGO)” (p. 53) also contributed in the formation of what some have called global civil society (As Cited in Bakish & Harcourt, 2015) engage with the problems concerning women’s human rights, health, oppression, feminist economics, social equity, and the negative impact of globalization (Moghadam, 2005).

Third-world women who have been marginalized or rendered invisible by much of liberal feminism's illusory universalism must come to an end by the process of “unmasking the particular woman embodied in the unitary category woman” and this demanded the white women to realize their role as oppressors

(Mullally, 2006, p. xxx). Diverse feminisms have argued to erase the differences, to adhere the Universalist discourses of rights which neglect the importance of these differences between women or men and women. To achieve just multiculturalism, first is to perceive the difference, provoke solidarity and a sense of belonging for assorted communities and to call for the 'other' to be included. Much of modern feminist thought urges to return to the local, stating the contestation by contending that Universalist discourses dismiss and ignore the significance of cultural, religious and other differences among women (Mullally, 2006).

Women's Studies have evolved to enable broader communication and variation, and much of the feminist debate has shifted on from theoretical schools of feminism and arguments concerning different waves (Scott et al., 2017). Women's studies equip students with the analytical abilities as well as the historical, political, and cultural Knowledge to deal with the modern world "in all of its complexity" (Grewal & Kaplan, 2006, p. xvii). Transnational feminism has been recognized as a considerable discipline within women's studies over the last decade, and it has therefore become an essential component of academic study and college-level courses (Tunç, 2013,).

Transnational Feminism emerged in the North American academy, in part, as a result of postcolonial critiques and introspection which is often connected to the writings of authors like Trinh (1991), Lazreg (1988), and Mohanty (1986) (Swarr & Nagar, 2010). More non-western writers like Spivak examined the dominant narratives of the west and institutions' inclination to exclude and disempower the 'subaltern' of the Third World (Kapoor, 2004). These non-western writers and many others verbalized the west hegemonic practices against third world women to react against and delineate them. Kamila Shamsie is one of those feminists' writers who constructed a platform to show the real activism of third world women.

Analysis

Salt and Saffron (2000) moves through diverse family anecdotes humorous and tragic, which are paced together like a jigsaw puzzle (Zahoor, 2015). It is the fictional narrative of Dard-e-Dil's royal family, who had been cursed with not-quite-twins for generations. The myth of not-quite-twins is a curse implies that relatives or siblings come on the same day, have the same fate, and will disgrace the family. The author opened the novel with the narration of a female character, heading the role of storytelling to Aliya, the exquisite young woman who studied English literature and graduated in the United States and decided to make a visit to London before traveling to her homeland, Pakistan. Aliya is a young member of the Dard-e-Dil's house, the daughter of Nasser and Ayesha. The first thing

Shamsie identified her work's heroine Aliya with is storytelling, narrating the stories of her family (royal family) to the passengers in the airport:

And the occupant of the aisle seat across from me was so grateful for my high-volume chatter– which replaced the usual boredom and non-recycled air of the transatlantic economy-class cabin with murder, war, jealousy, and rapidly reversing fortune– that he pulled my luggage off the conveyor belt at Heathrow... two girls had even sat cross-legged in the aisle, listening to my stories until the flight attendant shooed them away (Shamsie, 2000, p.8) ... At college I was famous for my storytelling abilities. (p.17)

Shamsie's incomparable presentation of Aliya, assigning her the responsibility of recounting the heritage of her family, expound that a third-world woman can be a narrator, historian, writer, cultivated, and storyteller, not only confined to house chores. Aliya is connecting the past and present through her stories, voicing the tales and experiences of her family's women. It was not only Aliya who participated in the process of recounting stories but also the rest of the female characters. With their narration, Aliya in specific, they have created a borderless world. Well, it is apparent that Shamsie feels it is her responsibility as a writer and Eastern woman to grant women's stories, basically through her smart heroine Aliya "perhaps when we tell our stories our stories tell on us; they reveal what is and what is not explicable in our lives." (p.168). Shamsie hints through storytelling at the idea that stories change and connect us to emphasize spirituality and to know that others in different parts of the world, specifically in the third-world are not a category, statistics, or numbers; instead, they are all creatures that live at the same time and on the same universe:

If we are going to learn anything at all we learn it from people who are different from us. Someone who is exactly like me is the equal of my voice and that is a very narcissistic experience, a life based on sameness is a very narcissistic life. We need to hear multiple stories, not just a single story from this country or that country, multiple stories that hopefully connect us better across boundaries (Caravan, 2017, 22:08).

It will cast the monotony of sameness, painting a positive picture of third-world women who assured that women do spread out the world because the reader hears someone's story, she/he will not think of that person as a category but will have to see her/him as human-being. Aliya placed the stories of the family in a transnational, feminist-connected space.

Aliya grew up listening to the stories of her family, which helped her to inspect the past and the myths of not-quite-twins. Aliya's great-grandmother gave

birth to triplets, three sons, Akbar, Sulaiman, and Taimur, who fell under the not-quite-twins category and believed they were destined to cause the family's demise and shame in some way. Aliya's capability to detail her family's historical state of Dard-e-Dil shows how she is connected to it; among those stories class not-quite-twins, her family's line, and members.

Every culture worldwide is constructed on the commitment to maintenance acquainted with history and assists people in forging their identities and their sense of pride as history is the mirror of life and time in its varied nuances. This is what Shamsie did; she restored the history of her ancestors through the feminine voice of her heroine Aliya, embedding historical events throughout the fictional tale of Dard-e-Dil. Aliya engaged in such a prolong talk about the family's past with her cousin Samia, who had not seen each other for years and came to London to do research for a few months. Aliya told Samia about Taimur disappearance and the message he sent to his family that tells his desire to leave everything and be a servant, "My brothers, we were born the year after the Jalianwalla massacre... The writing of this letter is the last thing I do before entering into the employ of an English army officer, as a valet." (Shamsie, 2000, p.21). Dadi or Abida; Alyia's father's mother and Akbar's wife, told this to Aliya and now the latter is re-narrating it again to Samia in its details.

Shamsie is rewriting history far away from the controlling patriarchal power with the aid of her female heroines. She revealed the troubled female identity side and how it is unsettled by political disputes, clearing up their experiences. The partition allows severance of ties with friends and extended families. Aliya went with Samia to see the Indian relatives, Farahnaz (Baji), the second cousin of Dadi, who did not meet and talk to each other since the partition. Together those ladies reminisced about the past in London where Baji exhibited the family's tree pruned copy which was recorded by Babuji "the keeper of the Dard-e-Dil family tree" (Shamsie, 2000, p.33). Aliya detected several of the new information from 300 years before the time born of the triplets. Likewise, the history of Dard-e-Dil family during the Mughals glory days when Dard-e-Dil was part of the Mughals' empire, not a kingdom. Moreover, another story of not-quite-twins, those located on the map with a star beside each name, and the surprise was Aliya's name starred with Mariam, her cousin, as not-quite-twins. Baji was pleased to have Aliya and other members of the younger generation tell them about the past and the family heritage;

she extended a hand and pointed at a picture on the wall. I got up and walked over to it. The setting was the grounds of the Dard-e-Dil palace. I recognized it instantly from the photographs and paintings that adorned the walls of Dadi's house in Karachi. (p.32)

The tales Baji tells, the lineage map, the pictures she keeps as well as the places and national symbols she has mentioned throughout her account like Taj Mahal, “Think of an image that captures and preserves the glory of the Mughals, and if you have any sense of anything you’ll say the Taj Mahal.” (p.35) and leaders, as well as languages, are all methods to sustain their history and heritage. It is not only Baji, Aliya, and Dadi who follow the same procedures; those women are depicted to be barriers and carriers of their history, resisting the demise of their culture, so they are keeping their roots alive. Shamsie dissents from the westerners’ insights of third-world women as being encompassed by stiff patriarchal codes with fragmented experiences. Acknowledging how those women nourished and kept their legacy and pride, Shamsie locates those third-world women in an authoritative role in saving the nation and building the country. Aliya and the rest of those women used the forenamed methods to provide a constitution for their unity:

Resistance is always situated in a context, a historic tradition, a certain place and/or social space formed by power. Therefore, resistance is also situated in relation to previous resistance. Especially when resistance is innovative, experimental and creative, it needs to build on the material left by other rebels—stories, myths, symbols, structures and tools available in that special situation. New forms of resistance connect to old forms by using them as stepping stones, translating existing hegemonic elements, dislodging and recombining that which is available to them” (As Cited in Johansson & Vinthagen, 2020, p.6).

Moving to one of the central characters and a symbol of rebellion in the family of Dard-e-Dil; Mariam, the daughter of Taimur, who went into a self-exile. Aliya started narrating Mariam’s story from the first moment when she came, where before her arrival, there was a letter from a stranger to Aliya’s parents entails: the young lady Mariam is a member of Dard-e-Dil’s family, and she will come to live with them for she is an orphan now for the death of her parents. A few seconds after reading the letter, the bell rang, and Mariam entered their home and life, and this coincided with Ayesha’s labor giving birth to Aliya on that day. Mariam preferred silence, and she would not contact with anyone from the family except to order meals from the family’s cook Masood. After years of the same pattern, living a peaceful life and getting attached to Mariam, specifically Alyia, who were like sisters, not only cousins, Alyia got accepted into college, but the sudden shock was “Mariam Apa eloped with Masood.” (Shamsie, 2000, p.71). “her suitcase was gone, and a photostat of a wedding license was on her bed,” (p.109).

Shamsie, in one of her interviews, states that “The dividing factor in Pakistan, more than anything else, is class... and also the snobbery of class.” (Cilano, 2007, p.153). On the basis of class, Mariam and Masood’s relationship is rejected by the Pakistani society and especially her family; the traditional aristocratic one will never permit such a union to take place (a cook from a lower class that even his brother is a servant to another aristocratic family, and a girl from a royal family). The author here demonstrates how Mariam, the courageous female character, disapproved of the social stratification to separate her and Masood just because of his status as a cook. Mariam’s choice was to exclude herself and her partner from the royal environment she was living in. Due to the mysterious circumstances about her past, in which area her family lived; the infinite questions directed to her from family and relatives to know more about her, it seems she already had enough to enroll herself in taboo codes she may not survive;

Scott shows how certain common behavior (for example,... escape, sarcasm, passivity, laziness, misunderstandings, disloyalty, slander, avoidance) is not always what it seems to be, but instead resistance. Scott argues these activities are tactics that exploited people use in order to both survive and undermine repressive domination; especially in contexts when rebellion is too risky. (As Cited in Vinthagen & Johansson, 2013, p. 4)

Mariam is not a coward by choosing to run away; she chooses the life that no one will live but her. Actually, Mariam did not exert much effort in an endless traditional-cultural of class and prejudiced life battle that even if a miracle happens and her family accepts to have Masood, she will not immune herself from others’ bitter criticism, gossip, vicious conjecture, and humiliation.

Mariam’s silence considers a tool of resistance; she was attentive to others yet did not utter a letter, of course excluding Masood from this, as if defying classism by not speaking to anyone in the family but the cook, undermining her family power by not engaging with them “her silence was subversion.” (Shamsie, 2000, p.150). Mariam chose to whom to talk and when she wanted to be free of the heavy biases “The art of silence,... covers various strategies of reticence” (Yamamoto et al., 1993, p.4). Silence is not something that has not been tackled before, “The narrator in *Salt and Saffron* warns of the necessity of understanding silence; in each of Shamsie’s novels, much is alluded to but not explained.” (King, 2011, p.151). Aliya describes Mariam’s silence, “She taught me the textures of silence, the timbres of it, and sometimes even the taste.” (Shamsie, 2000, p.38). Aliya translated her cousin’s silence and felt it; even though Mariam was not talking to her, Aliya adorned her presence and suffered a lot after her absence.

Shamsie uses the technique of silence that is verbalized by Aliya's words in the description of her cousin's books and the activities she was practicing:

There was more Ghalib to be found in the bookshelves that ran along the length of a wall. And not just Ghalib, but also Woolf, Faiz, Faulkner, Rumi, Hikmet, and a whole shelf devoted to Agatha Christie. Some thought it strange, but to me it made sense that such a worldless woman should surround herself with books. (p.72) She listened to Beethoven played. (p.96)

The forenamed technique indicates two things: Firstly, how Mariam is cultured to read poetry, novels, and different stories, sparing the power of words in reading and creating an alternate world. Shamsie tries to eradicate the domination of the westerners in all of its forms since "Middle Eastern cultures have long been stereotyped." (Lazreg, 1988, p.100). The author proves that "Western perceptions of Third World women that construct them as backward, ignorant, oppressed, and often illiterate have been challenged on many counts." (Ghosh & Bose, 1997, p. xxviii) by reassessing third-world women like Mariam's character as a dumbfounding reader of plays, poetry, novels. Shamsie ripped the false considerations from the global frames on those women of being inferior if compared to men in their nation or to their peers in other parts of the world. She changed the typical image of third-world woman with urban, assertive, self-affirmed, and productive scholars like Mariam and the rest of the female characters as Aliya, Samia, Dadi, etc. Those women used to carry books with them, have an interest in what they read, recite verses, and connect to the world around them with literature. Secondly, the author hints to the value of implicit over the explicit in Mariam's silence, forging a new form of silence, operative, full of sturdiness by employing Aliya to show its significance to the readers throughout her narration. Thus, Shamsie asserts that her work is marked by feminine sensibility and that silence "can speak many tongues, varying from culture to culture... In literature, irony and understatement, as well as other modes of implicit communication, have always been appreciated." (Yamamoto et al., 1993, pp.1-2). Thus, silence indicates implicit meaning as well, "Silence can communicate scorn, coldness, defiance, sternness," (As Cited in Yamamoto et al., 1993, p.2).

The strong bond of connection was not only between Aliya and Mariam, but among Aliya and Dadi as well. Their relationship as grandmother and granddaughter is not based on the traditional delineation of disconnection from each other and from the world around them, not perceptible of what is evolving outside. Conversely, their relationship is put up on love, appreciation, and tenderness; their connection can be seen in Aliya's words:

I was very young she had taken me to a *kathak* performance. It was my first experience of classical dance and I was transfixed by the sound of the ankle bells – the *ghungroo* – which accompanied the *tabla* and sitar as the dancer whirled and glided across the stage. (p.84)

Dadi awakened Aliya's love for art and gave her the chance to be linked to a means of communication as well as feel its power. Shamsie intends to say that third-world women do not only raise their daughters within homely dungeons; in opposition, they have granted them the freedom to open up to the world around them. Furthermore, a third-world woman is equal to her counterpart, for her senses and emotions are triggered by art in such genuine theatres within her country. Aliya's portrayal of her grandmother demonstrates their efficient bond and the very proper characteristics that Dadi possesses:

Abida who went to college, Abida who rode on donkey-carts to the refugee camps in 1947 to help those who needed it, Abida who told me I had to learn to be independent because she didn't want me to become one of those women who relied on their husbands for everything. (p.153)

As an educated woman, Dadi presented to have a matchless charisma and presence, a prudent woman who assists those in critical situations and supports the women in her family. Shamsie aspires to say that third-world women are not pushed back in the private space within the patriarchal domain as victims; they have exceeded this by moving together with their astounding solidarity towards progress. The author succeeds in constructing a counter-creed for the women in third world to break free from the false universalization of the first world and

replace the vision of third-world-woman-as-victim with the no less essentialist vision of third-world-woman-as-authentic-heroine, a woman who is close to the earth, self-aware, self-critical, nurturing of culture, community, and family... However, so... the view of third world women as traditional, irrational, and uneducated is unfounded implies that the opposite is true. (Wood, 2001, p. 433)

Shamsie points, through Aliya's narration, to another insurgent female figure; Meher, Dadi's sister, the "rebellious younger sister" (Shamsie, 2000, p.66). Meher married at a young age and eloped with a man she chose from a very respectful family; as a result, her family eventually approved of their union. Unlikely, their marriage did not last because of the death of her husband. Meher waited to get her daughter a pleasant rich match, and when this happened, she "sold her house and declared she was going to Greece... Then she took off in the

direction of the Mediterranean and proceeded to multiply her wealth with a few wise investments in the European stock markets.” (p.67). Meher did not bemoan her misfortune of being a widow; rather, she thought that this was something intended to happen and that it was necessary to continue living. Shamsie presents Meher as a woman of will who established a new life in Greece, making new connections and contributions, yet, continued her visits to Karachi to see her family. The author's categorization of third-world women uplifts them to earn an equal position with western feminists. Meher defied social confinements and transcends the typical third world woman in conventional society in Pakistan, achieving an individual identity, “It is therefore important that the experience, voice, and politics of Third World women be de-marginalized and included in the mainstream analysis and knowledge construction about neoliberal globalization.” (McGovern & Wallimann, 2009, p.2).

Third-world women have life ordeals bigger than them; their problems and the things they suffer differ from those in the west. Further, Shamsie invokes how Pakistani and Indian women suffer the deleterious outcome of partition, how they are shattered and united in a foreign place, not on their lands. Aliya is a considerate historian, and she reflected upon partition's effectiveness on the women in her family and how they still haunt them, “More than thirty-five years I haven't seen her... Blood is thicker than time, blood is thicker.’ And she sat on the cold marble floor and wept.” (Shamsie, 2000, p.24). This becomes more clear when Dadi missed the opportunity to see one of her Indian relatives during her rapid visit to Pakistan; it is not only Dadi or those from the old generation, but it extended to the younger generation who had been influenced by the severe impact of this dispute;

We met at an art exhibition. Treasures of the Indian princes. We both kept circling back to a cabinet which displayed the sword our illustrious ancestor, Nur-ul-Jahan, used in the Battle of Surkh Khait. Once we started talking it took about seven seconds to work out the connection. (Shamsie, 2000, p.39)

This shows how Samia and Rehana, the granddaughter of Baji, firstly met in London, as Rehana tells Aliya about how they found out they were relatives, and subsequently Samia introduced Aliya to them. The trauma they incur along with the memories persist in their current life, thereby, Shamsie deliberates the diverse misery those women afford daily, and throughout their meetings in England and in other countries with their relatives she alludes to the larger tale of partition. With all the ordeals those women encountered and still facing, “Western feminists have often discounted the struggles of Third World women when these struggles have not met Western normative standards.” (Ghosh & Bose, 1997, p.xxix). The author enucleates and deconstructs the artificial perceptions of

western females, fixities of patriarchy, and the history of partition by constructing a transnational feminist identity to recount the experiences that are not told yet. The portrayal of their nation, heritage, stories, and struggles are used as an efficacious tool to count for their transnationalism:

This narration of South Asian history highlights the position of those who were ruled and whose stories were either lost or were silenced by the dominant political and social narrative. This analysis of *Salt and Saffron* explains that the nationalist discourse is a gendered phenomenon where women are confined within the boundaries of a private space of home, away from the public sphere of modernity and progress. Therefore, Shamsie uses a transnational feminist perspective in her novel to critique the oppressive forms of nationalism while narrating the women's experiences. (Shirazi, 2018, p.1)

Throughout the diverse experiences and pain of those women, Shamsie was able to connect them together, whether in Pakistan, India, London, or in America. This connection is quite amazing, for it enabled readers worldwide to conceive the connected soreness of those women.

Aliya resolves the conflict of not-quite-twins and her journey in exploring the history of the family that the separation of the three brothers happened before partition, and it was for personal, not political reasons. Moreover, Aliya reached the conclusion that perhaps all her speculations about Mariam's departure were true, or they may not. What Aliya was sure of is that her cousin would always be part of their life.

Aliya is like a nomad by the stories she tells during her travels to London, the United States, and Pakistan, or her summer trips to Paris; she made history and stories as a literary genre. During her flight to London to visit her Indian relatives, she met a young man (Khaleel) on the plane, whom she told him a good set of anecdotes that he was deeply interested in. Aliya was so drawn to Khaleel from their first encounter that they embraced farewell at the airport as they turned to go, which was unusual since she had never done it before with a stranger. She was pleased to the coincidence that brought them back again and led to further meetings where they both had the necessary knowledge to support their families as a pair. Khaleel belongs to the middle class, his relatives live in Liaquatabad, a very poor zone in Pakistan, but his family made it by their enthusiasm and assertiveness to become professors and have their own teaching jobs abroad.

Aliya did not make the acts of secret meetings and elopement, rather she introduced him to her female cousins in London, male cousin Sameer, and to her parents in Karachi when he came to her house, "Khaleel shook hands with my

father, nodded at Ami, smiled. I could see them thinking it was clear that I'd fallen for his good looks alone." (Shamsie, 2000, p.166). Shamsie sets forth two views: the first, Aliya is mature enough, independent, empowered, and able to direct and choose in the middle of a traditional aristocratic family by selecting Khaleel. This represents an indirect challenge to break away from the family's norms, questioning the inherited traditions from the past generations, thus exhibiting a unique attitude towards individualism. The second perspective is the understanding of her family to bring to light the fact that not all third-world women are restricted, subjugated, and bound by their patriarchal and the approval of this; Khaleel's attendance at her house. This is a different portrayal of both Aliya's father and cousin, having their daughter's boyfriend in their house as civilized people, supporting her, respecting her privacy, and giving her the space any girl must have to start a new life. Aliya's parents and cousin left the couple to talk, "then said goodbye and retreated to their room. Sameer had disappeared somewhere." (p.169) Shamsie offers a striking image different of the west portrayal as stated by Mohanty:

The familial system, the assumption of a singular patriarchal kinship system (common to all Arab and Muslim societies, i.e. over twenty different countries) is what apparently structures women as an oppressed group in these societies! This singular, coherent kinship system presumably influences another separate and given entity, 'women'. Thus all women, regardless of class and cultural differences, are seen as being similarly affected by this system. (Mohanty, 1988, p.70)

Shamsie succeeds in challenging the western influence in its global domination with her script that is voiced by her distinguished female characters, that marked a notable shift in themes, concepts, attitudes, and identities. The author shatters the ready-made mold that the third-world woman must fit right into it.

Conclusion

Western feminist discourses have historically stigmatized third world women via their extensive representation. The study aimed and was effective in accomplishing the goal of exposing the fake sisterhood and generalization of those feminists in the west who had accepted superiority in their views toward their peers. Dismantling the negative image of third world women, which is formed by the Western feminists, and portraying them once again as equal members to their counterparts, is what Shamsie has done accurately throughout her novel. The author offers an authentic interpretation and revival of the

Pakistani heritage throughout *Salt and Saffron* by blending facts with fiction and headed the role of storytelling to the heroine Aliya as well as to other characters to transfer their history orally in the light of Transnational Feminist theory. Thus, transnational feminism as a radical framework used to address the differences between both the global south and the global north and to illuminate third world women's diverse forms of oppression, various adventures, contributions, stories and to stick to the main idea of exposing the western feminist's hegemonic practices against them.

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