

## PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

### A STUDY OF FUNDAMENTALISM AND CULTURAL HEGEMONY IN THE 'AMERICAN DERVISH' BY AYAD AKHTAR

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A Study Of Fundamentalism And Cultural Hegemony In The 'American Dervish' By  
Ayad Akhtar-- Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 18(18), 1716-  
1732. ISSN 1567-214x**

**Keywords: Hegemony, Culture, Ideology, Power, Identity, Influence, Religion**

#### ABSTRACT

The study focuses on how literary texts reflect the social and cultural phenomena dominantly existing in social contexts. The researchers have tried to see Akhtar has manifested his experiences in the novel *American Dervish* regarding the hegemonic culture influencing a particular family. The research is aimed at seeing the impact of American hegemonic culture on the lives of the characters of the selected literary text by applying Gramsci's theory of "ideology and hegemony" (2000; 2011). This theory refers to the standard rule kept up through the ideological and social means that is willingly accepted and idealized by the people who are at the lower position, like the colonized. The study finds that the major factor that has compelled the characters to go against their religion is the dominant culture of America which has a complete control on their lives and has abolished their fundamentalist beliefs. They have started admiring Americans as a standard for them. Moreover, they have started accepting the portrayal of the negative behavior of individuals is the true representation of their religion. They are reluctant in practicing Islam and have developed their identity as Americans by getting attached to the Jews and Christians and following their values as their own. This transformation is followed by the supremacy established by the powerful class through the consensual submission of the people who are dominated.

## INTRODUCTION

Ideas and norms are contest in the public sphere called civil society; however, the idea of power as hegemony has been an influencing and unabated discussion among scholars. It has also given birth to the civic sense, critical aspects of social injustice and to challenge assumptions etc. (Heywood, 1994). The present study focus on such matters of cultural hegemony and fundamentalism besides reflecting on how after so many years of colonization; people are still colonized by the West. The process of colonization has changed and 'physical dominance' which was practiced by establishing colonies, has shifted into 'mental colonization," which is done through setting the ideological standards of being the well-wishers of the East. In such a way, the willing consent of the people is being taken by ensuring them that the interests of the colonizers are the interests of all. They have created an environment where people consider that their success is possible only by adopting the values and lifestyle of the West and by leaving their religious and cultural values aside.

The study takes on American Dervish to see how the cultural hegemony of the west and its influence on the people of East. After so many years of colonization people are still mentally colonized by the west because of the power that western countries have. In 2012, when American Dervish was published, Islamophobia (hatred and prejudice against Muslims and Islam in general) was also on the rise. It is considered that one of the major causes of Islamophobia is the increase of the Muslim population in the United States. At the same time, it is also seen that all the characters mentioned in the novel are living in America, and they consider it a matter of respect to be a part of America. They do not bother that they are not considered respectful by Americans, but rather they are prejudiced against them. But still, they have decided to live in America because it is considered a land of opportunity and adventure. The writer himself admits that his intention is not to correct the misconceptions of the whole world about Muslims. He is writing just to share his personal experiences of being a Muslim and an American at the same time. American Dervish was published in 2012, but it can easily be related to the current post-pandemic situation, where there is a shift in power balance. The whole world is facing critical situations particularly in terms of the economy, but America is still leading the whole world in all aspects like economics, military, socially, and culturally. People desire to be the part of America in one or the other way, and they want to get American nationality because of the ideological standards set by the Americans, like the characters of American Dervish. The study aims at making the people conscious about their manipulation and their exploitation in the hands of the Americans.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Chomsky (2003) has declared that America and all American leaders have a dream of dominance. They have a dream to dominate the world and for that reason they have struggled hard and shown their willingness, no matter how much greater and high the risks, they have remained determined to perform their duties. The aim or purpose is to have full control over the whole world and they have a pursuit of "full spectrum dominance". Therefore, the leaders

are ready to jeopardize the lives and the future of their species to reach the present perilous moment.

Haque et al. (2020) have conducted a study to examine the representation of cultural hegemony in Kamila Shamsie's novel 'Home Fire' by applying Marxist theory. Through the use of Gramsci's concept of hegemony, the researcher has highlighted the political authorization of the powerful group, which shows hierarchies and the hegemonic effects in society. Throughout the novel, the powerful and aristocratic classes have played politics just to suppress the lower classes, to get personal benefits of fame and power, and to create a hegemonic culture.

Being the birthplace of the movie studio, Hollywood is representing the real image of American life and people (Hale, 2018). A study was conducted by Tanaka and Wempi (2019) under the critical paradigm of critical discourse analysis, where Fairclough's three Dimensional Model is used for understanding and elaborating Hollywood's Hegemony. Moreover, Gramsci's theory of hegemony is applied to declare that Hollywood uses war movies to spread its power and hegemonic practices. Research has determined that in the era of neo-conservatism, the film American Sniper has proved to be one of the hegemonic practices of Hollywood containing Americentrism.

Diler (2011) has studied My Son the Fanatic to investigate the relationship between multiculturalism and fundamentalism through sociopolitical movements. It has been investigated that the biggest form of alienation for the younger generation in western countries is fundamentalism. It has been proved that fundamentalism has nothing to do with multiculturalism and vice versa, because multicultural societies have developed completely under the influence of colonial and imperial rule in the 20th century.

Barzinji et al. (1993) adopted the cultural approach for analyzing the novel American Dervish to examine the clashes between the religious and social aspects of life in the Muslim community. Both father (Naveed) and son (Hayat) have behaved identically and discovered their identity by giving up their religious creeds and by accompanying and befriending the Jewish fellows, Nathan and Rachel. Naveed's character has been portrayed negatively in a way that he mistreats his wife, hates her and tears his own religious Holy book. Muneer has brought up her child Hayat like a Jew, and Hayat himself has been struck and finally got his identity in the arms of a Jewish girl. Ali (2015) conducted a study on American Dervish examining the loss of identity of Pakistani-American immigrants by focusing on the intimacy between the Muslims and their religious and cultural values. The writer himself is under the influence of most of the western theologians and, being influenced by them, he has tackled different subjects like the conflicts between the East and the West like religion, ethnicity, and cultural conflicts etc. Naveed regarded Islam as a backward religion, and he has lost his identity. Muneer has started questioning her religious values. Mina has also changed her outlook for assimilating herself into the American community. Hayat has left his religious practices and Islam has no more value to him, and he got his identity from his

revelation to a Jewish girl. Therefore, it has become difficult for the immigrants to keep hold of their own beliefs and views.

Baykara and Kacmaz (2021) developed a study that entirely focuses on the concepts of hybridity, in-betweenness, mimicry, and cultural interaction in the light of cultural theory presented by Bhabha. The researcher has concluded that Hayat has constructed his hybrid identity through the process of hybridization and overcome his dilemmas as well. Like all the other immigrants, he has gone through the process of selecting what to hold on in his life and what to leave behind to adjust in a completely new society. Finally, he has left the ultimate social taboos of Islam and ended up being more like a Jew.

American Dervish has also been explored from a feministic perspective as well. Fajar (2016) has conducted a study using the feminist approaches of Stuart Hall and Chandra Mohanty to interpret the text. It has been tried to understand the way women are repressed, the way the feminist perspective is portrayed through the female characters of Mina and Muneer, and finally, the kind of ideological status and position the author possesses behind the novel has been tried to be explored. Because of the misinterpretation of Islamic laws and the Quran, women have to face gender inequality, oppression, and humiliation by the hands of their patriarchs of the family. They are not always uneducated and backward like the common stereotypes that are attached to them.

Yasin et al. (2021) has studied the way Hayat has lost his religious identity that was so dear to him in the beginning through Eric Erickson's approach to Identity Crisis. The study concluded that Hayat got stuck between the conflicting issues of religion, culture, mysticism, and philosophy that had pushed him towards the loss of his own identity. He has adopted a completely new and broader western style of living as the only option for his survival in America and lost his religious identity.

Handayani (2020) has explored American Dervish through the lenses provided by Stuart Hall and Clifford in diaspora writings in order to examine the kind of interaction the Muslim immigrants were having with the other individuals of entirely different backgrounds of race, gender, culture, and ethnicity. The study has contributed to the perpetual construction of the characters through different means of preservation, resistance, and negotiation between different individuals. They have shown resistance towards their own homeland culture and negotiated with the people of the American state and society, and in the end, have succeeded in constructing a fluid kind of identity.

After reviewing the relevant literature the researcher has found a gap for conducting present research in the area of cultural hegemony. A huge body of research has already been conducted in the field of cultural hegemony. But this theory has not been applied to any literary work along with the concept of fundamentalism. Most of the time when the theory of cultural hegemony is applied, it is used to analyze the dominance in terms of force, but in the present research, the concept of hegemony is applied to analyze the dominance

in terms of consent along with the concept of fundamentalism. The research intends to explore the influence of western ideology and hegemony on the cultural and fundamentalist beliefs of the Eastern people.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The selected text has been explored by applying the theory of cultural hegemony introduced by Gramsci and Stuart Hall, and fundamentalism through the Close Reading method. The theory of cultural hegemony is based upon some of the significant elements for example, culture, ideology, hegemony, and power etc. that are explained below.

At present, the concept of culture has been difficult to understand and to conceptualize, and most of the scholars have regarded culture as ambiguous and even non-operational, meaning that it can never be understood in a certain pattern. But even then, it is a major object of study throughout the world. Because of different media sources, it has become quick and easy for people to communicate with each other across borders (Gramsci, 2000).

Antonio Gramsci's use of the notion of hegemony has a great historical background. By understanding its real concept, the intellectuals can be able to join the people, and only then is the construction of popular hegemony possible through the constitution of powerful resources. Wilson (1940) has stated that from 1908 to 1917, hegemony has been referred to as one of the most significant political slogans, in history, in the Social Democratic Movements of Russia.

Stuart Hall (1985) has elaborated Gramscian concept of hegemony by associating it with the ideological domination of the society by the elites of the society. These ideologies are maintained by the elite and dominating class of the society. They set the ideas and the interests that are adopted by the subalterns as the standards. As a result of those ideologies the working class starts taking their manipulation and exploitation for granted.

"...how ideology is reproduced in the so-called private institutions of civil society—the theatre of consent—apparently outside of the direct sphere of play of the state itself . . . how a society allows freedom of civil institutions to operate in the ideological field, day after day, without direction or compulsion by the state... the consequence of that "free play" of civil society... reconstitutes ideology as a "structure in dominance." (p. 101).

Cultural hegemony is all about maintaining the rules and dominance through cultural and ideological means. It maintains an imbalanced relationship among the classes where the values of a politically powerful class are imposed on the less powerful classes just to maintain control and dominance over them. Edward said (1979) has also discussed this fact: that the most important component of European culture that makes it hegemonic in Europe and also outside Europe, "is the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures (p.7)."

Hayat, the main character, is enjoying a game with his American friends, and the vendor has given them pork bratwurst rather than beef bratwurst. At first, he has decided to return it to the vendor but suddenly he thinks, "What reason did I have anymore not to eat it? None at all, I thought" (p. 7). Religion is the only doctrine that can restrict its followers from crossing their limits. Hayat has abandoned his religious beliefs and eaten pork bratwurst. He seems to be quite happy after eating that pork sausage, and he has started feeling an amazing taste that he has never felt before in his life. He starts regretting that he has wasted so many years and has never tasted this amazing and delicious sausage. Moreover, he feels remarkable changes in his personality. He is feeling stronger, energetic and brave after that bratwurst, as he says, "I felt at once brave... (p. 7).

He has justified his act and relaxed himself by stating that he has looked around and upward at the sky, nothing has changed. Everything is still in its original shape and place, which means that there is nothing wrong with his eating pork. Nature is not angry with him for going against her and completing his wishes and desires. He is feeling like a newborn baby in a mother's lap having a sound sleep, free from every kind of tension and having only desires of eating, drinking, and sleeping. He has enjoyed a sound and unburdened sleep. He is thoroughly enjoying his state of peace, stillness, and tranquility. Basically, he has chosen to be American and is no more confused between two extremes, "...what it's like to lose your faith." "It's freeing. So, freeing. It's the most freeing thing that's ever happened to me... (p. 11).

For Mina, America is presented as a place of safety, security, and peace; and her own land, Pakistan, has become unsafe for her. Hamed Suhail (Mina's first husband) has made it impossible for them to stay in Pakistan. "...the lawyer, Mina meets that morning tells her she has nothing to worry about. At least as long as she is in this country..." (pp. 166-167). Mina's books are set alight by her father as he thinks it is because of the books that she is getting rebellious. The lifestyle in the USA is very impressive for the people going there from the third world countries. She is in awe, "America's size impressed him, and so did its cleanliness...There's no garbage.... How do they do it?" (p. 192). His way of mentioning that everything is big and America's size is big means that everyone including Mina's father has admitted the superiority of America to the whole world. They are bigger than the whole world so the whole world is under America's control. Economy, education, trade and many other departments of the whole world are controlled by them. They have the ability and power to control the world and to manage all matters in an efficient way, "Unlike us Pakistanis...Americans know how to make the world a better place." (p. 192). Here it comes where the Pakistanis and others people from third world willingly underestimate and degrade themselves. On the other hand, they admit that America deserves to be a superpower because they know how to manage the things and how to keep the things in order and manage the matters in a reasonable way.

Muneer ascertains that Islam is not a trustworthy and reliable religion. Her father used to say that the only secret to a happy and satisfied life is respect. Everyone should give respect to himself as well as to others, but this element

is missing in Muslims. Her father was a wise man in worldly terms. He was not a practicing Muslim, but more like a Jew.” (p. 22).Muneer and Naveed met in Lahore, they have fallen in love with each other and got married. The moment they have landed in America, the problems in their lives have started, and he “started cheating on her almost as soon as they arrived in America.” (p. 20).He has started hanging out with white women outside the home, which is very common in American culture. Muneer thinks that it is the weakness of the Muslims that they feel so tempted towards the western attractions. “Give a Muslims man a drink and watch him run after white women like a crazed fool!”(p. 21).

She is targeting religion at every point without realizing that it is the American environment that has trapped Naveed and he has started torturing her. Naveed has continued transgressing the boundaries of religion. Muneer is critical towards his activities;“Chasing white flesh...The first thing he does is run off with a prostitute! Is that normal?” (p. 149).Muneer has developed a perception that all the Eastern men are the same and they are careless, irresponsible and rude “...a man who drank and cheated on his wife couldn’t claim to have any credibility...” (p. 125).They are mad for white women. Her use of the phrase, ‘chasing white flesh’ reflects her disgust for the common behavior of the Eastern men that is also reflecting the dominance of the white.

Because of Sunil’s fanatic behavior, his wife has left him and ran away with an American. “His wife has left him for a white American, taking their only son...” (p. 173). This is another example of the broken family systems of America. The way Naveed is interested in white American women; she has left her husband for a white American man. People consider and idealize Americans to be the perfect partners for them and leave their own partners, which results in a broken family system and also in the disturbed mental growth of their children.

They have easily adopted American culture because of the ideological power behind hegemonic culture, but they have not got this power to practice their own religious and cultural values completely. That is why, Naveed keeps insisting to his son, “All I’m saying to you is: Don’t end up as a maulvi.” (p. 46).The truth of the Americans about life is totally different from the truth of the Pakistanis because of the difference in the religious and cultural values.

Muneer is somewhat confused; she is not clear what she wants in her life and what she desires her son to be in his life, a Muslims or a Jew. On one hand, she insists on him to be a Jew because Jews respect their women, but on the other hand, she wants to draw a line between themselves and the other religions. “We don’t go to church, Hayat. We’re not Christians”. We have to draw the line somewhere.” (p.29). She always tries her best to give her own reasons for different things in order to protect her son. She is struck between the two extremes of the Muslims and the Jews. She does not have clarity about which kind of personality she demands her son to have in his life. It seems that she wants him to be secular and to adopt some of the attributes of the Muslims and some of the Jews.

She convinces Mina to marry Nathan (a Jew) to have a good and satisfying life in the future.

“What does it matter?! It doesn't matter! Let him stay like he is... You stay like you are! These things don't matter!” (p. 145).

She is making up her mind that she will have an ideal life by marrying Nathan, which she can never ever imagine by marrying a Muslim man because of the conservative ideologies of these men and because of the rules set by their religion, Islam. Muslim men can never be happy with their wives, and their wives are living a terrible life with them because of their masculine behaviors. Muneer believes that it does not matter if he is a Jew. They should not worry about each other's religion and faith. She says:

“I'm bringing you up like a little Jew” (p.81).

She wants her son to be a Jew because in her opinion, Jews give respect to their women. Unlike his father, he will allow his wife to have a say in life. In reality, this is one of the main concerns of Muneer's attention that she wants her son to be different from his father.

She unstoppably and continuously mentions plenty of things about the Jews that she is impressed by. She has referred to the faith of the Jews and their shrewdness. They are ruling the world in the present age because of their smart strategies and policies. Moreover, they have faith in their abilities and have confidence in themselves. Besides that, she has elaborated on their interests and the determinations of their souls in order to show their expertise in different fields of life:

“... never let their own kind down; how they honored the place of the mother; how they loved books” (p. 82)

Muneer's inclination towards the Jews is because of her father, who died after the Second World War in England. He was inspired by the Jews. He was influenced by their way of being critical about things and their inquisitive nature to explore things and learn them with logic. Conversely she says,

“neither of my parents was particularly religious, and I heard more tales from Mother about Father's mistresses than anything else...” (p. 36).

Fundamentalism has deeply affected the lives of almost all the characters. The fundamentalist attitude of the people towards their family members and towards their children causes a huge problem among the characters, just like Naveed's mother's attitude towards them regarding the teachings of Islam is of a great problem. She has been habitual of beating her children and never giving them food in case of their inattentiveness and forgetfulness about the prayers. Muneer has explained that Naveed has turned his face against Islam because of the unnecessary strictness from his mother's side. Her attitude has created hatred in him against Islam. It has diverted his attention towards other religions which, she thinks, are not so difficult and that give at least some



space and relaxation to the people. Although he believes in Allah as a supreme being, he is not ready to practice the religion of Islam because of the kind of abuse he has faced in his childhood.

Hayat has been completely unaware of the teachings of Islam because since his birth; his parents have completely adjusted to a new society by adopting its cultural values. Their standards have changed and they have become more concerned about their personal lives than raising the child in a healthy way. For his parents, Islam is redundant in their lives. Mina tries to teach Hayat how to offer his prayers but Naveed doesn't like it. He says that he doesn't want his son to be a maulvi (Cleric). Mina argues that,

“It's just namaaz (Salat/Prayers), Naveed. I hardly think teaching him to pray be going to make him end up as a maulvi (p. 46)”.

Naveed thinks that like Christianity, all the teachings of Islam are only for maulvis and Islam is only the religion of these Maulvis not the religion of all the Muslims as a whole. Similarly, Chatha is a fundamentalist. He does each and every possible thing to prove Americans as the nonbelievers and the ones whom Allah does not like. He tries his best to picturize the ultimate end of the Americans where they will be fried by Allah in hell and they will be given extreme punishment by Him.

“He'll fry them just like one of their fishes at their church Friday fish fries!”(p. 56).Naveed believes that Chatha is a hypocrite because he has a double personality. He wants to be good in the eyes of everyone and pretends to be very religious, but internally he hates the people to the core of his heart.

Naveed is intensely in love with American culture and traditions. He always tries to show America as superior to Pakistan in terms of culture, tradition, education, economy, and in terms of providing opportunities to the people. He is trying to boast that he has made his success with practical deeds and he has gained practical knowledge about the things rather than the bookish knowledge like all the other Pakistanis.

“—as a pledge of his allegiance to the American tradition of making oneself through deeds and not thoughts...” (p. 59).

His attitude determines that he is entirely transfigured into the American outlook.“Religion, my friends,” ...“is a topic for fools. And this conversation is the living proof... Don't discuss religion or politics. Especially with a Muslim” (pp. 101-102).

He does not like to have a religious discussion with anyone in life and that is the reason he also discourages others from participating in religious talks because he thinks that it is a matter of the fools. No one should engage in such conversations because religious conversations are the conversations and debates that start with conflict and end with more confusion in the minds. No one can have a consensus on religion. Specifically, he talks about the Muslims and Islamic conversations. He perceives it to be a waste of time and energy to

get involved in Islamic topics with the Muslims. He does not believe in the teachings of Islam at the same time he almost rejects Islamic stories of the prophets narrated in the Quran. As he says,

“We’re talking about Jesus! Who even knows if that guy lived? How stupid can you get? Arguing about nonsense like that?” (p. 102).

Mina and Muneer inform Hayat that Mina is going to marry Nathan, but he questions his religious state as he is a Jew and she cannot marry him because she is a Muslim. Muneer tries to calm him by assuring him that he is going to change his religion.

“He is in love with your auntie (p. 108).

She attempts to prove that a man’s love for someone is more important than the discussion about the religion he follows. She explains that his father is a holocaust survivor who will never allow him to marry outside his religion, but still he is not thinking about his father; rather he is ready to marry Mina at any cost. She compares Nathan’s sacrifice with Naveed’s,

“What has your Father sacrificed for my sake? Hmm? Tell me! Not even one night’s pleasure with one of his white prostitutes...” (p. 108).

Muneer has developed a sense of inferiority and has started comparing the American and Asian women. She says, her husband doesn’t appreciate her looks and doesn’t like her mouth,

“...the way he likes the mouths of his white prostitutes. Free hearts, free minds, free mouths... Not like Eastern women, who are heavy and dark and mentally imprisoned,” (p. 110).

The view of Asian American men about their own women is negative and they take them emotionally weak, fragile, submissive, unintelligent, uneducated, and uncivilized as compared to the modern American white women.

Imam Souhef impresses them with his appearance and with his polite way of talking to the people. But when Souhef has delivered his sermon, he has become really commanding and terrifying among the people. He does not convey Allah’s message in a lighter tone; rather, he terrifies the people about the hellfire and other punishments of the people who disobey Allah’s orders. .  
“He was pointing at Imam Souhef, who was standing on the stairs and smoking a cigarette” (p. 124).

One of the reasons for Naveed’s hatred for Islam and religion in general is the hypocritical attitude of the Muslims. Souhef asks for donations for different reasons on different occasions like renovation of mosque or to help the Palestinian immigrants and no one knows where the donations go.

Naveed warns Nathan about Imam's greedy attitude. He has mentioned that they will charge him for different reasons and one of them can be his conversion to Islam.

"Just don't come complaining when he bleeds you dry for consulting services and fees...Your conversion." (p. 125).

Nathan goes to mosque and is hurt and feels insulted at the attitude in Imam whom he found

"...was a hatemonger and an anti-Semite!" (p. 142).

Naveed does not try to stop Nathan as he could not afford to offend him because he is on business terms with Nathan. It means that business is more important to Naveed than religion. He has sacrificed his religion for the sake of his business and worldly benefits.

After his experience at the mosque, Naveed is not ready to allow his son to follow Islamic ways of life. Naveed hates the Quran so much that he has warned his son to stay away from that book.

"If I ever see you with that book again, I will fix you. You can trust on that" (p. 155).

In the hospital where his child is in bed, because of the fracture in his arm, but at that time he is warning him to stop reading the Quran. He said,

"This goddamn thing..." (ch.13)

And snatched it from Hayat's hands. His use of profane language for the Quran clearly demonstrates his attitude towards Islam. In his outrage he has desecrated the Quran that exhibits American influence on his ideology which supports personal and secular ideology. He pulled and tore pages and pieces of pages falling to his feet. He tore and tore and before long the carpet was covered with paper... danced and ground the pages underfoot.

"You want your Quran?!" he yelled. "That's your fucking Quran! (p. 169).

Naveed is upset after Nathan has left to settled back in Boston, he wants to be away from them once and for all because of religious fundamentalism. Now, Naveed has to face a financial crisis because they will not be able to continue their research. But Naveed cannot afford to be away from Nathan because he will decline in this way. Naveed is really upset and depressed, and that has affected their family as well. He "wasn't certain he could go on with the work without Nathan." (p. 175).

Mina also advises Hayatto avoid studying Islamic stuff when his father is around. She asks him to "just keep that Quran safely tucked away in your closet when he's around (p. 174). She says that in this world most of the time, we are bound to some limits set by the people who are in authority in the

house and in other fields of life. She is much more careful about the boundaries made by the people than the boundaries that are made by Allah (SWT). Naveed makes her promise to stop teaching Islam to Hayat. She tells Hayat,

“I have to honor his promise. I am his guest, after all...I have to honor his will. It's his house.” (p. 175).

At Mina's walima, Hayat recites the Quran but people object that in order to become a hafiz it is necessary to memorize the Quran in its original (Arabic) language. It does not count that he learns, memorizes and recites it in English. Naveed gets the chance to show his hatred and dislike for the Muslims. Moreover, he discloses his dissidence against Mina's marriage with Sunil. He does not want Mina to be one of the parts of these fanatic people again and to waste her life. But she has agreed in spite of opposition and now they will exploit her the way they wish.

So after that, whenever Hayat feels ashamed of his recitation at the walima, he starts recalling his father's words,

“You are not like them...You are not a follower”. (p. 221).

Here, Naveed is comforting and reassuring him that he should not be worried about anything traditional. He shows his marked antipathy for his own religion and his own people, that they are idiots and non-sense people, who do not know how to behave in a particular situation. He should not pay attention to them; rather he should be focused and clear in his mind to follow the Americans and his own father who is an example of a successful man.

“All my life I've been running away from their rules, Hayat. All my life. You will be the same (p. 218)”.

He justifies his act of burning the Quran that he has burnt it only because of the Muslims and their damn ideologies.

“It's because you're different. You can't live life by rules others give you (p. 218)”. Moreover, he thinks that the Quran is not the book that can ensure success in this world. Naveed's criterion of success and of being successful is different from the believers. His ideology about life has totally changed. For him, success is all about having a business, a lavish apartment, and a bank balance in a country like America.

Mina has to wear “a tightly tied hijab (p.224)”

And is not allowed to see anyone else except Sunil after marrying him. She is forbidden to look at any man and also forbidden to talk to a non-mehram even at a holy place like a mosque. In case of a little carelessness, she is brutally bitten by him. He becomes ferocious whenever he feels that Mina has not followed his instructions and she is disobeying him, even unconsciously.

“And he does not even want her answering the door, an injunction he would test by having male friends come by and ring the bell to see if she would answer” (p. 225).

Sunil behaves like a true fundamentalist and an extremist who does not want his wife to breathe with her own wish.

“Mina’s passing look at a male driver ...was enough for Sunil to lose his temper” (p. 224).

He starts shouting at her, even in the car and on the roads. He does not bother to be careful in public places. He starts humiliating her and beating her on the spot. She is of the view that the Quran allows husbands to hit their wives. She is really satisfied with being beaten by her husband, as she has read in the Quran that men are in charge of their women. She has marginalized herself by confirming to her husband’s choice. She has presented a view that all women are weak, crazy, insane, and out of their minds, so it is really necessary to keep them within the limits.

She represents the colonial subjects who consider themselves uneducated and ill-mannered, and therefore, it is necessary for them to be directed by the colonizers who are civilized and sane. The way those women of the East consider themselves inferior, insane, and weak, and have accepted the dominance of their men upon them, all these third world citizens have accepted their inferiority. They give their willing consent to the Americans dominate and direct them.

It is also depicted that people get out of their roots and consider it a sign of their superiority and success. Hayat does not want to be the part of his Muslim roots and his Muslim apprenticeship. He has decided not to be linked with his Muslim identity. Therefore, he is trying to avoid his mother’s concerns for Mina because he starts recalling everything about Mina and his Islamic education that he has gotten from Mina.

He wants to become a man who is not restricted within the unnecessary limits. He is standing on the secular ideologies that are highly encouraged in America. He is now focusing on something that can help him to be a true American. He has decided to adopt all the manners that are typically demanded for an American. He will be brand conscious and be careful in his choice of jeans and the type of literature he will be reading except the Quran. He has completely left religion, as declares,

“I began... giving up on Islam little by little for years, and that now there was barely anything left” (p. 232).

He has passionately struggled hard on his father’s advice to be an American and eventually he discovers his identity as an American in the arms of an American girl.

“It was in Rachel’s arms—and it was with her love—that I finally discovered myself not only as a man, but as an American” (p. 234).

In the excerpt, we may notice that he has finally embraced his father’s concept of life. He is now grown up and has got his identity as a man and especially, as an American, which has been his ambition.

“He drinks a lot. More than he should. Not that he admits it... My mom suffers, not quite in silence, as I’m sure you can imagine” (p. 235).

In the end, a complete and true picture of a disturbed American family system is depicted. No one is available for no one. In their culture, blood relations are far away from each other. They do not have time for their loved ones. On one hand, Hayat has got his American identity, but on the other hand, his parents are living a miserable life. Naveed has started drinking profusely.

“He drinks a lot. More than he should. Not that he admits it” (p. 235).

Muneer is living a life full of suffering and pain as usual. She has nobody to talk with. Hayat is busy in his own life, and Naveed is not paying any attention to her words because he is drunk now. This is a typical picture of the American family system.

Nathan and Mina have been in touch even after Mina’s marriage to Sunil. Sunil had totally been unaware of her actions. One of their maids has acted as a means of communication among them. They have been writing letters to each other, and Mina has informed him about her life struggles. She feels comfortable talking with him. In the presence of her husband, she needs someone to be in touch with and to be in a comfortable zone to discuss her personal emotional feelings, which is a terrible thing to think upon.

She regrets her decision to marry Sunil and leave Nathan because of her family pressure. Her act of being in contact with Nathan proves the hegemonic dominance of America on the religious, moral, and cultural values of Mina. Being a Muslim, she is not allowed to be in touch with a man who is non-mehram to her. But she has already surrendered to the American ideology that allows a person to be in contact with anyone in spite of religious and cultural differences. Nathan has offered her for multiple times to come back to him, but she has not agreed because of the cultural and familial restrictions.

“It has to be a cultural thing...” (p. 236).

It means that religion has not been a restriction for her; she could have easily left religious beliefs behind (that do not allow one to marry a non-Muslim) and could marry him. She has been aware of the fact that she would be welcomed by him in any case at any time because she has always been a true love of him. Nathan confesses to Hayat, “I never got over your aunt” (p. 237). Even after her death that love resides in its former position with sincerity. Hayat has asked about their face-to-face meeting and their seeing each other, but Nathan has not responded to that question.

“He stared at me for a long moment, his eyes full, still, unblinking.”(p. 237).

It might be possible that Mina has forbidden him to tell anyone about that, or it is also possible that they have just met to share their stories of struggles in life. It indicates that they have had a relationship in their whole life and they have had a kind of relationship with each other that is beyond the boundaries of religious and cultural values. Mina has sacrificed and compromised on her religious values for friendship with a Jew, which shows the effect of American cultural values on her ideologies as a whole.

### **CONCLUSION**

It is concluded that in postmodern world the modes of colonization and exploitation have changed. Now, people are not manipulated through power and military; rather they are exploited through ideological and cultural means. After so many years of colonization, they are being mentally colonized by the Western ideologies. For that purpose, the West has set some standards that are willingly adopted by the people of the East and by those who are at the lower position. They do not have to struggle hard for influencing the people and for dominating them through physical power. People show their willing consent to be hegemonized by the West.

In the present world, America has become a status quo for almost all the people. They want to be the part of America in one or the other way, they want to get American nationality because of the power that America is having. That is the reason that America is having higher number of immigrants from all over the world.

Similarly, in the present study it is seen that Naveed has decided to leave his identity to live his whole life in America as an American. He has burnt the holy Quran which represents his leaving behind all his religious and cultural beliefs and now, he will be no more bound to any particular religious boundaries. He has also restricted his son from reading the Quran and getting any kind of religious teachings from anyone. Therefore, his son has also become an American and he has gained his identity in the arms of a Jewish American girl. After drinking wine he has started feeling that he is in a new world of peace and tranquility and he has regretted for not starting it before. Moreover, Mina who is presented as a strong believer in the beginning has now transformed to a girl who is ready to compromise her values for marrying a Jew. She has refused Hayat from reading the Quran because his father does not like her teaching him the Quran. She has said that being a guest in their home, she has to obey their orders, which actually means that being in America all the immigrants have to follow the American rules even at the cost of their own religious, cultural, and moral beliefs.

The research will be significantly contributing in the already existing knowledge from different aspects. At first, the study will be beneficial for the future researchers to know about modern ways of manipulation and exploitation by the West. Secondly, it will be significant for making the people aware of the new ways of manipulation. They are ideologically trapped by the

western hegemony. They will be able to know that they are being ideologically and mentally colonized by the west and their consent has been gained by the west to leave their own values and adopt the values of the people who are in power. They will be made aware of the threats that they are losing their identities and if they have not controlled their attraction towards the West they would have lost their identity as a nation.

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