



RESEARCH PAPER

**Dislocation and Exile: A Critical Study of *River of Fire* by
Quart ul ain Haidar**

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DOI

[http://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2020\(4-I\)1.1](http://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2020(4-I)1.1)

PAPER INFO

ABSTRACT

Received:

January 05, 2020

Accepted:

June 15, 2020

Online:

June 30, 2020

Keywords:

CDA,
Dislocation,
Exile,
Novel,
Post-Colonialism

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This study aims at exploring the issue of dislocation, exile and displacement in post-colonial perspectives. It attempted to discover the processes of dislocation, exile and displacement during and after the period of colonization in sub-continent. This research work has inspected the subjects of dislocation and exile and tried to find the reasons of identity crisis of colonized people. Present study has used the conceptual framework. It has taken the postcolonial themes of exile, dislocation and displacement. By using the Fair clough model of critical discourse analysis, the study has indicated that people from former colonies faced the problems of dislocation and exile as a consequence of migration and became victim of exile. It also has discussed the glitches posed by colonization in constructing their new identities. It has suggested that colonization has caused dislocation and exile in people of these colonies and they became exiled mentally and physically

Introduction

The issue of dislocation, displacement, alienation and exile are most studied and investigated disputes in globalized and postcolonial world. European colonization has led the flow of people from known to unknown places while exploiting the cultural, economic and social resources of colonized regions. Post colonialism has an important place in literary and cultural studies. It inquires the literature produced after decolonization, which might be written as response to colonial era or as resistance to the colonial exploitation. It also takes that time into consideration when first colony was made in this world. Independence from colonization didn't help many colonized people regain their identity. They were not independent rather intervention and after-effects of colonization are still visible.

Indian-subcontinent was one of the biggest British colonies for almost one century. Present work will study postcolonial themes of dislocation, displacement and exile in Indian-subcontinent after de-colonization through the novel *River of Fire*. Dislocation according to (Ashcroft, 2004) is willing or unwilling movement of people from known to unknown location while exile is a condition that involves the idea of separation and distancing from either a literal homeland or from a cultural and ethnic origin. No single theory was suitable for the present study to encompass debated issues. Dislocation is movement from a place to another place within the country or to another country (Ghosh, 2002). He further says that dislocation is a critical term that refers to the occasion of displacement that occurs as a result of imperial occupation and the experiences associated with this event (Ghosh, 2002). Whereas exile is a condition that involves the idea of separation and distancing from either a literal homeland or from a cultural and ethnic origin (Ashcroft, 2004).

Quart ul ain Haidar wrote *Aag ka Darya* in 1956 and then translated it into *River of Fire* in 1998 herself. It is a transcreation more than a translation. As it seems a new book in its own sense, having many themes and topics not discussed in *Aag ka Darya*. Novel has many subjects, most importantly effect of history and time. It is a marvelous piece of work encompassing centuries. Present study will focus on the mental trauma and problems of exile arose in the novel.

People from former colonies faced the problems of dislocation and exile as a consequence of migration because of colonization and became victim of exile. During and after the period of colonization the question of dislocation, exile, displacement and identity crisis came to the surface. This phenomenon causes traumas and loss of identities of colonized population. In order to thoroughly study these aspects in the novel *River of Fire* by Qurat ul ain Haidar this particular study has following objectives.

- To explore the linguistic resources used to construct the discourse for dislocated and exiled characters in *River of Fire*.
- To investigate how dislocation and exile have caused the crisis of identity in *River of Fire*.

The study is significant as it provides an insight in the process of dislocation, exile and identity crisis in relation to colonization in Indian subcontinent. It considers that dislocation causes homelessness and sense of not belonging in colonized people of subcontinent..

Literature Review

Simpson (1995) opines in the Oxford book of exile that it is the human condition; and the great upheavals of history have merely added physical expression to an inner fact. So exile can be considered as a condition similar to self-alienation". Internal exile is also a form of isolation of a person from its surroundings while living in it. It's most probably the most painful of all types. Powerful colonial center

made many people aliens in their own countries. Dostoevsky, a Russian writer when talked about his autobiography said "I had been cut off from society by exile and that I could no longer be useful to it and serve it to the best of my abilities, aspirations, and talents" (Simpson,1995). Decolonization couldn't help people of colonized countries escape from states of exile may be because of supremacy of some powers over the world or because many people themselves migrate to colonial centers and lead the life of dislocation and exile.

Said (1999) in his essay Reflection on Exile says that exile is "the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home, and its essential sadness can never be surmounted".

Hall (2003) says "migration is a one-way trip and there is no "home" to go back to". With the decay of British colonization, exiles, dislocation and migration were very eminent. Naipaul in his famous autobiographical description "The Mimic Men" describes the concept of migration and its after effects. He says that migrations gave rise the questions of dislocation, displacement, homelessness, rootlessness, exile and alienation. V.S. Naipaul has extensively worked on these ideas. He himself has lead the life of an exile. Themes of rootlessness and dislocation are very prominent in his works. Theroux (1997) favors "Naipaul the rhetoric of displacement":

Identity is a complex concept and difficult to explain in one definition. Bruke (2006) believes in role-based identities. An individual is continuously in contact with his environment. His social membership and cultural associations play an important part in ascribing him an acceptable behavior in a given society or culture. So, an individual may carry a set of identities like; husband, father, son, teacher, Muslim etc. at any given point in time. Moreover, these sub-identities may even interplay in different proportions as demanded by the social context of interaction and are essential for the group memberships (Bruke, 2006). Identity crisis is a state of homelessness, unanchoredness and rootlessness. It is a state of suffering.

In the archeology of knowledge, Foucault defines discourse as: "*The general domain of all statements as an individualized group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a member of statements*" (Foucault, 1969) two aspects of discourse have been specified by Foucault, First, that discourse is the general domain of all statements. In this sense, in human speech and writing, there is nothing outside of the discourse. So, whatever is written, said, or thought becomes discourse.

Colonial discourse threatens the identity of both the colonizer and the colonized. The colonial discourse is an attempt to secure and realize the identity of the colonizer by 'othering' the colonized (Ashcroft, Griffith, Tiffin, key concepts in Colonial Studies). But in doing so the false identity of the colonized is established, which is internalized by the colonized also, by the power of colonial discourse. Mutual transculturation of colonized and colonizer takes place in colonial discourses. This transculturation of colonizer and colonized facilitates a complex

system of cross identification, which threatens the identities of both the colonizer and colonized (Naipaul, 1969).

This view of identity in social psychology has many implications for postcolonial theory and for our analysis of the crisis of identity of Kamal also. In Kamalwe find a crisis of identities, either Pakistani or Indian. This notion of multiple identities as constitutive of the individual identities is an anti-structuralist notion in nature and has the potential to broaden our understanding about the concept of shifting identities in this age of globalization and multiculturalism.

Material and Methods

Linguistic extracts showing the elements of dislocation, exile and identity crisis have been selected, described, interpreted and explained by using Fairclough model of critical discourse analysis.

Discourse is considered as belonging to linguistics particularly Applied Linguistics. It is divided into two categories by Fairclough (2010). Discourse as a countable noun and as abstract noun. Small chunks of conversation, paragraphs, essays and novels can also be called as "discourse". Fairclough defines three levels of analytical approach of Critical Discourse Analysis:

Description: At this level formal properties of the text are dealt with.

Interpretation: Relationship of text and social practice is described at this stage. Text is perceived as a process of production and interpretation.

Explanation: Relationship of text or interaction and context of the text is considered at this stage i.e. it regulates the procedures of production and interpretation, and their social effects. (Fairclough 1989).

Selection, description, interpretation and explanation of data has been done through following steps.

- Firstly, the linguistic extract from the novel River of Fire which fit to the themes of dislocation and exile have been selected. Identified linguistic phrases in selected extracts have been highlighted, italicized and underlined
- Secondly, selected linguistic extracts have been described, interpreted and explained by the application of analytical model of CDA.
- Thirdly, effects of dislocation and exile have been examined on the characters of the novel and reasons for identity crises in colonized people have been traced.

Results and Discussion

Selected extract: 1

1. Kamal noticed the old name-plates on the bungalows 'gates. *He was coming from a country full of displaced people and he was one of them. Here were families living in their houses where they had always lived.* He remembered how, as a schoolboy prank, he and Hari had jumbled up name-plates on the gates of Dalanwall, Dhera Dun. *Now he has exchanged his complete address and an identity for a totally different one.* (Haidar, 1999, p.411).

Description, interpretation and explanation

In this extract, the writer has created a situation of identity crisis by using different words like *displaced people*. Displacement in postcolonial perspective refers to the process of dislocation. In the perspective of post-colonial theory dislocation is "a consequence of willing or unwilling movement from known to unknown location" (Ashcroft et al, 2004). Linguistically the word *displaced* has been used here as an adjective qualifying the character of Kamal Reza and all the people who have been dislocated from their mother land because of the "unwilling movement" and consequently lost their identity. The writer has expressed the dislocated being of Kamal Reza by constructing a discourse of suffering.

These lines give the description of the character, Kamal Raza. He has suffered the most because of the partition of joint India. He had to leave newly freed India to be settled in Pakistan as life became difficult in India for Muslims not only socially but economically as well. "*He was coming from a country full of displaced people and he was one of them*", these lines in the first part of this selected extract may seem ordinary to a common philosopher or critic but in fact these are heavily laden with significant meanings. They have a complete story behind it. Our main focus in these lines is...*displaced people*. In postcolonial studies displacement, dislocation, homelessness, rootlessness, alienation have been used synonymously. Dislocation according to Ghosh (2002) is an experience of displacement which is the result of imperial occupation. Self is dislocated in this context. It forces people to move to alien lands ultimately resulting in alienation. This dislocation and alienation results into crises of identity.

Syed Kamal was a great supporter of joint India, he has always felt and thought India his home. He didn't leave India after partition until India started behaving with him as he was an alien there. His father lost his all property. He couldn't find any job to support his family in spite of having a foreign degree because he was a Muslim and Muslims were supposed to leave India and consider Pakistan their home. He has visited India after seven years of partition and has gone to the place he called his home once. He is missing his life prior to partition and feels dislocated because of post partition consequences. Which are not only loss of identity of Muslims who used to live in India but of Hindus and Sikhs who have

always imagined Pakistan their homeland. Therefore, the writer has woven a discourse which expresses the dislocation of all the people living in India and Pakistan.

Kamal is talking about the relationship of his “self” and place. This migration from Pakistan to India has resulted into his dislocation. He is referring that Pakistan from where he has come is full of such people who have lost their identity because of dislocation of thousand people resulted from migration, a resultant of partition. *He was one of them* is a sentence by which he is expressing his dislocation. He is unable to identify himself with any of people. He is unhappy and in much pain because of this situation. Said is of the view that deprivation and negation of one’s original identity makes a person dislocated (Said, 1987). He says that this dislocation is the biggest dilemma of the colonized people. This dilemma is fate of Kamal Reza now. Situation has forced him to leave his motherland and go to a new land but that place is full of people who have been dislocated and had lost their own identities. After effects of this crises of identity and dislocation are also discussed in the next part of the sentence. Where he mentions that the people living in the houses which were theirs once are also displaced as well. Who have left their own houses at back and have settled here in new India. In the last part of the extract Syed Kamal says “*Now he has exchanged his complete address and an identity for a totally different one*”. He here clearly depicts how he has lost his identity and has adopted a new one. The expression “*exchanged*” implies the effects of dislocation and displacement which has made him exchange his identity and place which is entirely different to the previous one.

These lines apparently describe Syed Kamal’s problem of not identifying with the people and place which was his once. But these lines also depict the loss of identity of people of oriental culture. Displaced families were forced to leave their old places and settle into new. Secondly, they have exchanged their identities along with their homes. This migration has made newly freed countries a mob of displaced people who have no idea about their future and who cannot identify themselves with any of the group existing on both sides of the border.

Selected extract: 2

2. *Suddenly the other country began.* The gun-tooting Sikh soldiers were left behind. *I am in Pakistan. I have come from India, refugee, Muhajir. Displaced muslim from Uttar Pardesh... .. how terrifying... .. Refugee.... displaced, homeless... ..* (Haidar, 1999, p.419).

Description, interpretation and explanation

In this extract, the writer has used different discursive processes to construct a vigorous discourse of dislocated being of protagonist of the novel. The expressions *refugee, Muhajir, displaced* and *homeless* have been used here metaphorically. These all qualities are part of the personality of Kamal Reza. *Muhajir* is an Urdu word which writer has used to express the gravity of the situation. In Pakistan, people who came from India after partition have been called as *Muhajir*, which has implied meanings

of “not-belonging”. *Muhajir* could not get a status of first class citizen in Pakistan. Instead of the sacrifices they gave for their country they have not been allowed to be called as Pakistani but *Muhajir*. So, by using these linguistic expressions all together the writer intends to intensify the gravity of situation and calamity of the character.

This extract is the extension of the already discussed idea of dislocation. Homelessness and suffering have become tradition and norm all over the colonized world. British colony of India is one of them. Syed Kamal Raza was very respectful citizen of joint India, one of the important characters of the novel who has always favored joint India. He is suffering through the dilemma of partition and post partition trauma has over-powered him. Syed Kamal has migrated to Pakistan and after seven years came back to visit India, his old home. When he was going back to Pakistan after the completion of his visit, the sudden change of nationality while he crossed the border on train caused him enormous pain. The expression *terrifying* is a depiction of his trauma. *Suddenly the other country began.....I am in Pakistan. I have come from India, refugee, Muhajir. Displaced Muslim from Uttar Pardesh..... how terrifying..... Refugee.... displaced, homeless....* The first word in the sentence is an adverb of time and expresses the uncertain condition of Kamal Reza, cross of border has suddenly transformed him into a *Muhajir*. In the later lines a strong representation of his internal condition has been created by the writer. They depict his feelings about his identity, a flouting fabricated identity. This fabrication and construction of his identity is contrived by all the religious, cultural and economic factors. As (Kipling, 1913) says that fabrication and construction of identity is a process in which sociological and psychological factors should be considered. So, here in the given expression colonization, society, religion, economics etc. have participated in the construction of the colonized identity of Kamal Raza. He has no identity, no name. He is called by so many names in his new home. He has no personal attributes; these are rather given to him by the society.

The words “*displaced and homeless*” express his feelings. He has been disoriented, displaced, uprooted from his home. He has no identity. These are very powerful expressions by a colonized sufferer. Colonization has made him homeless, rootless. Fanon (1963) has said that colonization produces “individuals without an anchor, without horizon, colorless, stateless, rootless – a race of angels”. Similarly, Kamal became rootless and a shift from respect to disrespected has dislocated him. At first a very respected person who belongs to a Syed family had to go through these problems of homelessness and displacement. Syed are very much respected in this part of the world religiously. So Kamal had not imagined such suffering in his whole life. Secondly, he was a citizen and admirer of joint India who was displaced from his home, he is presenting the sufferings of the whole nation. Kamal is a muslim who had no place in India and belongs to Pakistan now. Accordingly, the phrase “*Displaced muslim from Uttar Pardesh*” depicts the condition. His father was a rich man in joint India but now the powerful colonizer had made him homeless, it has terrified him bitterly. He has been disoriented and alienated from his country

and migration has taken him to another country, where he has no identity. He has made his home in Pakistan but at heart he feels homeless.

These lines apparently describe the condition of people of sub-continent. It tells the mental and physical dislocation of people which has become the product of migration. Kamal could not identify himself. He has no identity. He has become homeless and displaced because of colonization. As Ngugi (1986) says that identity and culture of the colonized is always affected by the colonization. It is thus clear from the analysis that people of present India and Pakistan have faced the identity crisis because of post-colonial effects in sub-continent.

Selected extract: 3

The Hindu constable wrote down the necessary details in Urdu calligraphy, taking Kamal by surprise. *One year in Pakistan has already disoriented him about India.* (Haidar, 1999, p.397).

Description, interpretation and explanation

In this extract, the writer has depicted the dislocated condition of protagonist Kamal Reza. The author has used the word *disoriented* which refers to the process of dislocation and homelessness. These words are used interchangeably in discourse. The writer has knit a discourse of agony and suffering by using the adjective *disoriented* which refers to Kamal Reza. Post-colonial theme of dislocation seems quite prevalent here. As Abbas (2016) says that post-colonial is a situation where the colonized people are thrown from their homeland and they become detached from their history and are disoriented and disowned by their culture, this way their new identity has been constructed. This new identity is an identity of a dislocated being.

In the selected extract, Kamal came back to India after a year. He migrated to Pakistan after five years of partition and after spending one year he came back to settle the disputes of his property. The phrase *wrote down necessary details* is expressing the horrifying state of Kamal. Furthermore, in the next sentence "*One year in Pakistan has already disoriented him about India*" intensifies the stress and pain he is suffering through. Details are taken of the strangers in a new country. The constable when took his details he was in state of bewilderment which he expresses further. *Disoriented* has been used in the sense of "thrown away" here. So he is telling himself that he has already been thrown away by his once motherland. He has been dislocated, uprooted from his foundations. Power of the whole process of migration has been shown here. Colonization and post partition conflicts were so powerful that he couldn't resist it. He was colonized by the powerful colonizer who has displaced him. Who has thrown him away from his homeland? Kipling (1913) opines that colonialism has shifted his identity because he couldn't identify himself with any one. Therefore, he has become an insignificant person. These lines depict Kamal's mental trauma and suffering resulted from migration. Powerful occident has uprooted the powerless orient and has thrown him away from his motherland. British raj in joint India has changed the sub-continent into a British colony and

when they left this part of the world, many of the orientals were displaced and dislocated. Powerful colonizer had all the rights to decide about the powerless orient to disorient him. And this is what was done with Kamal. He loves India but India has thrown him. Here India symbolizes the powerful colonizer who has decided to divide it and overthrow its people. Likewise, Kamal is the colonized, a dislocated migrant.

The analysis shows the restriction which has migration applied on Kamal which have forsaken Indian citizens from their motherland. Such sufferings have become a norm and tradition all over the world wherever the colonies were made.

Selected extract: 4

Every railway station of his childhood had its own special gifts.... the petha and miniature of Malihabad, orange of Nagpur, brass toys of Banaras. Oh, India, India, why did you forsake me? A lump rose in his throat. (Haidar, 1999, p.397).

Description, interpretation and explanation

In this extract, the writer has constructed a universe through discourse. A universe of her choice. By using the discursive strategy of repetition writer has intensified the situation. The expression *forsake* has been used in terms of abandon. The first part in underlined expression expresses the state of bewilderment of Kamal "Oh, India, India, why did you forsake me?". He is in situation of exile. The later part of sentence shows how this abandoning has given him pain, "A lump rose in his throat." His trauma is apparent in these lines. According to Said, it is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home, and its essential sadness can never be surmounted (Said, 1999).

This small paragraph is another example of trauma and suffering of the protagonist character of post partition story of the novel. Syed Kamal Raza has been disoriented. The sentence *Oh, India, India, why did you forsake me?* signifies the traumatic condition of Kamal. He is seriously a victim of political conflict in subcontinent. He has a country, new home but he doesn't belong to that place. Even after so many years' level of his suffering is same perhaps worse.

These lines apparently describe Kamal's problem of losing identity as a consequence of dislocation, a result of migration. These lines depict the suffering of all the people of sub-continent. Kamal is the representative of the people of newly freed India and Pakistan. Sufferings of oriental people have been expressed here. The phrase "a lump rose in his throat" expresses the pain of the speaker. Psychological alienation has been caused as an effect of disorientation of Kamal from his homeland. Abbas (2016) says that exile is more than the concept of forceful removal from one territory. According to him, to be exiled doesn't require removal from the homeland. People living in the same place are often exiled.

Colonization has led the people suffer from the loss of homes and identity. Kamal has been missing the old days of happiness and joy and sheer pain is in comparison here. The use of the word *forsake* shows the distressed state of mind of Kamal which has casted a state of helplessness over him. Kamal here signifies the condition of exile, which leads to loss of identity. The analysis shows the mental and physical exile after migration. It is clear from the analysis that migration across the border has caused the dislocation of many people who are now living in the state of exile.

Conclusion

Ways of dislocated and exiled identity construction have been explored in the present research. Discursive processes construct a discourse which offers identities to its characters. In present activity such discursive strategies have been identified and identity construction has been recognized. Two post-colonial themes "dislocation and exile" have been identified as the major themes responsible for identity construction in the selected study. It has been noted that dislocation and exile cause alienation, homelessness, rootlessness, displacement and trauma in people of former colonies. A trauma that caused crisis of identity. The study examines that the possibilities, which the concept of dislocation and exile offers for the analysis of a text, are numerous. River of fire has not been studied from this perspective before so present study paves a way for the future researchers to study this novel from this angle. Dislocation and exile may be studied at various levels like cultural, linguistic, political, religious, social, psychological etc. Unfortunately, the scope of our study did not allow us to analyze all the different dimension of exile and dislocation in River of fire. Decolonization lead dislocation, exile and loss of identity in the novel. Delimited aim of studying the dislocation and exile of Kamal, his suffering of psychological exile, and his mental trauma still remains un-discussed to the required length. Nevertheless, the study reveals that River of Fire is a narrative of Kamal's dislocated displacement, rootlessness, homelessness, alienation, unanchored, dislocated and exiled life. Traumas of colonization and decolonization both have their negative effects on the people of sub-continent which are explicitly described in the novel. Critical discourse analysis of the study provides an insight into the tragic life of Kamal by analyzing the ways a discourse creates a universe about certain character.

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