Journal of Gender and Social Issues
Spring 2021, Vol. 20, Number 1

The Pakistani Woman in Western Eyes: Self-exoticization in Afzal-Khan's *Lahore with Love*

Abstract

This paper comprises a critical study of recollection of life events in the memoir titled: Lahore with Love: Growing up with Girlfriends Pakistani Style henceforth (LWL) by the Pakistani female writer Fawzia Afzal-Khan. We illustrate through our analysis that Afzal Khan looks at and represents Pakistani women's identity with a Western lens. We argue that Afzal-Khan portrays herself as an independent and anglicized woman who is in control of her sexuality, positioning herself at the center like the orientalists, constructing a monolith identity of Pakistani women in the narrative. Hence it is not only Western or white writers that exoticize the Pakistani woman, but migrated writers like Khan misrepresent this identity as she subjects herself to self-exoticization in her memoir with an orientalist approach.

Keywords: *Memoir, Pakistani woman, Orientalism, exoticization*

INTRODUCTION

In the context of Pakistan and other Third World countries, memoirs have their own significance. They provide cultural representation to the marginalized nations and groups. Female Identity of Muslim or Third World women in the past has been associated with the historical accounts of Western women which could be regarded as their way of strengthening their identity at the center, compared with the "Other" (Fanon, 2008). Hence, memoir-writing by Pakistani women can be viewed as an attempt to produce counter narratives against the stereotypical Western views about Pakistan and its cultural identity. After the 9/11 attack on World Trade Center, there was a dire need on the part of Pakistanis to reclaim their identity against the stereotypical Western perception of Pakistan as a terrorist state. More recently, the events that followed the attack by Taliban on Malala Yousafzai further raised questions about the identity of Pakistani women and the circumstances they live in. Against this backdrop, it is significant to study Pakistani women's memoirs as a new form of cultural, literary and linguistic expression in their indigenous and international contexts. To fill the gap of representation of Pakistani women's identity within international narratives, Pakistani women writers such as Durrani (1995), Naheed (2003), and Suleri (2014), have used memoirs as a

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LWL is a memoir by Fawzia Afzal Khan, a US based writer/activist of Pakistani origin. Belonging to an elite urban family, she left Pakistan in 1979 when she was twenty-one years old. At that point in time, women and minorities in Pakistan were facing inevitable oppression at the hands of the military dictator General Zia-ul-Haq. Afzal-Khan mentions that this memoir is her way to "see from a distance of age and location, the life challenges of Pakistani women of the socio economic class I belonged to." (Afzal-Khan, personal interview, April 11, 2019). It is about her life back in Pakistan with her family and especially with her girlfriends. This is a story about how her girlfriends belonging to upper middle class, with Western education and liberal backgrounds underwent profound changes of identity under the complex religious and social structures. It narrates how her girlfriends who chose to live in Pakistan met tragic ends of murder, suicide, mental or emotional breakdowns.

In the sections that follow literature review we illustrate through examples from her memoir that she wrote this narrative for the Western audience adhering to the stereotypical Western frameworks of representing Muslim or Pakistani women. Mohanty challenges the politics of solidarity by Western feminists. In her groundbreaking book "Feminism without Borders", she argues that the Third World Woman is produced as a "singular, monolithic subject" by Western feminists. It is done at the cost of appropriation of their experiences and Western feminists are unaware and unconcerned about the implications such writings have on the lives of these women. She does not only criticize the Western writers for this marginalization but also the Third World scholars, who write about their own people and culture but use the same strategy of positioning themselves at the center. (Mohanty, 1988, p. 17)

LITERATURE REVIEW

We draw on the work of two schools of postcolonial theory for the theoretical framework: The postcolonial theorists, Said and Fanon study the subject of colonized identity: Fanon analyzes the experiences of colonized people in the white-controlled societies; the inferiority complex associated with their non-white identity and their desire to overcome it by becoming white. Edward Said looks at academic scholarship about the former European colonies by scholars in the imperialist countries as being actually a project to conjure up the forces of imperialism, justifying governance by foreign rulers. However this school is not very sensitive to the gender(ed) and anti-feminist aspects of such representations which have been addressed by the school of postcolonial feminist theory, although the white feminists (Hosken, 1981;Jeffery, 1979,) cited by Mohanty (1988) have also represented or researched on Asian and/or Third World women with an orientalist lens. The postcolonial feminists of color who identify with this school of thought including Mohanty, Suleri and Loomba, critique the representation of Third World Woman's identity by the First World white feminists. These theorists critique the appropriation of a non-white woman's identity: an average Third World woman (Mohanty, 1988), oppressed postcolonial woman (Suleri, 1992) , a Harem girl or a sati (Loomba, 1998). The argument is that a non-white woman is represented as a monolithic subject to cater to the interest of its producer, the white feminists whose privileged position not only blinds them to the harsh realities of the Third World but with that they also tend to forget their powerful status in the world of academia which positions them in such a way that whatever they say has grave implications. These women of color stress upon the fact that those who truly belong to these cultures and have life

experiences in their respective societies, should write about them. They state that history needs to be rewritten not only from a woman's perspective but from a woman of color's viewpoint. For instance, Suleri contests the idea that "the outsitedness of cultural criticism is being translated into that most tedious dichotomy that pits the academy against the real world" (Suleri, Women Skin Deep: Feminism and the Postcolonial Condition, 1994). Critiquing the martial law regime of General Zia-ul-Haq and his 'Islamization' curtailing women's rights in Pakistan during the 1980s, she stresses upon the fact that the indigenous people and the natives who have experienced this ethos are able to write with more authenticity. Suleri, however, states that diaspora writers like Afzal Khan and Laaleen with their Western lens are as much outsiders as the white Western writers (Suleri, 1992).

Textual Illustrations

The (Fe)Male gaze

Afzal-Khan names each chapter of her text after one of her friends by giving their names as chapter titles. It is interesting to note that Afzal-Khan introduces each of her friends to her reader by giving details of their physical attributes and beauty; this being the first feature of their personality that she directs her audience to keep in their minds. Sam or Samina whose chapter is named "Sam's secret", is a dearly loved friend of Afzal-Khan' from Convent School, Lahore. She describes her physically: "her straight brown hair down to her lower back, like a chamois sheath I want to feel on my bare skin," and she is the "loveliest thing" she has ever seen (p. 1). It is a significant aspect to note that none of Sam's other traits of personality appealed to Afzal-Khan but her body, hair and "wafting aroma of *chambeli*[1] hair" (p.1).

It is noteworthy to point out that all of Afzal-Khan's girlfriends had a better womanly figure than her and she goes on to draw a comparison between her own body and theirs. Hajira's chapter opens up with a kind of visual treat, "she has on her chest, a midget with melons oh gawd!"(p. 28) and then a quick comparison to hers, "I have the straighter nose and the height, but no boobs to speak of." (p. 28) Such descriptions of feminine beauty in her friends in contrast to her own height, flat chest and flat bottom, her not-so-perfect manlike figure suggests not a rebellion against the "toxic body culture' but a voyeuristic interest in a woman's body from a male perspective.

Chapter three is devoted to Saira and Afzal-Khan gives a customary start by describing her physically:

> Tiny silver peas tinkled ever so slightly every time she moved her creamy golden legs. We sensed rather than saw them behind the billowing cotton shalwar, which draped but couldn't quite hide the curvy texture of her womanliness…We gawked and gulped as only twelve-year-olds can, knowing our flat-chested, flat-bottomed bodies looked pitiful in comparison. (p. 59)

[1] Jasmine flowers.

It is important to note that such physical descriptions of woman's bodies are usually found in representations of women by male writers, artists and painters. As Mulvey (1975) pointed out: "the male gaze denies women human identity, relegating them to the status of objects to be admired for physical appearance". Females only exist in relation to the male. In the same way, Afzal-Khan looks at and represents Pakistani woman as an Orient as opposed to her own Occidental self. The oriental female only exists because of the occidental female and her girlfriends live in the minds of her readers as bodies not identities. Thus, her girlfriends are represented as the exoticised Other; as "erotic delights" (Shabanirad and Marandi, 2015, p. 23) since their bodies qualify them as 'feminine' compared to Afzal-Khan's 'masculine' body and character. A reader can trace a pattern in her treatment of her friends. Her fascination with her friends' bodies, their anatomy particularly their breasts reeks of an erotic interest: "The breasts that had so held me in awe on the verge of adolescence…You can see them heave even behind the silk *dupatta*[2] she wears modestly across her bosom" (p. 64). The idea of feminine beauty that she maintains through such details is that of a firm body, perfect figures as compared to her "flat-chest" and "flat-bottomed body".(p. 59) And yet simultaneously, her self-representation embodies a rebel against all the traditional notions of femininity, be it body, ideologies, or emotions hence a superior 'self' who is "essentially rational, normal and masculine". (Shabanirad and Marandi, 2015, p. 23). In the traditional sense of gender, she is the man to all the women in the text as they are represented or read as the inferior others to her masculinity.

An Orientalist Lens

Afzal-Khan draws a boundary of self and other in her memoir and the distinction she makes can be traced by following the definition of a Third World Woman in the West. This explanation is also found in Mohanty's article, an average Third World Woman who lives "an essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender"(p. 34). Being from the "Third World" means she is ignorant, uneducated, tradition bound, domestic, family-oriented, and victimized. This, she suggests, is in difference to the "(implicit) self-representation" of Western women as educated, modern, having control over their own bodies and sexualities and the independence to make their own decisions." (Mohanty 1988)

This definition is very important as these are the traits which recur throughout the memoir where Afzal-Khan— a woman with an anglicized vision— portrays her girlfriends as the average third world women. An example can be found in the portrayal of Sam who is an "Other" to Afzal-Khan in many ways. The most crucial point of difference is that Sam is a typical girl caught in a love affair with a soldier away at war who is "desperate to write to her, to be assured of the love of a good woman" (p.7). Here again Afzal-Khan reaffirms that Sam is an average Third World woman, a typical Pakistani woman, an emotional being, dependent on a man's love to save her. When her lover marries a woman of his mother's choice, Sam gets her hair cut very short out of depression and is found dead on a bench in Ganga Ram hospital, Lahore showing herself to be a perfect example of the crippled portrayal of a Third World woman, totally dependent on the menfolk for happiness in her life.

[2] A large scarf worn by most women in Pakistan to cover their heads and breasts.

It is worth mentioning that Afzal-Khan clearly draws a line between her own character and that of Sam. Afzal-Khan's point in writing about Sam's love affair is to highlight the feminist idea of romantic love as a debilitating state and a weakening process for women. She comments: "I lost interest in Sam and the supreme silliness of true confessions…yuchh! Who needs that when Kinnaird College for Women is materializing within our very reach."(p. 10) She paints herself as a modern woman having control over her own body and emotions: when Sam is trapped in a petty love affair, Afzal-Khan was thinking about the fun, freedom and the exciting world of Kinnaird College Lahore.

Similarly, Hajira, another friend who had a "cooler" (p. 29), meaning a more Westernized family than Afzal-Khan, becomes an inferior Other to Afzal-Khan when she rejects her Western way of life for her boyfriend: "She shushes me up with great ferocity, Madame…that was all done under the influence of the western propaganda as we've been victims for all our lives. It's cutting us off from our roots! It's turning the likes of you and me into parasites who prey on the lower classes of our wretched society" (p. 43). Under the influence of her lover Sufi, Haji did not only change her way of thinking but her appearance too underwent a change. She started wearing *shalwar kameez*[3] made of cotton stuff called *khaddar* [4]"the poor person's cloth" (p. 44). She acquired a love for Urdu language and culture which Afzal-Khan viewed as a mistake. Afzal-Khan tries to tell this to Hajira and save her friend but she is insanely in love. From a feminist perspective, it can be stated that a friend who was more modern, had more prospects of life than her, was not wise enough to make the right decision. However, when Sufi's friend Bakri falls in love with Afzal-Khan and proposes to her, she rejects the idea of a modern woman: "a flirt..you know I string guys along, I don't mean anything serious by it"(p. 47). At this incident Afzal-Khan yet again represents herself "as having control over her own body and sexuality and the freedom to make her own decisions" (Mohanty 1988). Although she is persuaded by Hajira and Sufi to reconsider her decision , she does not pay any heed. This is, yet again, an assertion of her agency against societal norms and expectations. As she says: "So I stand my ground against all that romantic moral pressure. I say no, and Bakri weeps" (p. 48). Unlike her traditional friends, she flirts with men unabashedly, she rejects their romantic advances including a marriage proposal despite coaxing and cajoling by her friends: "I turn my heels on them all and walk out in my signature gesture," (p. 48) this turning of heels is actually turning away from a regressive Pakistan, "a place of romance, exotic beings" (Burney,2012, p. 44) . However, much later in the narrative, when she desires an extra-marital affair with the same Bakri in her forties, their relationship is consummated.

Even at the age of twenty-one, in the 1970s Pakistan, when women from her social class and age group including her friends would be keen to catch an eligible bachelor to settle down, Afzal-Khan had made up her mind to pursue a PhD degree in the USA. Not only was she autonomous in her decisions, she could foresee the repercussions of Hajira's poor judgement in deciding to marry a communist. When she admonishes Haijra, the latter replies:

[3] Baggy trousers and tunic worn by both men and women.
[4] Cheap coarse thick fabric.

> I know what I'm doing—and sooner or later, you're all going to see how wrong you were about Sufi: he is truly a man of principle. He believes in living simply—and so do I. I spit on this bourgeois, decadent, westernized class we all come from…I embrace my roots now, and I am happy to give up material comfort in pursuit of a classless society. (p. 50)

Hajira will pay with her life for going against her elitist sociocultural background and a code of life (upper class) that is the norm. Hajira suddenly married Sufi two months after Afzal-Khan went abroad. Both of the families were unhappy with this mismatch of bourgeoisie and lower socioeconomic classes and the so-called communist turned into a greedy person after the marriage being quite happy with the house and car given by Hajira's parents whom he had earlier criticized. After six months of marriage, Hajira became mother to a baby boy. With a drastic change in her life coupled with Sufi's attitude, she slides into postpartum depression and the promising painter is further disheartened when her husband asks her to not pursue her studies and to let him be the only artist in the family.

> He tells me my work isn't very good any more, that I should simply let him be the artist in the family, and reserve my energies for the baby; perhaps he's right. I really don't want to bog him down, and I certainly have no desire to be in competition with him. (p. 55)

Having lost faith in a husband who used her to make his way into becoming a successful artist and realizing her fault in leaving her class and lifestyle for him, she commits suicide in the very house they used to meet in when she was madly in love.

Saira— a friend from Kinnaird College, Lahore, (known as a finishing school for the elitist girls) too is portrayed as inferior to Afzal-Khan in many ways. First she comes from an "Urdu-medium upbringing" that justifies the kind of backward thinking she has regarding the institution of marriage and, therefore, is very critical of Afzal-Khan's modern views. She taunts Afzal-Khan for her lack of interest in the household training: "You'll end up on the shelf, high and dry, while we bring you ribbon sandwiches from our oh-so-married households!" (p. 61) to which Afzal-Khan replies "Maybe some of us don't want to get married!" (p. 61) This taunt and reply depicts the dichotomy of good and bad girls in this memoir. Mohanty argues that Western writers portray the Third World woman as tradition-bound, domestic and family-oriented in contrast to the self-representation of an educated woman with modern ideas, in this instance a woman who does believe marriage to be the ultimate goal of life.

Years and several pages later in the text, on one of her frequent visits to Pakistan, the expatriate Afzal-Khan is invited by her old friends Saira and Numana. They are both married, having children of marriageable age, grown to be extremely narrow minded under the influence of a conservative society in Pakistan and are offended with Afzal-Khan due to the "shameless reference" to their "legs and bosom" (p. 65) A crucial point they both make is that life turned out to be different for them than for Afzal-Khan because they were living in the patriarchal and oppressive Pakistan while she went to USA. "You managed to escape,

Madame and it shows…" For them escaping Pakistan has afforded Afzal-Khan all the fun, freedom and pretend-teenager life. (p. 66) They show their 'ignorant' (Mohanty 1988) perspective of life by asking irrational and personal questions like "do you pray?" making a point that if Afzal-Khan had been a God fearing woman she would have never decided to write the kind of vulgar memoir she wrote. Naumana who had been a victim of Sharia law, allowing her divorced husband to take away her seven year old child is so naïve and unreasonable that she does not realize it to be an exploitation of women by male interpreters of Islam but rather believes it to be the will of God:

> It is true I suffered from the Sharia's laws which give the man, the father, the right to his offspring no matter what. But Madame, if that is God's will, we must accept. Who are we to question his infinite wisdom? (p. 69)

Where Naumana is a victim of 'Islamic code', Saira is a prey to the 'familial system' and is married to her cousin who was a medical student. Her wedding was a typical Pakistani extravagant event, where the bride wore "twelve sets of heavy gold jewelry adorning her neck" (p. 75). Her husband sexually abused her by having anal sex "when he made her hold to the side of the bed and stick her tush into the air, while he proceeded to do unnamable things from behind" (p. 76). Saira didn't see this as an abuse but accepted it as the duty of a wife to provide every kind of (sexual) pleasure a husband asks for. Saira's mother-in-law got her son married during his education because she thought having a wife available for his physical needs would save him the chances of distraction. He could not complete the degree and blamed it on the distraction of family life caused by Saira who was producing child after child like a machine. His mother sent him to England away from the stress of his wife and children to concentrate on his studies but there this innocent boy fell for an Englishwoman. Again to save her baby boy, she sent Saira, his wife after him to get him back on track but the latter could not endure the psychological torture inflicted by him and had a nervous breakdown. Through the depiction of such incidents, Afzal-Khan is commenting on a patriarchal society which she was fortunate to escape; where sexual pleasure is a male prerogative while the women are slut-shamed if they own their sexuality. Afzal-Khan's tongue-in-cheek humor and underlying irony is apparent in her narration of the 'politics of pleasure' when Saira initially claims to be madly in love with "H- Bhai"(p. 75) after her wedding night.

Good Girl Versus Bad Girl

It is interesting to note that Afzal Khan constructs the identity of "self" and "other" with the naming of her character and her friends. In Sam's chapter, she introduces the readers with the nicknames, she and her girlfriends had decided for themselves according to their personalities. The names are "Sam, Shelley, Honey, Haji and Madame Sin" (p. 4). Madame Sin was the name given to Afzal-Khan for her unconventional thoughts and breaking away from the social, religious and familial constraints which her friends thought to be a sin. She introduces her character to the reader as Sin, an outsider who does not fit with Honey, Shelley or a "good woman" like Sam. As their names suggest they are good girls "modest, timid, self-sacrificing and nurturing" (Tyson, 2006, p. 89) Afzal-Khan glorifies the character of a rebel and hence a bad girl. "Bad girls violate patriarchal sexual norms in some way: do

not accept their traditional gender role, disobey the patriarchal rules, they're sexually forward in appearance or behavior…" (Tyson, 2006, p. 90) .This dichotomy of good and bird girl starts Afzal-Khan's project of representing Pakistani Woman, "as a singular monolithic subject." (Mohanty 1988)

Her exoticization of her friends stems not only from the process of naming but also through her construction of her friends as good-but-crippled girls fearing the constraints of family, society and religion without realizing that they were being exploited by these institutional structures. The only exception to this exoticization of Pakistani women is her friend Mad/Medea — a bad girl like Afzal-Khan. As the name suggests Mad/Medea, Madina is a mad woman like Medea: a character in Greek mythology who took revenge on her unfaithful husband, Jason by murdering his new wife as well as her own children. Naming Madina (or Madhu) after a character, who did not hesitate to kill her own children in order to punish a man for bringing shame on her, Afzal-Khan introduces her reader to a woman like herself. She is not submissive, family- oriented, tradition-bound or a victim but is a strong character who does not let anyone take advantage of her.

> Madhu always did look like she had blood on her mind, she was ready to beat the living daylights out of any man—or woman, girl or boy, animal or human, older or younger, fatter or thinner, bigger or smaller—who dared say or do anything she perceived as taking advantage of her. (p. 105).

Afzal-Khan celebrates Madina's character in the memoir since she is an alter-ego of the author. She breaks all the stereotypes and each and every act and trait of her character shows her as a rebel against set ideas about a woman's conduct. She abuses "rickshaw drivers and best friends alike" she is Afzal-Khan's Viola, "an image of fresh-faced violence". Like Afzal-Khan, she comes from an elite background. Her character embodies all the attributes of Western women, she is 'educated' in the right meaning, 'modern', has 'agency', 'free' to make her decisions and 'control over her body and sexuality'(Mohanty 1988). Her representation is of an 'essentially rational', 'developed', 'superior', 'normal' and 'masculine' person (Shabanirad and Marandi, 2015). A worthy change comes in Afzal-Khan's self-representation in this chapter. The 'bad girl' she has celebrated in her character throughout the previous chapters fades here. The dichotomy of 'good girl' and 'bad girl' blurs here when she is in comparison with another 'bad girl'. When Madina is caught in an abusive argument with the rickshaw driver over twenty rupees, suddenly Afzal-Khan is embarrassed: "I want to shrivel up,…anything to stop these terrible words flying out of her mouth at breakneck speed" (p. 108).

Madina is a successful theatre director, who introduced street theatre in Pakistan that raised a voice against the oppression women faced by religion and state. She is a strong headed woman who refused to take no and made her way through every barrier that came in her way.

> Madhu's production was not permitted to be performed on the main stage, for fear of the competition it might—and did—offer the long-standing resident director. In typical Mad-ina fashion, she refused to take no for an

> answer, and proceeded to claim the outdoor stage where no plays have ever been performed, as her special space. (p. 113)

Madina flirts with every man she likes, she has physical relations with a Japanese man abroad and people in Pakistan do not approve of her "scandalous behavior abroad". Despite her reputation, she got married to a *desi*[5] man. In Afzal-Khan's point of view, any man who would marry Madina would need the "patience of a saint if not a prophet", these are the kind of remarks that Afzal-Khan's other friends passed about her also and which she regarded as a result of their living in a narrow minded community like Pakistan. Madina is articulate about sex and loose talk is her idea of fun talk that is uncomfortable for Afzal-Khan suddenly and unexpectedly. "Tarranum…laughs raucously, immensely enjoying Madina's vulgarity, while I, newly conscious of having turned into an elegant swan, refuse to be drawn in to the hilarity" (p. 115)

Another aspect of Madina's life that confirms her status as an Other to Afzal-Khan's self-at-the-center is that Khadim Bakri whom Afzal-Khan rejected and who wept for her, married Madina as her second husband. When Bakri realized his mistake, he wanted to get rid of Madina, "a whore not a woman" who eats and drinks "like there's no tomorrow" (p.124) He leaves for "Janat-ul-Amrika" begging Afzal-Khan to be his rescuer. Afzal-Khan, whose character has undergone a change, provides the expected comfort to him. "I pull up the sheets to cover him, following the female tradition of the East at least in this instance" since Madina is now "something too terrible to name" for him. To soothe him, Afzal-Khan assures him that he would be taken care of: "Come on, yaar, I roll on to him, relax, shake off this Madina obsession, you're with me, remember?" (p. 125). This affection turned into a love affair that was not serious as expected and ended with his return to Pakistan. Afzal-Khan was in an unhappy relationship with her husband but she never agreed to marry Bakri. A month later "Bakri, who only ever wanted to be a *Khadim*[6] (lover), is dead" (p.133).

CONCLUSION

The detailed study of the text concluded that Fawzia Afzal-Khan portrays her own character as superior to all her girlfriends who represent Pakistani Woman's identity in the memoir. She constructs her identity throughout the memoir by a constant contrast with her girlfriends portraying them as victims: ignorant, irrational, exotic, romantic, domestic and feminine in contradiction with her self-representation as a woman who is modern, independent, rational, developed, normal and masculine. She also establishes the idea that Pakistan is not the right place for a woman like her who wants to be free and successful and the USA is a suitable land offering the kind of freedom and independence she needs; in other words an "appropriate grazing ground" (Afzal-Khan 63).

[5] A Pakistani.
[6] Servant.

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Journal of Gender and Social Issues
Spring 2021, Vol. 20, Number 1

A Historico-Cultural Review of Native American Woman's Double Spatial Marginalization in the Post-Contact Era

Abstract

The present study explores Native American woman's spatiality in the post-contact or post-colonization era and its implications on the Native American woman of contemporary America. The paper offers a historico-cultural critique of Native American woman's spatial marginalization as a result of the US Government's assimilation and acculturation policies. The present study employs Tim Cresswell's notion of normative geography to explore the socio-cultural construction and reconfiguration of Native American normative geographic structures in the post-contact era. This study claims that Euro-Americans used religion, land treaties, education institutions, and legislative acts to destabilize Native American woman's positionality within Native American normative geographies. The research concludes that the Euro-American expansionist agenda that resulted in Native American woman's double spatial marginalization continues to mar Native American spatiality in contemporary United States. Hence, to obtain socio-cultural emancipation, Native American woman needs to contest her spatially marginalized position.

Key words: *Native American Spatiality, Marginalization, Native American Woman, Post-contact Normative Geographies*

INTRODUCTION

The Standing Rock tribe protest against the North Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) is one of the major resistance movements of contemporary Native American history. What made this protest an important resistance movement in the history of Native America is the role that the Native American woman played in it. On the one hand, for the spatially marginalized Native American woman, this resistance movement was an opportunity to redefine her spatial location within the Native American normative geography. On the other hand, her participation in the anti-DAPL protest exposed the deep rooted spatio-gender inequalities prevalent in Native American society. The discussion in the following study surveys the spatialization of the Native American woman in the post-contact era and the implications of her double spatial marginalization in the contemporary era.

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Space and place are multidimensional entities. On one hand, they refer to the geographical coordinates of a physical structure, while on the other hand, they signify an individual's positionality within social hierarchies. In both scenarios, they possess meaning and thus influence the behavior of the people. However, these entities do not have inherent meaning. Rather, their meanings are inscribed by powerful entities and processes that socially or physically control the meaning-making process within a particular geographic and social setup. The subsequent meanings assert influence in multifaceted dimensions. The meaning of a place influences an individual's relationship with that particular space and establishes an individual's relation with the *other* and thus constitutes the foundations of spatial *otherness*.

The notion of spatial otherness is constituted upon certain "expectations about behavior" concerning a place (Cresswell, 1996, p. 3). Hence, a general idea about what is appropriate or inappropriate behavior concerning a particular space is developed by those agencies and processes that hold social powers. Tim Cresswell (1996) maintains that individuals and groups constitute the notion of appropriate and inappropriate conduct in the reciprocity of a place's "naturalness" (p. 5). An action is considered in place when it complies with the expected appropriate behavior, and action is considered as out of place action when it defies the expected behavior (Cresswell, 1996). The actions that are out of place are considered as transgression because they contest the naturalness and take for granted the meanings of a particular place. Consequently, it impacts the normative landscape of a particular society. Likewise, Cresswell (1996) defines normative landscapes as the social orientation of space that designates appropriateness or inappropriateness to an action within a geographical space. In other words, the constitution of normative geography takes place when some socially powerful agency entitles certain actions as right or wrong about a particular space and place.

The present study offers an historico-cultural survey of the Native American woman's positionality within Native American social and geographic spaces in the post-contact era. This study argues that Euro-Americans employed religious teachings, educational reforms, legislative acts, and land treaties to reconfigure Native American normative geographic structures upon Eurocentric models. Consequently, Native American woman, who was already spatially marginalized in the pre-contact era, became doubly marginalized in the post-contact era. In the present study, the term post-contact era means the intersection of time and place when the United States government implemented the assimilation and acculturation acts that began a new era in Native American history. The arrival of Columbus in 1492 did not altogether change the socio-cultural patterns of Native American societies, rather the Native American culture received Euro-American cultural values slowly and gradually. It is pertinent to mention here that Columbus was not the first European to discover the Americas, however, the present study takes this iconographic moment in order to signify the initiation of Europe's encounter with the region. Therefore, in this study, the term post-contact normative geographies are composed of those spatio-cultural practices that the United States government implemented under the aegis of the assimilation and acculturation programs.

Euro-Americans invaded Native America for various purposes. For instance, the Spanish colonized the Southeastern and Southwestern Native Americans to create a local peasant class. The French occupied the Atlantic coast to the Mississippi River in search of saleable

goods, natural resources and engaged in fur trade with the Natives. The Russians used the Northwestern coasts and the Arctic to trade marine mammal furs with China. The British focused on expanding their territorial jurisdiction in Native America (Luebering, 2001, p.21). However, these conquests were not "one-way" events; rather, Native and Euro-American contact brought socio-cultural changes to both populations and Europe as well. With the growing territorial dominance of the Euro-Americans, European culture also exerted its influence through different ways into the Native American society. This happened particularly, during the latter half of the millennia, when settlers and Native Americans came into close contact and thus influenced each others' cultures. Euro-Americans cherished the legacy of a centralized government, authoritarian religion, well-defined class structure, and socio-economic models and hierarchies whereas the Native Americans did not use these socio-cultural structures (Nichols, 2004, p.27).

Native American societies were culturally diversified groups that were established upon individualized socio-political, and socio-cultural patterns. For instance, the migratory Ojibwa tribes were matrilineal societies, whereas the Algonquin tribes followed patrilineal social hierarchies. In tribes like the Huron, the man worked in the fields and gathered seasonal fruits and berries, while the woman headed councils and selected the chief (Leubering, 2010, 50) On the other hand, Euro-Americans, coming from different parts of Europe, brought with them shared cultural norms. Early conquest of the Native American lands and people instilled an attitude of superiority where they considered themselves civilized and felt a responsibility to make the Native Americans socially civilized and cultured by organizing Native American societies upon Euro-American socio-cultural patterns (Nichols, 2018, p.3). To reorganize Native American society upon Euro-American models, the Euro-Americans used Christianity and military force to transform Native American societies into so-called civilized societies. Besides this, when Euro-American and the United States government was established and wielded substantive power, legislation contained Native Americans into Eurocentric socio-cultural arrangements; these laws included the establishment of reservations, land allotment acts, and creation of boarding schools on reservations.

Additionally, the socio-cultural influence informally seeped into the socio-spatial dynamics of Native societies. On one hand, these multidimensional pressures reconfigured the socio-cultural landscape of Native America, while on the other hand, they reified the spatially suppressive normative geographies of Native American society (Perdue, 2001, 7). The Native American woman became double marginalized spatially because the Eurocentric socio-cultural patterns of the eighteenth and later centuries divided Native American society into the public and private spheres that dominated Europe. This division was supported through religious teachings, definitions of gender roles, and legislative acts. According to Luebering (2010), the mission "mandated that native individuals be separated by gender", which augmented pre-existing physical and sexual abuse of Native American woman by man (p.187). Native American patriarchy readily accepted the gendered division of the spheres for it assured them of retaining the supremacy of the Native American man over the Native American woman. Elements that supplemented Native American woman's double spatial marginalization also included boarding schools. These schools were established on the notion of the gendered division of labor. Male children were taught subjects that would make them

useful workers in the public sphere whereas woman was taught homemaking and the art of domesticity (Perdue, 2001, p.8). Legislative acts like the 1887 General Allotment Act further compromised Native American woman's spatiality by assigning arable lands to the male heads of families (Perdue, 2001, 8). The following section presents an in-depth analysis of these different schemes that contributed and paved way for the double spatial marginalization of the Native American woman.

Spatial Marginalization through Religion

Just as they were culturally diverse, Native American societies were religiously diverse. In other words, Native American societies did not follow a single religious or belief system like the invading Christian Euro-Americans. There were hundreds of Native American tribes and clans, and the majority of them had their own belief systems, which were different from other tribes. For instance, the Ojibwe religion was founded on the Grand Medicine Society that would arrange religious ceremonies. The Grand Medicine Society is an esoteric group that acts as a "center of spiritual knowledge and a source of social prestige" (Luebering, 2011, p.39). The Carrier Natives' religion had a "great sky god and many spirits in nature" which could be contacted through dreams and visions, and they believed in "reincarnation and an afterlife" (Luebering, 2011,p. 43). The Tanaina Native Americans were "animistic" (Luebering, 2011,p. 44). The Iroquois believed in an elaborate religious cosmology that consisted of the woman falling from the sky, the deluge that is the great flood narratives, and supernaturalism, cannibalism, and star myths (Luebering, 2011,p. 49). The Natchez "venerated the Sun, which was represented by a perpetual fire kept burning in a temple" (Luebering, 2011,p. 43). The Pawnee Indians believed in star gods and performed ceremonies to entreat their presence (Leubering, 2011,p. 76). The Sioux performed the annual Sun Dance (Leubering, 2011). The Cheyenne Native Americans believed in two deities, "the Wise One Above, and the god who lived beneath the ground" (Leubering, 2011,p. 88). The Pueblo Indians believed in the Kachina religion, which is a complex belief system that comprises "hundreds of divine beings act[ing] as intermediaries between humans and God" (Leubering, 2011,p. 97). The Yuman religious belief was established upon a "supreme creator" (Leubering, 2011,p. 101) while the Navajo Indians practiced an array of ceremonies and rites that celebrated the emergence of the first people from many worlds that exist beneath the earth (Leubering, 2011,p. 104).

These multifaceted religious belief systems governed the Native American tribes. The presence of different religious belief systems made the Native American religious setup vulnerable against the institutionalized religion of Euro-Americans and thus during the contact era gave an opportunity to the Euro-Americans to impress their own socio-religious beliefs upon the Native Americans. The French, among the earliest Euro-Americans who interacted with Natives, relied on Jesuits to teach Christianity to the Native Americans. Since the French came to exploit the natural resources of America, they were not primarily concerned about the religious conversion of Natives to Roman Catholicism. However, as they established settlements on the coast, they needed the services of missionaries. Even at this stage, the work of missionaries was not necessarily to spread Christianity; rather, they worked mainly to pave the way for the colonization of Native Americans. These missionaries established churches throughout the Native lands and invited people to Christianity. English

colonizers also came to America in pursuit of commerce and territorial expansionism. The Evangelization of the Native Americans was never on the agenda list of the English. Clergies of both countries used the same methods of preaching that ranged "from fairly benign to overtly oppressive" (Leubering, 2011,p. 170). One difference between the two nationalities was that the early English brought with them a Puritan version of Christianity. These missionaries were "extremely doctrinaire " in their religious affairs, and would torture Indians who would attempt to maintain their traditional religious practices (Leubering, 2011,p. 171). Eventually, the Quebec Act of 1774 and the U.S Bill of Rights ensured free practice of religion to the Native Americans, however, these rules never materialized.

The spread of Christianity in Native America by the Euro-Americans exerted tremendous influence on indigenous religious belief systems. The monotheistic religious culture destabilized the polytheist religious beliefs of the Native Americans. The monotheistic religious culture destabilized the polytheist religious beliefs of the Cree, Ojibwa, Chipewyan, and other Native American tribes. Christian theology cut deep into the very belief of the Native Americans that all people came from the worlds beneath the earth and that they are all equal. Christianity also taught the supremacy of the Euro-Americans and their cultures over the Native Americans, and this idea was reiterated through the lessons derived from Genesis. Native Americans were placed at the lowest level of the social strata, both culturally and spatially with the "cultural supremacy" of the Euro-Americans being extended to the spatial. Christianity stipulated spatial hierarchies, where the Euro-Americans occupied the higher position, allowing them to capture, occupy or take any portion of Native American land. At the same time, Native Americans as a whole were placed in a subordinate and secondary position to Euro-Americans and Native women were placed in the lowest strata of the spatial hierarchy of Native America.

While the Cree, Ojibwe, and Chipewyan polytheist tribes had always considered the world and its people as a product of the coupling of male and female entities, Christianity distorted this image to a great extent and propagated a "notion of single, male deity who was superior to all other deities" (Paper, 2007,p. 63). Although the linguistic barriers made it difficult for the Native Americans to understand this concept, the notion further destabilized the already ambivalent gender relations of the Native American society. It is pertinent to add that the notion of ambivalence in this study refers to the inherent discrimination prevalent in the gender relations of the Native Americans. Christian teachings enforced the "patriarchalization of Native traditional cultures" (Paper, 2007,p. 65). This imposed patriarchalization and the attitudes of the early misogynist missionaries of Christian monastic orders extended the cultural marginalization of the Native American woman, which in turn resulted in her spatial marginalization. Christian missionaries, thus, imposed Christian values upon Native Americans, which would strictly confine the Native American woman to home and the church.

Native American men and women received the teachings of Christianity differently. Traditionally, Native Americans continued their religious practices in the early contact period; however, in the era of reservations, Christianity became a means to survive the harsh privations on reservations (Luebering, 2010, p.84). Therefore, Native American men did not

readily accept Christianity until it was forced upon them. The Native American man's aversion to the new religion was rooted in his long-held superior position in comparison to that of the Native American woman and they believed that the new religion threatened their dominant position (Nichols, 2018, p.95). On the other hand, Native American women accepted Christianity because it granted them freedom from the Native American patriarchal authority. Native American woman's socio-cultural marginalization made her an easy target for Christian missionaries. She was eager to accept Christianity in the hopes of achieving cultural and spatial emancipation; however, the new religion did not give the cultural and spatial freedom that it promised or propagated. Thus neither the Native American traditional religion, nor Christianity, offered any spatial freedom to the Native American woman (Perdue, 2001, p.89).

Christianity also reinforced the Native American gendered division of labor by restructuring the Native American society upon patriarchal standards. The Christian missionaries' exaltation of male superiority and admonition that females were "lesser beings" (Paper, 2007,p. 65) widened the gender gap. Furthermore, Native American religion "mandated identification by matrilineal descent" (Paper, 2007,p. 90). However, with the arrival of Christianity, patrilineal descent was recognized in an effort to discourage matrilineal social systems, which significantly hurt women's social status. In addition, Euro-Americans dismantled Native American matri-local ritual centers that were used for different religious ceremonies. These centers were run and supervised by clan mothers who would choose and instruct the leaders. With the building of churches throughout Native American lands, the matrilocal ritual centers were destabilized and clan mothers lost the power of socio-religious preeminence. This further destabilized the normative geographies of the Native American society and put the Native American woman in a doubly marginalized position in the social hierarchy.

Furthermore, the new religion destabilized the Native American religious relationship with nature and land. In many Native American societies, farming, hunting, and food were essentially religious activities. Food, whether received through hunting or farming, was treasured as a gift of spiritual beings, and elaborate ceremonies were organized to celebrate food. Native Americans established a relationship with nature and land through these quasi-religious ceremonies. The rituals performed during hunting and after harvesting meant renewed relationship with the earth. In many tribes, like the Pawnee and Nitsitapi, female members of the tribe performed these ceremonies (Paper, 2007,p. 109). Christianity had no such traditions and discouraged Native American women from being part of any such gathering. With the passage of time, these ceremonies were rarely celebrated and Native American women who would often form the center of such ceremonies thus lost the esteemed spatial position that these rituals lent them. These religious interventions further deteriorated the Native American woman's spatial position in the Native American geographies of the post-contact era. In other words, Christianity contributed in maintaining the ambivalent normative geography of the Native American society.

Spatial Marginalization through Land Treaties and Acts

Religion was not the only way in which Eurocentric spatio-cultural norms were implemented. Euro-Americans used forced occupations, land treaties, land acts, and policies that influenced the overarching structure of normative geographies of Native America and adversely affected—indeed, disenfranchised—Native American woman's space within the normative geographies of Native America. In the following section, I discuss different acts, treaties, and legislative procedures that paved the way for destabilizing the normative geographies of Native America. However, it is important to inform the reader that since all treaties deal with the issue of land and space, I discuss only those treaties that influenced the overarching socio-spatial set up with reference to the Native American normative geography. In the present section, I explore the role of the U.S Government Civilization Fund Act 1819, the Indian Removal Act of 1830, and the Dawes Act of 1887 in augmenting spatial marginalization of the Native American woman. These acts are of particular importance since they paved the way for the assimilation and acculturation of the Native American society into the Euro-American social system. In this analysis, the study does not indulge in the assessment of the acts, treaties, and policies as to whether these treaties were good or bad for any of the party; rather, it offers an analysis of the impact that these acts and treaties had upon the normative geographies of the Native American culture and spatiality. Nor does the present study dwell on what situations led the Natives and Euro-Americans to reach agreements or treaties under these acts, and whether these treaties were fulfilled or not; instead, it explores the ways these treaties changed the normative geographies of Native America and caused woman's double spatial marginalization.

Euro-Americans invaded America with a deep-rooted ethnocentric view of the world, which also developed a sense of re-organization of the Native American society upon Eurocentric socio-cultural norms. The first step towards this socio-cultural modeling began with the arrival of the missionaries and the establishment of churches in different Native American villages. The process of Christianization was slow but sure. Meanwhile, Euro-Americans also established their settlements across the present-day United States by occupying Native American lands through treaties, battles, and forced removal. Until the 1775 War of Independence, all Euro-American nations exploited Native America and its people by different means, which included the occupation of land, natural resources, and trade. After the Revolutionary War of 1775 and the foundation of a federation of states, a large portion of the North American continent came under the territorial jurisdiction of the United States. On the other hand, since the time of the arrival of the Euro-American, Native American tribes had tried to maintain their spatio-cultural sovereignty by either engaging in wars or treaties with the Euro-Americans. However, after the War of Independence, Native American tribes began to enter different treaties with the United States government. In other words, the colonization of Native Americans did not culminate until the establishment of the United States government.

The United States government continued the colonization process and considered Native Americans a challenge to their territorial expansion. Therefore, the U.S government entered into different treaties where needed and passed different laws and acts to resolve the so-called Indian issue. In this regard, the first major act that was passed by the United States

government was the Civilization Fund Act of 1819. The act was constituted to initiate a civilization project to bring Native Americans into the mainstream American socio-cultural fabric. The Civilization Fund Act of 1819 was targeted at introducing among the Native Americans the habits and art of "civilization." Indeed, these habits and art of civilization were modeled upon the Eurocentric, or now, White Euro-American socio-cultural norms. The 1819 Act brought two decisive changes to Native American society. Firstly, it changed the means of production of sustenance so that Native Americans were coerced to abandon pre-contact modes of food production like hunting and were asked to develop agriculture as a means of food production. Second, the Act introduced the education project by which Native American children would be educated in arithmetic, reading, and writing. An annual amount of ten thousand dollars was appropriated for the implementation of the Act.

The Civilization Fund Act 1819 played a vital role in shaping the normative geographies of Native America in the nineteenth century. With the changes in the means of production, the normative geographies of Native America also changed. With the abandoning of hunting and initiation of agriculture as the primary mode of sustenance, the gender roles and spatial positioning of the Native American man and woman changed drastically. In the past, hunting had constituted not only the means of sustenance for the Native Americans, but it also established the spatially superior position of the Native American man. Hunting was an activity that required physical strength and freedom to move freely; therefore, it was considered as a masculine activity. It also allowed the Native American man to exhibit and impose his strength, and spatial control of a territory. The Native American woman rarely participated in the hunting expeditions, remained at home, and waited for the Native American man to bring the game home. Abandoning hunting meant Native American man's resignation from his spatially superior position. On the other hand, the limited reliance on agriculture in Native American societies prior to the Civilization Fund Act had lent Native American women an important role in the field. Although Native Americans had not developed the Eurocentric model of farming, Native American woman was mainly responsible for what cultivation was performed, and these spaces were considered hers. In these spaces, the Native American woman contributed to the family income, which buoyed her status. However, the implementation of the act forced Native American women to retreat to the domestic sphere since the Native American man occupied the space of agriculture under the new law. In the pre-contact era, the gendered division of labor between hunting and cultivation defined the Native American geography. In the post-independence era, this division altogether changed and the Native American society was re-established upon a new normative geographic structure where man occupied the field, and woman was relegated to the spaces of home and domestic work. Native American woman's limitation to home space and her labor to domestic chores further compromised her spatial position.

The second part of the Civilization Fund Act of 1819 that severely damaged the spatio-cultural orientation of the Native American normative geography was mainly related to the education of the Native Americans in areas like arithmetic, reading of the Bible, and writing English. In order to implement this section of the Act, boarding schools were established throughout Native America. In the beginning, these schools were established under the supervision of churches and were run by Protestant missionaries. Later, these church schools

were remodeled upon the format of the Carlisle Industrial Indian School. Native American children were forcibly taken from their parents and indoctrinated in Euro-American ways of living (Reyhner, 2006). These schools trained Native American boys in fields related to public spaces, whereas women were taught tasks that were compulsory in the private space of home. The process of forcibly assimilating the Native Americans into the dominant society began in these schools, and that ultimately influenced the normative geographies of Native America. Euro-American gender roles and gendered spatial allocation were enforced upon Native American children, which in later years became profoundly influential in reshaping the normative geographies of the Native American society.

The Indian Removal Act of 1830 also jeopardized the normative geography of Native America. It disturbed the overarching geographic location of the Native American tribes. With the passage of time, the number of Euro-Americans in Native territories increased while the number of Native Americans decreased every passing day due to murders in wars and deaths caused by diseases like smallpox and influenza. When they had first arrived in Native America, Euro-Americans had established their settlements in the areas that were of little or no use to the Native Americans. However, with the passage of time, the settlers began encroaching on lands that were significant for the Native Americans. These encroachments were triggered by either the lust for occupying lands that were suitable for residential purposes, valuable for their agriculture, or offered valuable natural resources. With the American War of Independence and the establishment of the United States, the ever-increasing lust for land grew among Euro-Americans and with it, the greater mistreatment of Native Americans.

The United States government's assimilation project failed miserably in the first quarter of the nineteenth century in which the notion of the Native American's otherness played a pivotal role in shaping the U.S government policy towards the Native Americans and their lands. Consequently, the United States government passed different legislation to usurp Native American lands. These acts began with the voluntary removal programs that included financial settlements and culminated in the 1830 Indian Removal Act. Before the 1830s Indian Removal Act, Native American tribes, including the Cherokee and Choctaw, were coaxed into voluntarily relocating with fringe benefits. After the passage of the 1830 Indian Removal Act, the tribes located on the east bank of the Mississippi River were forced to move towards the west bank of the river into specifically allocated reservations. These reservations were established in "Indian appropriation bills" passed by the United States government. Among these different bills, the most famous is the Appropriation Bill for Indian Affairs of 1851, which paved the way for the Indian Appropriation Act of 1871. Many of these displaced and relocated tribes not only lost their lands, but they were also forced to adopt the Euro-American socio-cultural patterns in the newly allocated reservation. According to Perdue (2001), the United States government, through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), enforced the Euro-American construction of gender by "issuing ration to men for their nuclear families" and employed matrons to teach "domestic skills" to the Native American woman which made women "submissive" to men (p. 7). The relocation and subsequent devaluation of the Native American woman drastically changed ancient relationships with the lands. The normative geographic structure that developed in these

reservations engendered a sense of alienation in the Native American woman. The Native American woman, who was at the margin at her ancestral lands, became further marginalized and lost even that sense of location in the reservation land. This lack of association hindered her emotional attachment to the space of the reservation. Consequently, the Native American woman developed a sense of out–of-placeness or displacement on the reservation.

Since the United States government held power in the post-contact era, it dictated the normative geographies. The Dawes Act of 1887 or the General Allotment Act was crucial in reshaping the overarching normative geography of Native America since it introduced an era of individual land ownership, which had never been practiced by Native Americans previously. According to the Act, the male head of the family was eligible to purchase the allotted land, and the woman was denied any such power to possess land. The act aimed at equipping the Native Americans to take responsibility for their socio-economic conditions as per Euro-American socio-economic systems. However, the Act caused huge disintegration to the tribal family system, consequently making the Native American woman more dependent upon the Native American man. Native American woman's socio-economic dependency compromised her spatiality with reference to her roles and position in the Native American society. In short, in order to synchronize the normative geographies of Native America with those of the United States spatio-cultural norms, the United States government implemented the Dawes Act in 1887, and this had a profoundly negative effect on the status of a Native woman.

CONCLUSION

Religious teachings, educational programs, land acts, and treaties augmented the gender bias in the Native American normative geographies in the post-contact era. Consequently, the Native American woman's spatial position changed adversely. The Eurocentric hierarchal pyramid was imposed on Native societies to the degree that a woman who had been in the lower stratum originally became spatially double marginalized. This spatial double marginalization is still prevalent in contemporary Native American society, making Native American woman's socio-cultural and socio-economic emancipation challenging. The Dakota Access Pipeline (DPAL) is a contemporary example of the US government's attempt to occupy Native American lands of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and reconfigure the Native American normative geographic structures. Hence, the anti-DPAL protest offers an opportunity for the Native American woman to contest the said reconfiguration of the normative geographic structures and thus challenge Native American patriarchal and US spatial hegemony. Within this context, contemporary Native American women may use the Standing Rock protest as an opportunity to spatially transgress the normative geographic structures that the US government aims to implement in the backdrop of the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. In this context, the present study suggests that the issue of the Native American woman's marginalization may further be explored to understand the impact of the anti-DAPL project on the Native American woman's emancipatory movements.

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