

Decentring the Akhara: A Post-Orientalist Reading of Marginal Characters in *Between Clay and Dust*

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ABSTRACT

This study presents an analysis of Musharraf Ali Farooqi's Between Clay and Dust - a post-orientalist novel, focusing on the marginal characters who carry the aftershocks of colonialism and the internalization of cultural inferiority during postcolonial time in South Asia. Shifting the spotlight from dominant characters like Ustad Ramzi and Gohar Jan, the research emphasizes Tamami and the townspeople, whose silences, failures and fragmented identities speak to the treacherous legacy of colonial discourse. Based on Edward Said's Orientalism theory the research uses qualitative approach of analysis to explore how internalized colonial ideologies continue to impact native subjectivity and collective memory. By decentring institutional spaces like the Akhara and Kotha, the article uncovers how cultural decline is not merely structural but psychological, inscribed in the daily lives of those who have been deemed insignificant. The conclusions add to postcolonial literary analysis by illustrating the ways that power is exercised through absence and silence and by resisting the standard emphasis on heroic resistance in favour of analysing the quieter, but no less significant, modes of postcolonial trauma and complicity.

Keywords: *Between the Clay and Dust, Cultural Loss, Edward Said, Hybridity, Identity, Musharraf Ali Farooqi, Orientalism, Postcolonialism, Subcontinent, Tamami, Townspeople*

INTRODUCTION

This work seeks to reflect the peripheral characters in the novel *Between Clay and Dust* (2012) by Musharraf Ali Farooqi, a heartfelt story of post partition which reflects the psychological harm as well as cultural degradation due to colonialism in South Asian region. Though the majority of the critical work of the novel has paid consideration to the main characters, Ustad Ramzi and Gohar Jan, who are the last representatives of traditional values like the akhara and the kotha, this research work focuses on the marginal figures, namely Tamami and the anonymous townspeople.

The novel by Farooqi is not about a state of the melancholy of cultural nostalgia or institutional decay; it is about what becomes of people, their state of mentality following the observation of structures collapses. The setting of the novel is strongly reminiscent of postcolonial urban decadence, is used as a metaphor to fragmented identity and erosion of culture. The akhara and the kotha are not merely physical spaces but

on the contrary, they are a symbol of a threatened indigenous philosophy and Ustad Ramzi and Gohar Jan fight to uphold these principles.

The most painful description of the cultural and psychological disorientation that the colonial era left behind is Tamami trying to understand what is wrong with her, only to collapse. The conflict of identity that Tamami is facing is revealed in the following line: He had entered in the ring not because he loved the sport but because he wanted to show that he deserved attention (Farooqi, 2012). This scene is an indication of his identity crisis and anxiety when performing. The fact that he completely fails to receive the legacy of his ustad is not just his own failure but that of a slightly larger identity crisis based on displaced traditions. The burden of the eyes on him is judging not admiring him, but it is some sort of a turning back of the town on the old things, with the expectation that the new man is estranged and the society has changed (Farooqi, 2012, p. 87). The silence of the townspeople adds to this theme even more, not as a blank, but as an absent presence that reinforces colonial residues in the postcolonial society. Such silences, failures and disconnections are not gaps in the narrative, but structural and encoded around the trauma of cultural displacement and the degradation of indigenous systems of knowledge and power.

According to the theoretical explanations of the Orientalism (1978) theory by Edward Said, the study views such peripheral characters as part of the broader concepts of the colonial discourse in cultural identity and selfhood. The idea of internalized Orientalism by Said is logical in explaining the fact that Tamami unconsciously applies that standard of Westernization by looking at his own culture and having a false perception that it is poorer (Said, 1978, p. 25). The silenced, fractured, and hybridized voices occupying the narrative periphery may be excavated critically by using this framework.

In such a way, this study can not only be added as a part of a more nuanced interpretation of Farooqi novel, but it can also suggest another perspective of critical discourses in postcolonial literature. When the central analysis shifts the analytic emphasis off the dominant characters and on to the ones who have traditionally been considered unproductive, the research confirms that power and meaning can be found not only in the speech and visibility, but also in the absence and quiet refusal. The disenfranchised figures in *Between Clay and Dust* remain silent, but the silence of their voices echoes the disruptions of colonialism that they never had a chance to enact, they could neither reclaim nor forget that it was not their world and that the postcolonial era, which follows, is not theirs (Farooqi, 2012, p. 154), which confirms the effectiveness of the marginalization as a form of expression. Their broken identities, toned-down voices and symbolic failures make a very strong example to make a point. In conclusion, the paper recommends that in order to have a real picture of the psychological and cultural impacts of colonialism, one must listen not merely to the voices that are screaming but those that are in the periphery, fractured, silenced yet extremely articulate.

Research Question

1. How do marginal characters in *Between Clay and Dust* reflect internalized colonial discourse as described by Said's Orientalism?

Research Objectives

To analyse how marginal characters in *Between Clay and Dust* reflect the internalized effects of colonial discourse, using Edward Said's theory of Orientalism as a critical lens.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The earlier literary literature and the post-colonial literature about *Between Clay and Dust* has been majorly concerned with the symbolic onslaught of the cultural institutions, like the Akhara and Kotha. This is particularly well exemplified, as presented in the recent article by Qasim, Butt, and Shah (2025), which in a very rich manner presents the analysis of how Musharraf Ali Farooqi novel actually upholds and preserves the traditional occupations that used to constitute the very essence of the South Asian cultural identity. The reverence of such decaying institutions, which were the focus of the analysis by Qasim, Butt, and Shah, was reflected in the description of the aakhara, which was described as a monument to a lost age and its walls were haunted by stories of glory that nobody ever came to listen to (Farooqi, 2012, p. 30). Their research was mainly based on Orientalism by Edward Said which demonstrates how the colonialist nations encouraged a western mentality that devalued the local employment. Through their emphasis on Ustad Ramzi and Gohar Jan, they bring out the pride that these two characters hold towards their traditions despite the danger of losing them. (Parry, 2004; Ahmad, 1992)

Much of the opinion expressed against *Between Clay and Dust* by Musharraf Ali Farooqi has been based on the figurative breakdown of such institutions like the Akhara and the Kotha. These formerly sacrosanct places of the institution are used as metaphor of the disintegration of native traditions with the arrival of the colonial modernity. Critics noted the institutional decay in the Kotha by highlighting the fact that what was once a place of art and beauty has deteriorated due to its neglect (Farooqi, 2012, p. 50) but its collapse occurred due to the march of time and the sound of silence of the Kotha songs.

The disintegration of these institutions has been subject to a lot of criticism as an indicator of the change in values and the loss of heritage in postcolonial cultures (Shah & Iqbal, 2015). But this emphasis on the degradation of the outside cultural institutions has a way of obscuring the psychological and inner crises of characters with marginal status. Such characters as Tamami, Gohar Jan, and the unnamed townspeople are not just spectators of the destruction of culture, they are directly involved in the postcolonial disasters of postcolonial identity, sexuality and silence. The explanation of such psychic states is that they demand internal fragmentation, unformulated trauma and gaps of representations.

In his masterpiece book *orientalism* (1978), Edward Said illuminated how the discourse of the west constructed an inferior East systematically. More interested in external representation and geopolitical impact Said was, however, essential in his work. These works were later developed by Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak into more complicated theories of the process of internalizing such discourses by the colonized subject. Bhabha (1994) has come up with the theory of hybridity that explains the ambivalent identity of the colonized between the mimic and the resistance. The questioning of subaltern silence as written by Spivak (1988) presented important questions concerning the ability of the marginal subject to speak within the hegemonic order.

Nonetheless, the focus on the institutional spaces is at the cost of the psychological dynamics of the postcolonial trauma, particularly in characters who are neither obvious nor vocal in the opposition. In this respect the Orientalism theory should do more than merely criticize the Western perception; it should be used as a prism to make us reconsider the way that colonized people perceive themselves (Said, 1993; Moore-Gilbert, 1997). According to Said (1978), it is not only an external view on the part of the Orient when it comes to Orientalism; it is internalized and the colonized people start doubting themselves. This internalized doubt goes in line with what Said observed and this is evidenced in that Tamami found himself in the shadow of his ustad, his pride and a sense of inferiority which is something that was internalized by him (Said, 1993, p. 28). In that sense, it is worth giving more attention to minor characters

of Farooqi as Tamami and nameless townspeople. They are not just background characters especially, but they symbolize this internal conflict in a huge way.

Frantz Fanon (1963) who exhibited the psychological impacts of the colonial domination and Ania Loomba (1998) who highlighted the contemporary impacts of colonial discourse on the postcolonial cultures are supportive with the aforementioned perceptions to make up the theoretical basis of this paper. Their joint point of view is crucial to the realization that even minor characters of Farooqi are significant even when they are being sidelined. They do not say anything, but they have a meaning. They may not rebel, but they meditate. In the process, they model the contradictions, the losses, and the psychic dissonances of a society that is still struggling to work with the consequences of colonial domination. Summarizing the legacy of colonialism traces (Fanon, 1963, p. 42; Loomba, 1998, p. 50).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The postcolonial literary theory is a strong and all-encompassing approach to study the literary works, the effects of colonialism on cultures, identities, and stories even after the direct imperial powers came to the end. Orientalism (1978) by Edward Said is the record-breaking book that led to the enhancement of the postcolonial studies. According to Said, the manner in which Ethe used to be treated used to be a highly politicized representation framework. It was considered the creation of the referenced Western mind, a canvas on which the stereotypes of exoticism and backwardness were drawn (mingled), which was the distorted prism Said criticizes (Said, 1978, p. 40). The Orient was a regular construction in Western scholarship, art and literature as irrational, backward, exotic and static, a construction that exactly defined Western conception of a self. These binaries were not harmless, they had been used to legitimize control and domination, which had imperial purposes. The discourse of colonials as criticized by Said was not only institutionalized but also embedded in the language itself, and it determined the manner in which the colonizers viewed the colonized, and it also created a sense of self-view in the colonized.

The original theory of Orientalism by Edward Said was the major source of this study since it addressed the question of how the postcolonial discourse has still affected not only the outward representations of the East but also the inner self-concept of the postcolonial subject. Said developed his theory in 1978, which deconstructs so-called objective Western scholarship of the so-called Orient and shows that it is in fact a paradigm based on politics and constructing the East as inferior, irrational, and stationary, all that the West can claim not to have become. (Said, 1978, p. 42). Although the work of Said in its early years was concerned with the representation of the East in Western literary and scholarly traditions, its applicability has since been extended to other contexts, namely the examination of how the past colonized societies inculcate the depictions (Fanon, 1963; Loomba, 1998).

This critical concept of internalized Orientalism by Said is important in explaining the actions of the minor characters of Farooqi. In *Between Clay and Dust* all characters such as Tamami and the townspeople are not directly oppressed by the colonialists. No white masters, no visible leadership of imperial rule. And still, their articulations of value, their pursuits of values, and their representations of value are all indicative of a colonial system of cultural valuation. Not only is Tamami a technical failure but an epistemological one; he does not really comprehend the indigenous discipline he attempts to inherit because he is unconsciously gauging himself against alternative, modern, perhaps, Westernized ideals. Since the identified worldview of the colonist was the one that the colonized subject is likely to adopt (as it was noted by Albert Memmi, 1991), the latter is eager to follow in their footsteps by imitating what they originally despised. This is exactly what Said is cautious about; a colonized subject who starts to see the world and himself as perceived by the colonizer (Said, 1978).

Said provides a throughway to consider the cultural aspects to the post-colonial identity in the novel of Farooqi. Said explains that post-colonial political colonialism is still perceived through the prism of constructing internal identities and perspective of inferiority (Said, 1978, p. 45).

METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides the methodology of the article which seeks to examine how the use of marginal characters in Musharraf Ali Farooqi *Between Clay and Dust* emulate postcolonial anxieties and internalized colonial discourse. The research has used a content and thematic analysis approach to qualify the study. It explores representational meaning and cultural contexts during post colon analysis using close reading. This is an interpretive approach used to analyze the inner worlds of characters like Tamami and the townspeople which are largely overlooked, representing mostly silent citizen characters in mainstream approaches to literature. Their mute intervals, lacks and movements are perceived not as the blank spots in the story but as a measured reflection of social and psychological breakdown. The postcolonial theory is combined with critical literary criticism to dig into the intricate processes of marginality in postcolonial world.

The choice of a qualitative research design is justified by the fact that it is suitable to conduct the valuable and context-related meanings that cannot be measured in statistical data. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) assert that the most suitable method of conducting studies that trace their origins to interpretation, subjectivity as well as symbolic representation are qualitative approaches. In literary analysis, especially with respect to identity, power and colonial discourse, the qualitative research can be utilized to do subtle analysis, which deals both with what is said and what is not said. It is neither in search of statistical generalization, nor is it striving to provide its results with an axiomatic truth, but only striving to add to the knowledge, and thus is quite appropriate to this exploration of fictional consciousness and cultural residue.

To be more precise, the textual analysis is considered to be the main methodological instrument of this study. Textual analysis is an in-depth analysis of the language of the text, characterization of characters, and the nature of the theme represented in the text. The approach is suitable since the main source Farooqi novel is a piece of literary art which carries cultural, historical, and ideological contradictions in the narrative structure of the work. The scholar is interested in significant passages revealing how marginal characters respond, or fail to respond, to trauma, hierarchy, and fading traditions. The appeal of characters like Tamami and the townspeople is a result of a critical interest in the inscription of not just dominant discourses in literature, but also around the subaltern, the gaps and silences (Spivak, 1988). Those are the metaphoric heart-beats of the text, whose silent functions present fertile soil to be interpreted.

Qualitative research can be of great use to literary studies because it allows to interpret the text and make multiple levels of meaning, draw parallels between textual traits and socio-political circumstances, and locate subjectivity as the place of knowledge production. Unlike quantitative paradigms that focus on foreseeability and control, qualitative inquiry glorifies complexity, contradiction and ambiguity. It allows the researchers to see the literary works as a living discourse. They are determined by ideology, emotion, and context. The quantitative approach is particularly helpful to use in the post-colonial criticism as it provides a full background of studies that is helpful to answer the questions about the rights, erasure, and central power. This research offers important contribution to the general discussion of the expression of marginalization in literature because of the emphasis on qualitative insights that help to not only understand the novel by Farooqi but also add to the wider discussion.

The textual analysis is important since it will not only look at the novel as a story, but as a cultural window with ideological sedimentation. It puts emphasis on style, silence, metaphor, and behaviour, which are impossible to grasp through the superficial readings. The subtlety of Farooqi in bringing out minor characters makes this sort of analysis possible. Their silences are non-figural fill but a reflection of legacy silence, which is formed by colonial past and cultural disorientation. When these subtleties are considered the research is closer to the call to hear the unspeakable, by Spivak and the call to who speaks, by Said. The qualitative approach which is used in this case does not dictate anything but holds the internal challenges of the text and forms the space that the marginal voices inhabit in its postcolonial world.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Farooqi creates not a supportive character in the figure of Tamami, but a quiet tragedy. Tamami is not a hero nor a villain, but something much more sophisticated; he is far more complicated, and he is a split personality, in which he thinks about admiring the cultural practice he lacks the full understanding of this practice, and he is a desire to have his glory. He admires him, but at the same time, he is jealous of him as he does not know whether to admire or outdo Ustad Ramzi (Farooqi, 2012, p. 56). Between the burden of the past and the hope of contemporary acknowledgement, Tamami turns into a tragic figure symbolizing what might occur when being unable to fit within either of them.

Tamami approaches wrestling impulsively and impatiently, unlike Ustad Ramzi whose every action is characterized by ritual, restraint and respect to the Akhara. He desires the title rather than the way which brings the title. This is agonizingly realized in the novel where he plays a match without the approval of his brother and loses in front of people, the humiliation that destroys not only the reputation of his brother, but his spirit. According to Farooqi (2012), Tamami went to the bout by himself and was beaten to the ground in a few minutes without struggling (p. 122). The loss moment itself is not dramatic in nature, but its effects are silent. Tamami soon gets sick and passes away, his body is weakened, maybe, but more to the point, his soul is destroyed. His rottenness is delicate but eloquent: "He was sitting on his back, cuddled up, and did not stir as a person came in. His food was not touched at all (Farooqi, 2012, p. 127). By doing so, Farooqi provides portrait of a postcolonial person who is not destroyed by foreign forces, but by self-destruction.

The failure of Tamami is not isolated of the idea of Orientalism by Said. According to Said in *Orientalism* (1978), colonized peoples start to judge themselves by the imported standards, and therefore the culture of inferiority complex is formed. Tamami is not making an attempt to celebrate his cultural heritage; he is attempting to demonstrate that he can be worthy in a system that is no longer in all its dignity. According to Farooqi (2012), he desired to become famous and have his name to live on. Not as his brother, but in a different way, a contemporary way" (p. 88). Not only is he plagued with the shadow of his brother, but the colonial binaries, the what is valid, which is prestigious, which is modern. Wrestling, to him, is no appointment that is to be perfected, but a platform on which to enjoy a stolen value. The garlands, applause, posters, they were more to him than the discipline, notes Farooqi, and this suggests the transformation of Tamami into spectacle rather than craft (p. 91). The tragedy, however, lies in the fact that the audience that he is trying to win over is no longer there, or even worse was never scheduled to be there.

Besides, the psychological aspect of internalized colonial logic can be seen in the relationship between Tamami and Ustad Ramzi. Ramzi does not allow Tamami to represent the Akhara not necessarily due to his inability but because he feels that Tamami does not know the spirit of the practice. Ramzi acknowledges that he is strong, but not patient enough to bear the burden of the honour of the Akhara

(Farooqi, 2012, p. 75). And still, Tamami does not give up, she does not give up because she loves the craft, but an inexplicable necessity to be noticed. Although his death is subtly narrated, it was more of an existential defeat. He is not an unsuccessful wrestler, he is a fragmented soul, a victim of a postcolonial world where tradition no longer holds power, but it is too late to enter the realm of modernity.

Farooqi does something deep through Tamami. Drawing on this he demonstrates that the actual effects of colonialism do not necessarily have to be spectacles or any other historically great effect. In other cases it is stuck in the heart of a young man who desires to count and does not because the very categories of value that surround him are distorted to unrecognizability. In the novel, the death of Tamami is grieved in a rather low-key manner, yet, it is at no point doubted. Nothing is outraged, nothing redeemed. Just silence. Farooqi writes that Ustad Ramzi never bothered to mention Tamami once more. It is as though he was wiped out with his last breath since he was not mentioned in the Akhara (Farooqi, 2012, p. 130). And volumes are that silence speaks.

In case Tamami represents the fragmented mind of a person who has to overcome the consequences of colonialism, the townspeople in *Between Clay and Dust* demonstrate how the colonial logic embedded in individuals can lead to the collective actions. They are silent witnesses of the traditions which once were so loved and tender being disintegrated, yet they remain silent, apathetic and scolding with their gaze creating a very strong background to the drama in the novel. Nobody ever said anything to his face but there was some talk in the streets and among patrons. He allowed his house to fall, and therewith the glory of the past too (Farooqi, 2012, p. 104). Not being colonizers, they represent a continuation of the colonial discourse by being involved in the gradual cultural erosion of their history.

The explanation of this behaviour is provided by the Orientalism theory developed by Edward Said. Among the main arguments that Said brings forward is the idea that colonialism need not be physically present, it already exists and is passed down by ideologies that redefine the outlook that people have of themselves and the world around them. The inhabitants of Farooqi novel are living under such a system. They are not opposed to the fall of the Akhara, or the relegation of the Kotha. On the contrary, they take it as an ordinary thing, even as something natural. Even this passive acquiescence is an effect of colonialization. As the years went by they have been conditioned to view their traditions as outdated, even humiliating. Farooqi writes that no one would come to watch any more. The neighbourhood boys would rather watch the movies on the screen or listen to the radio cricket game (Farooqi, 2012, p. 102). They demonstrate the extent to which the values of the colonial have taken hold in their silent decline to join the culture.

Farooqi takes care not to demonise them. They are not wicked, and they are not constructive aggressors. Rather, they are the symbolic social tissue that has internalized the ideologies of colonialism to an extent that fighting back appears impossible anymore. They do not break tradition vigorously, they merely cease to believe in it. This silent undermining is worse than in an open struggle. With the traditions finding no audience, their sense starts to disintegrate, not melodramatically but gradually, irrevocably. The narrator notes that at one point the Akhara was the pride of the town. It was now in a dignified neglect, as of an old man awaiting to be recalled (Farooqi, 2012, p. 98).

This complicity comes out especially clearly in the novel occasionally. The skimming attendance at the funeral of Tamami, the decreasing number of people visiting the Kotha, and the protest when wrestling becomes irrelevant, is all the signs of society that has not only lost its traditions but also interest in them. In their non-activity, the townspeople themselves are the active participants of the erasure of colonialism. Farooqi skillfully makes this dynamic unobtrusively. It is no accusation he makes, but he provokes thought: How does a culture forget itself? When memory is a burden, who does it?

When Farooqi does not treat the townspeople as one but as a moral reflection, he gives the reader a chance to face the daily processes with which loss of culture takes place. Their silence is compelling us to ask questions we do not want to hear: Is forgetting a betrayal? Is the apathy some form of violence? Powerless are not the townspeople but the tragedy is that they have lost the importance of what is being lost. And that amnesia of the tragic, the project colonial is at last achieved, without a struggle.

The above discussion of Tamami and the townspeople illustrates another layer of colonial legacy, which does not reside at the high altitude of the grand stories of conquering or resisting but at the low level of dislocations that transpire in the lives of the people. It is often said that these characters are not heroes in the traditional sense of the word, but such a statement does not imply that they do not have an essential narrative role: they are the carriers of the internal harm caused by colonialism. Their narrations are retold not in conflicts or speeches but in silence, failures, and absences. No one had visited the Akhara this time, as Farooqi (2012) notes, even the small boys who previously lingered at the gate to take a peep at the wrestlers. In this respect, the novel by Farooqi is a psychological file of the postcolonial state, the account of what remains when the flags have been taken down, and the administrators are absent. Tamami was not speaking at all. It was like a burden has been laid on his shoulders that no one can raise it off him (Farooqi, 2012, p. 125). Remembering the words of Said (1978), we should not forget that colonialism was not just a system of domination, but of epistemological power: it reformulated the ways the colonized people thought, felt, and esteemed themselves. The characters of Farooqi are in a long shadow of that redefinition.

The interpretation is a continuation of yet a major deviation of the reading offered by Qasim, Butt, and Shah (2025), who concentrate more on Ustad Ramzi and Gohar Jan as the embodiments of the dying indigenous occupations. Their study is a justified initiative and accentuates on the significance of cultural space which includes the Akhara and Kotha in maintaining identity. Nonetheless, this paper holds that we need also take our own medicine and consider those characters who do not resist in our quest to understand the depth of postcolonial trauma, and how, in their confusion or silence, people become the products of a traumatized collective consciousness. The fall of Tamami and the moral vacuum that the townspeople are seem to have slipped into are not a distraction to the key issues that the novel aims at; they are continuations of them. Not many people came even when Tamami was dying. The defeat seemed to have neglected the environment around him as though it was contagious to him (Farooqi, 2012, p. 128). Their state revisits the observation of Edward Said (1978) who notes that colonialism establishes a structure of feeling and knowledge (p. 56) that persists in creating identity even after the political power has passed. The characters portrayed by Farooqi, therefore, emerge as case studies of how the colonized self may actually become inward and shatter under the burden of inherited silence.

Edward Said (1978) is adamant that territorial domination was not the sole purpose of the colonial encounter; it also involved re-organizing thought, value, and identity. The colonized started playing the part of the colonizer once the colonizer established the definition of what was considered valid and the primitive. Tamami does not require a British officer to bring him down he brings himself down by internalising a policy that informs him that he is not sufficient. According to Said (1978), the Orient was never and still is not an independent thinker and agent (p. 42). Farooqi shows this using the silent breakdown of Tamami: He had become quiet, withdrawn to himself... He could not even stare at himself in the mirror anymore (Farooqi, 2012, p. 124). Their traditions do not require a decree of colonization to be forgotten, the townspeople merely lose their way, taking with them the soundlessness of the borrowed rankings and a lack of faith in their own culture.

So also with the townsfolk, who are not revolting but resigning. Neither heroes nor victims in the conventional use of the words, they are party, agents in a slow cultural erosion. They cannot fight back

not only because they are weak but because it is a symptom of inherited exhaustion, a tiredness inherited through generations of culture displacement. And in the story of Farooqi this fatigue is not noisy it is muffled. The narrator points out that the Akhara was hardly called upon at this point. Nobody stopped to look at it, as it was already a ruin (Farooqi, 2012, p. 108).

In the end, this reading demonstrates that not only the institutions built by colonialists are left behind by colonialism, but also the thoughts of people who experienced the fall of these institutions. The lesser characters in Farooqi urge us to reconsider what resistance would be like, what would be considered the cultural survival and the actual battlefields of postcolonial identity. They take us to the point of remembering that it was not a mere act of colonizing people but a part of who we still are.

CONCLUSION

In its core, *Between Clay and Dust* is a book about terminals, the invisible death of institutions, the decay of once prestigious careers, and the evaporating cultural self-confidence. Nevertheless, whereas the majority of the scholarship offered has looked at this exhaustion in the case of the exemplary resistance of personalities like Ustad Ramzi and Gohar Jan, this article defends another, possibly more unsettling version. With the Akhara decentered, and attention paid to other characters like Tamami and the townspeople, we get a more detailed, but no less powerful, narrative: the narrative of psychological fragmentation, of inferiority internalized, and of historical silence (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 2007).

Using the concept of Orientalism as formulated by Edward Said, it is easy to understand that the postcolonial trauma that is investigated in the novel is not merely an institutional or external phenomenon but a rather personal and internal one. On the same note, the silence of townspeople is not empty; it is crowded with ideologies, fears and shame inherited. They do not protest the break-up of their world since they do not believe that world to be worthwhile. And that unbelief is in numerous ways the final, the greatest triumph of colonialism. The minor characters in Farooqi are there to remind us that the cultural survival is not only on the shoulders of the visible champions. It is as much based on the silent testifications of common people: the way they talk, what they recollect, what they keep and give up.

Finally, *Between Clay and Dust* is a lament not only of the death of the Akhara or the dying music of the Kotha. It laments a deeper loss, the loss of cultural confidence and collective memory by the people who are left behind. Through this focus on the figures on the margins, this work has revealed that a real cultural reckoning should include not only the heroic but the hesitant, not only the strong, but also the silenced. In their betrayals and their silence we see the unhealed wounds of a past that is yet to be repaired (Chakrabarty, 2000; Said, 1993).

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