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From Postcolonialism to Post-9/11: Examining the Socio-psychological Corollaries on Youth in The Domestic Crusaders by Wajahat Ali

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Abstract: This paper considers the pivotal nexus of postcolonialism with post 9/11, and the latter's impact on the young characters in Wajahat Ali's *The Domestic Crusaders*. This article asserts that new realities ushered by the post 9/11, the war on terror, and the neo-imperialistic policies of the US mark the beginning of a new era that can be equated to the postcolonial era, stemming from the events which emerged after the fall of the Twin Towers. Socio-psychological difficulties are experienced by the young Muslim expatriates in the US since they faced identity crises, otherness and resistance. US policy towards the Muslims focused on religion and ethnicity, together with the post-911 resurgent nationalism in the sense of identity crises in the American context, replicates the binary conflicts that existed in the colonial world; Self/Other, West/East, Master/Slave, and White/Brown. A qualitative method of data collection has been used in this research. For the conceptual framework, the research examines the social and psychological dimensions of postcolonial literary theory in light of the concepts of Homi. K. Bhabha, and other eminent theorists. In the field of social psychology, the study utilizes Erik Erikson's concepts outlined in the book *Identity: Youth and Crisis* and the parameters developed by Robert T. Carter concerning PTSIM: a hypothetical psychological theory. This paper's specific focus on the representation of the socio-psychological impact of post-9/11 on young characters and their consequent reactions adds more to the dynamics of contemporary literature.

Introduction

The Domestic Crusaders, a play written by Wajahat Ali, a young Pakistani-American, is about the challenges faced by an immigrant modern Muslim family from Pakistan living in the suburbs of America in the post-9/11 era. Reem Elbardisy notes: "*The Domestic Crusaders* stresses the troubles that a contemporary Pakistani American family has undergone in the United States of America after September 11, 2001" (156). About the title of the play, Nukhbah Langah remarks:

> Crusades in this play refer to the religious wars in the eleventh and fifteenth centuries in the context of 9/11, while the title of the play mocks the Bush Administration's description of the 'War on Terror' as a crusade. Concurrently, Ali's American-Pakistani characters feel that their day-to-day survival in the U.S. is also a kind of a crusade at a personal level, hence turning them into 'The Domestic Crusaders'. (89)

The play presents Muslim voices in a public sphere that has been structured by dominant stereotypical perspectives about them in the post-9/11 America. Maram Mohammed Samman states that in post-9/11 America "it is now a fact that to be a Muslim is to be a distrusted Other" (241). Yasir Ali asserts that the word '"Muslim' was construed as a presumptive threat to the nation's security, and thus government bodies presented the targeted security measures as necessary for public safety" (1032).

This paper attempts to reflect on various stereotypical perceptions about Muslims and Pakistanis' identity created in the wake of 9/11 as highlighted by Wajahat Ali in the play. Significantly, *The Domestic Crusaders* underscores the biased role of media, its stereotyping of immigrants, and the spread of misinformation about Islam and Muslims in the post-9/11 milieu. Rehab Farouk and Mona Anwar note: "Following 9/11, politics, religious leaders, media pundits, self-proclaimed terrorism experts exploited the feeling of an already terrified citizenry by offering gross overgeneralization and blatantly incorrect depictions of monoliths of extremism and hatred" (120). Similarly, Salman, a character in *The Domestic Crusaders* resents the media pundits' prejudiced constructs, and he, therefore, protests: "Tired of this goddamn heat… Goddamn media. Same nonsense every day! Blame Islam. Blame Muslims. Blame immigrants for everything! Tired of the daily propaganda!" (Ali 23). Expressing resentment over the subjective role of media, American generals, politicians, and treacherous Muslims in the 9/11 aftermath, he further slams:

> So, Iran is making weapons now? Why don't you tell us who sold it to them in the first place!? Jhootay! Haramzaday! Who's that? Right—another Amreekan general telling me why the Muslim world hates us. Amreeka, everyone is an expert— morons, absolute idiots, liars, liars running this country, the worthless media, the oil companies—Muslims—useless also—stabbing you in the back— (Ali 23)

Salman finally declares, "[w]hen those two towers fell, we fell with them" (Ali 83), and even "the elderly Muslims—even the Indian Hindus and Sikhs—are seen as terrorists" (Ali 39), and eventually the lives of hundreds of Muslims, Asians families living in America, are affected as "[t]he institutional, structural, interpersonal and state violence that they faced turned their life into a hell" (Farouk and Anwar 128).

Aims and Significance

Given the focus on the young characters of Ghafur, Fatima and Salahuddin, this paper is devoted to exploring how identity crises and othering inflict socio-psychological effects, and ensuing reactions and resistance expressed through social and mental struggle. The play focuses on the life of six unique and eclectic characters representing three generations: Hakim, the grandfather; Salman the father, a 54-year-old engineer; Khulsoom, a 50-year-old mother; and three adult children born and bred in the United States - Salahuddin 27 years old, is the eldest son, a bachelor, and a playboy; Fatima, 24 years old, is a student activist and wears a hijab (veil) in the wake of 9/11, and the youngest son, 21 years old Ghafur is a student of medicine. All these characters represent those young men, and women, who suffered for their racial and religious identities in the post-9/11 America. Though the characters in *The Domestic Crusaders* are not paragons of virtue, their lives in the aftermath of 9/11 are changed by unrealized dreams. Timothy McSweeney on Twitter, quoting Rabia Chaudry, writes about the play:

> *The Domestic Crusaders* is a story about a family, [. . .] Every character captures the psyche, the baggage, the impulses, the hopes, and the fears of the South Asian American Muslim community. … *The Domestic Crusaders* will make you laugh, but when your laughter fades, you'll be left with lessons on what 9/11 and the years subsequent did to the identity and aspirations of an entire community. (2021)

Methodology

This paper engages in a close reading of the text, context and reception analyses the socio-psychological impacts of post-9/11 on the young characters.

Through carefully sifted textual evidences and arguments, the development of identity crises, otherness, and resistance; its impact and consequent changes in the socio-psychological realities of young characters are analyzed. In particular, the study examines the social and psychological dimensions of

postcolonial literary theory in light of the works of Homi. K. Bhabha and other eminent theorists. Bhabha posits "the psyche and the social develop an interstitial intimacy. It is an intimacy that questions binary divisions" (19). Thus, postcolonial theories are especially useful in exploring the interplay between colonial relations' social and psychic structures in the changing nature of colonial encounters. More specifically, it delves into how new identities impact the youth in post-9/11 America. The chosen text relates to Edward Said's idea "that every literary text is in some way burdened with its occasion, with the plain empirical realities from which it emerged" (35). Furthermore, this paper extracts social psychological principles from the work of Erik Erikson titled Identity: Youth and Crisis, where he declares "the whole interplay between the psychological and the social, the developmental and the historical, for which identity formation is of prototypal significance, could be conceptualized only as a kind of psychosocial relativity" (23). The concept of identity, its development and resolution of identity crises, the concepts of alterity and resistance, the transformation and the impact on the assented socio-psychological conditions of the characters are analyzed and illustrated with arguments, through appropriate textual analysis. Furthermore, this research paper looks for guidelines provided by the Post Traumatic Stress Injury Model (PTSIM); a hypothetical psychological theory developed by Robert. T. Carter first in 2001 and then further improved in 2007, which focuses on racial conflicts, discrimination, traumatic stress, the subsequent reactions, and sufferings. Carter is of the view that "one's racial identity is experienced in relation to his or her gender, ethnicity, social status, religion, age, and other factors" (18), and "racism has been found in research to be a form of stress and, as such, has affected the mental and physical health of its targets" (25). Keeping in view, the aforementioned theoretical perspectives the young character's identity crises, and socio-psychological impacts as depicted in *The Domestic Crusaders* are analyzed as follows.

Analysis

Wajahat Ali's blending of humour with depictions of prejudice and intergenerational conflict presents the treatment American Muslims received in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attack and the vicissitudes that occurred in their lives. The play begins when the family celebrates the twenty-first birthday of the youngest son Ghafur. Henceforth, as per the objectives of this paper, the young characters of Ghafur, Fatima, and Salahuddin are individually examined about how in the post-9/11 America they face the challenges of religious and racial identity, othering, and the subsequent socio-psychological impact on their lives.

Ghafur

The youngest son Ghafur returns home on a college break, and unexpectedly announces that he is going to quit his medical study, and will become a history teacher to reform and correct the misrepresentation being spread about Muslims and Islam. The cause of this decision is Ghafur's discriminatory treatment or 'othering' at the airport, which the security official calls a standard procedure (applied only to Muslims and non-white Americans), because "the 9/11 attacks served as a permanent trigger used to justify almost any new national security policy proposal" (Yasir Ali 1042). Ghafur, for his grizzly beard, wearing a prayer cap and having a book on Jihad (holy war) and Terrorism, is suspected. He recalls, "a large Filipino man comes and takes me to the side" (Ali 40). On asking "have I done something? Is there anything wrong?" (Ali 40), the Security Man chuckles "Heh-heh. No, no, just standard procedure is all" (Ali 40). About this type of Racism, Carter posits:

Discriminatory harassment is a type or class of experiences or encounters with racism that are best defined as aversive hostile racism, which involves thoughts, behavior, actions, feelings, or policies and procedures that have strong hostile elements intended to create distance among racial group members after a person of Color has gained entry into an environment from which he or she was once excluded. (79)

This derisive standard procedure echoes the discriminatory US policy in the aftermath of 9/11 towards Muslims and other non-white American communities who are treated as others for their racial identities and stereotypical semblance with the terrorists. Farouk and Anwar indicating this issue, argue:

The impact of the post September 11, 2001 war on terrorism on Muslims and the USA PATRIOT Act Muslim lives have changed in America after September 11, 2001. Counter-terrorism policies have

targeted Muslim communities more than others. Fighting terrorism is used to fight Muslims in different segments in America. The ethnic and religious profiling of Arabs and Muslims is part of a counterterrorism strategy. (127)

Hatred for Muslims and Islam surges after 9/11, as Ghassan F. Radhi asserts that "[a]ny Muslim is thought to be a timed bomb that may explode at any minute. Moreover, the other people will feel safe to see the police questioning a Muslim. Islamophobia at this time is obvious, more dangerous and out of control" (116). Ghafur notes, due to resemblance with Muslims, "how a crew of flight attendants refused to fly with a Punjabi Sikh man onboard. Even though the man was an affluent, tax-paying college professor—of English, no less—with American citizenship, he was kindly asked to leave so as not to *endanger and disturb the psychological and mental comfort of the airline passengers*" (Ali 39). Carter affirms that "[r]acial stratification and systemic racism have been and continue to be endemic and ingrained in all aspects of American life: in customs, laws, and traditions. As such, these barriers to equality have had a profound impact on both those who have been racially oppressed and subjugated to racism in all forms and those who are the oppressors" (13). The presence of non-white Americans (others) even in public places is not acceptable and may cause a mental and psychological disturbance to the white natives (self). Such biased treatment of white Americans towards non-whites reminds us of the colonized era's binary of self/other, and how the colonizers in the past on the basis of racial discrimination treated the colonized people. This racial discrimination in the post-9/11 USA corresponds to R. Lister's concept of othering as a "process of differentiation and demarcation, by which the line is drawn between 'us' and 'them' – between the more and the less powerful – and through which social distance is established and maintained" (10). Stephen Morton corroborates the same idea that "[t]hroughout the history of western culture and thought, there are certain people, concepts, and ideas that are defined as 'Other': as monsters, aliens or savages who threaten the values of civilised society, or the stability of the rational human self. Such 'Others' have included [. . .] the Oriental, non-western 'Other'" (37). Carter also posits that "racially based harassment include physical, interpersonal, and verbal assaults; assuming one is not to be trusted; treating people according to racial stereotypes; and assuming one is a criminal or is dangerous" (78). So, in the 9/11 aftermath, the racial and physical semblance with the terrorists marks all non-white Americans as suspicious and despicable. Ghafur presumes, "[p]erhaps they think all people who wear turbans are terrorists? Perhaps they didn't like the way he looked?" (Ali 40). To put it in Homi Bhabha's words, Americans' "social sovereignty and human subjectivity are only realizable in the order of otherness" (87). Ghafur too becomes a victim of this othering for his racial and religious identity at the airport, when according to him, he is humiliated like a zoo mammal and thoroughly searched:

They spend five minutes doing a body search. They check my wallet, my keys, my belt, the contents of my bag, the magazine, my shoes, the keys again, and finally back to the belt. The other passengers stroll on by, witnessing the Muslim-mammal zoo exhibit. I'm sure it made them feel really safe, that I was being sanitized. Even safer, when I boarded the plane and walked down the aisle. Oddly enough—no one else was searched except a young black man and a middle-aged white guy. He probably had an Eastern European name. (Ali 40-41)

The incident of othering and degradation at the airport brings a socio-psychological transformation in the life of young Ghafur. His character, in the words of Bhabha, "gives us a useful sense of the circulation and proliferation of racial and cultural otherness" (97). Fatima, Ghafur's sister, sarcastically says, "[y]ou're lucky they didn't just strip-search you, hose you down, and do some Superman scan of your internal organs while they were at it" (Ali 39), and further declares the incident as a "blatant racial profiling. They only nabbed you 'cause you had an Arab-sounding name—that's the only reason!" (Ali 41). Even the housewife, Khulsoom satirically scolds her son, "[d]idn't I tell you to shave your beard before you came? Who gave you the brilliant idea to keep a beard? And you wore the topi [cap]? Oy, uloo [owl]! Why didn't you hold a sign saying, I'M AN EXTREMIS. ONE WAY TICKET TO ABU GHRAIB, please" (Ali 41). Ghafur, the hope for his family, the future doctor, and for his mother the healer of the world, is compelled socially and psychologically by the post-9/11 circumstances, to abandon his plans and thinks, "[p]erhaps there are better ways to heal the world than to become a doctor in this day and

age" (Ali 41). His decision indicates that "[r]acism and experiences with discrimination also affect adolescents' academic performance, interpersonal interactions, and their daily lives" (Carter 60), and additionally, "adolescents' family relationships, school performance, interactions, and psychological well-being seem to be adversely impacted by their experiences with racism" (Carter 61). For Ghafur, there is not only physical illness to be healed but "[t]here's more in this life than just—than a nice 401(k) plan, job stability, and medical degree" (Ali 43). He wants to cure the mental illness of the world and those people who despise and maltreat others on the basis of racial and religious discrimination. In a heated debate and to the extreme annoyance of his parents, young Ghafur declares that the study of medicine is not the need of the time but the world should be taught the true version of Islam which has been distorted by the media, incidents of racial discrimination and extremist fanatic Muslims in the aftermath of 9/11. Ghafur's contention to articulate his point of view conforms to Bhabha's viewpoint that "[t]he social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going, negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation" (3). Ghafur resents and proclaims:

That's what I'm saying. These extremists using those millions to teach their perverted version of Islam. The Taliban thinking it's Halal and Islamic to beat and lock up women. Thinking they're doing God's work. Americans, and these Christians here, thinking each and every Muslim is a Jew-hater, about to go berserker-rage and blow himself and everyone else up. No one knows anything. And look at this media—that's the same garbage they get day in, day out. And no Muslim does anything—we just sit and complain. Why don't we go out and tell them how it really is? You could do it. (Ali 49)

The pleas by Ghafur indicate a socio-psychological transformation in his person, since he is shunning the desires of his family to become a doctor, and instead announces, "I've decided I want to be a teacher" (Ali 50). He also wants to call over the neighbors (whom they have lived alongside for fifteen years and don't even know most of their names), go to the churches and do some interfaith dialogue (Ali 49-50). Ghafur's reaction and resistance are constructive, he opts to educate and spread awareness in the world that all Muslims are not terrorists, hence discrimination on the basis of race and religion ought to be stopped. The whole family, specifically the parents, are extremely shocked by Ghafur's decision:

> Khulsoom: How could you decide this? When? Why wouldn't you *tell us* about your decision? Why are you ruining your future? All our plans we had for you—
>
> Salman: Your future is our future! It was decided long ago! We made a decision—that's why I pay that goddamn money for that goddamn private school! (Ali 52-53).

However, Ghafur's decision is firm, the post-9/11 circumstances impel him to become a history teacher and address the misconception and misinformation about Islam and the Muslim world. He anticipates his ambition: "Inshallah, I'll get my doctorate. . . . Inshallah, in history with emphasis on the Middle East, Islam, and Arabic. It would be ideal to be tenured at a prominent university like Harvard, Columbia, or Berkeley, but if I can't be, then Allah knows best. I'd even teach elementary or high school" (Ali 54). He further pacifies his parents and articulates his aims that "at least I'll get the opportunity to make people unlearn all the misinformation they've been force-fed their whole lives about Muslims, Islam, Arabs, and the Middle East. And inshallah, Abu [father] and you [mother] will get the blessings of my work" (Ali 55). Ghafur aspires to purge and purify the image of Islam and Muslims in America and believes he can change the prevailing environment of fear and hatred that ensued among diverse communities after the 9/11 attacks. He exhibits his aim: "America, Americans, the world… [are] paralyzed by fear, hatred, doubt. Perhaps it's a purge. All this is just a purge, you know? A purification. Allah preparing us for the universal Renaissance. Then they won't fear us. We won't fear them. I know it. It has to be—has to… Ami and Abu won't be afraid, either. None of us" (Ali 70). Hence, Ghafur's resistance is not recourse to violence but in a constructive demeanour, he aspires to teach the fanatics the real essence of Islam: that they may not kill innocent people in explosions or attacks. He craves to reform the Muslim community in the USA and illuminate the American society. Farouk and Anwar state that "Ghafur represents Wajahat Ali, and other Muslims who try to clear the wrong image of Islam after 9/11. The institutional structured state violence against them as ethnic and religious minority provoked

them to take part in resisting and fighting this violence positively" (128). In the wake of 9/11, keeping in view Ghafur's motive, apparently, his socio-psychological transformation for a social cause, is in a positive direction rather than negative leanings. His resistance and reaction appear to be cathartic and psychologically supportive to defuse his rage and resentment for the humiliation he suffered at the airport. Sometimes, one finds other ways to release one's rage and resentment rather than recourse to explosions and destruction. Probably, Wajahat Ali through his character, imparts the idea that reaction and resistance may not always be in the form of violence and resentment. Instead, the use of pen and speech can convey a more forceful message to the USA and the Western world that on the basis of mere racial and religious identities no one should be stereotyped as extremist or terrorist. Elbardisy corroborates the same idea that "[t]he oppressive measures Ghafur has undergone at the airport and the several injustices both he and his fellow Muslims face in America after 9/11, were not only repressive but productive as well" (163). For Ghafur the "veil is about to be lifted, [he] can feel it. Once it is lifted, people will finally see and experience the truth!" (Ali 70), the truth between a 'good' and 'bad' Muslim, and the truth between Islamic humanism and fanaticism. To his father Salman's reprimand that he is destroying his life before it can even have a beginning! (Ali 57), Ghafur's response is of an uncertain future that "[a]least I'll be responsible for my own downfall—" (Ali 57). Hence, the post-9/11 circumstances, incidents of racial and religious discrimination, and othering have a profound socio-psychological impact on Ghafur's character, changing his course of action, which also at present ruins his parents' dreams of socio-economic accomplishments.

Fatima

Like her brother, the post-9/11 scenario has a social and psychological impact on Fatima's life. Khulsoom, her mother, delineates her transformed character in these words: "My only beti [daughter], twenty-four years old. Still single! No proposals from anyone. Instead of attending her law-school classes, goes to these rallies. Once such a nice girl, now wearing hijab, giving controversial speeches, getting arrested at the university protest, going out on the town with blacks—" (Ali 7). The oppression Fatima suffers as a Muslim American, after 9/11, spurs her to organize protests and gatherings in the university against the discrimination Muslim women encounter in the society. Her reaction to racism corresponds to Carter's perception in his study that "with Asian and African American female students, that high levels of self-esteem and an attribution style that equated negative feedback to racism, rather than personal failure, moderated participants' reactions to negative feedback" (28). Disillusioned with both Muslim men and native white Americans and with a renewed religious zeal in the wake of 9/11, Fatima dates a devoted African-American Muslim, wants to marry him, and believes that the "blaycks are people, too—they're Muslim! Remember, no color barrier in the religion?" (Ali 7). She desires a distinct American identity and joins a group of Muslim 'sisters' in the college, who are known as muhajjabahs, and should be respected because they have the modesty to cover themselves (Ali 10). She dislikes the hollow and factitious modern American lifestyle which is based on hypocrisy and superficial attractions. She craves for freedom of speech and fights for a better world, and like Ghafur, for survival, she aspires to change the discriminatory mentality in the post-9/11 scenario, and in a very somber and sad tone proclaims her whims which she calls pointless delusions:

> People don't change, Ghafur. No one changes. In their head they think they've changed. In my head, I think I changed—evolved into a better Muslima, a stronger woman, more liberated, more fearless, ready to fight and take on the world—but it's all pointless delusions in the head. [. . .] Their perspective—lifestyle, whatever you want to call it… It's their only reality— even if it is narrow and ignorant and racist and an endless pile of denials and lies upon lies. For them—for us, for me—it only matters if it works… as long as it's safe and reliable. (Ali 68-69)

Fatima appears frustrated and caught between the two opposites i.e., Americanness and conventionalism, the modern hollow lifestyle based on 'us' and the 'other', and the old typical worn-out traditions. She struggles against the offensive attitudes of American society and the traditionalist Pakistani viewpoint. She campaigns against the unfairness and prejudice of American society, against Arabs and other typical Muslims. She cares for the innocent people who are senselessly massacred in

the American 'war on terror', and "so brutally oppressed they have nothing left to lose" (Ali 42). As a lawyer, she wants to defend Islam and shatter the misconceptions about Muslims. She doesn't approve of the Islamic ways the Taliban stand for and asks, "What did we do? How many did anything? How many Muslims protested the Taliban?" (Ali 18). Equally, Fatima complains about the stereotypical image of Asian Muslims in the post-9/11 America when she notes, "all the neighbors think we're freaks, anyway. I heard the kids next door complain that our house smells like Little Kabul" (Ali 16). She is "regarded as a Muslim fanatic because of the hijab she wears. Such American people are influenced by those orientalists who give general judgments about Muslims and do not understand the true nature of Islam" (Elbardisy 158). Fatima's marginalization and stereotyping in the post-9/11 USA is analogous to "the colonial discourse [that] produces the colonized as a social reality which is at once an 'other' and yet entirely knowable and visible" (Bhabha 101). Her grandfather Hakim corroborates her concern: "Yesterday at the flea market, I was picking my fruits—as usual. One white man was next to me. He was with his son—just a boy, probably eight or so. The boy looked up at me and asked, 'Are you related to Osama bin Laden?"' (Ali 16). This indicates the 9/11 aftermath American structured mindset, that not only adults but children too deem resemblance with the fanatics and terrorists, and mark a person apprehensive and suspicious. Shaimaa Saeed asserts, through these situations, the racial profiling experiences of the characters, "Islam is proved to be marginalized and stereotyped among other religions because the superior Other associates it with terrorism and in turn Muslims are viewed as terrorists" (514). In addition, the matching of American Muslims with the terrorists on the basis of colour, race, and culture in the 9/11 aftermath, also conforms to the colonial era's paradigms between 'us' and 'them'.

Furthermore, the role of media also affects the psychosocial life of young characters like Fatima and Ghafur, where deprecating remarks are used for the Muslims:

> FEMALE COMMENTATOR: (*Voice-over*) This war will end only when these monsters and terrorists and Al-ka-eeda and fundamentalist regimes renounce their hatred and extremism and learn to love and embrace democracy and freedom and American values, such as tolerance and separation of church and state and, God willing, good hygiene, ha!
>
> MALE COMMENTATOR: (*Voice-over*) Ann, how do you expect them to love us when we're invading their countries and bombing their homes? (Ali 92)
>
> FEMALE COMMENTATOR: That's the problem! They don't understand. They just don't get it. We're not invading them. Hello, stupids! We're liberating you! (Ali 93)

The biased and impertinent approach of media corresponds to Edward Said's assumption that "media-produced attitudes, the ideological insistence of a culture drawing attention to itself as superior has given way to a culture whose canons and standards are invisible to the degree that they are 'natural,' 'objective,' and 'real'" (9). Fatima, highly disillusioned by such statements, in reaction, turns off the TV and questioningly declares, "I just… I just don't even know what to say. Is she serious? Do commentators on TV actually hear themselves when they talk? They must be insane. That's it. I won't watch the news anymore" (Ali 93). Fatima's father referring to Americans' radical and racist thoughts in the 9/11 aftermath declares about the Female Commentator: "This woman has the best-selling book in the country right now. Her entire audience is paranoid men and women who think I'm going to bomb their house and convert their children" (Ali 93). Ghafur indicates the post-9/11 polarization between right and left-wing Americans, and notes "[h]er audience is the same as all the right-wingers. Just like the other guy, his audience is only the left-wingers. There's no balance" (Ali 93). In response, the mother Khulsoom utters very interesting and satirical remarks: 'Left, right, middle, conservative, liberal. What happened to normal?"' (Ali 93). In fact, Ghafur and Fatima, who represent the normal young men and women, their love and embrace of American democracy, freedom of speech, and belief in religious tolerance, are unfortunately the victims of 9/11 developments. Their consequent situation indicates the socio-psychological impact on the lives of normal non-white American Muslims, specifically youth like Ghafur and Fatima, who one way or another fall victim to discriminatory attitudes, for their stereotypical religious and racial identities.

Additionally, in the wake of post-9/11 developments, America's direct support for Israel against

Palestine hurts Fatima; she raises questions about the Jews; that they "[h]ate our people? Oppress Palestinians? Own Hollywood, distort the media?" (Ali 27). She shows resentment and slams her brother Salahuddin's intention to marry a Jewish girl:

> You'd probably let your wife teach your kids that the Palestinians are rock-throwing terrorists. And every Arab kid is a potential ticking human time bomb. And the Israelis (in a baby-like voice) obviously are poor, defenseless innocents who just happen to have one of the world's strongest militaries, nuclear capabilities, M16s, and Apache helicopters thanks to direct support from your United States of America! (Ali 28)

Fatima's support for the Palestinians implies that post-9/11 circumstances, the humiliation of Muslims, the surge of Islamophobia, and racial profiling not only resurrected Islamic values (Fatima's wearing hijab) in the life of young Muslims but also created sympathies in them for the rest of oppressed Muslims in the world i.e., Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan and others. Such reaction signifies how the post-9/11 developments impacted the social and psychological being of young Muslims, who, like Ghafur and Fatima, showing resistance, come forward and determine to enlighten the world to the idea that their religion and culture approve of freedom of speech, equality, and religious tolerance. The implicit implication of the text is, the denial of these basic rights may lead to insurgencies, and conflicts against America and the West, similar to what happened during the colonial era.

Salahuddin (Sal)

The twenty-seven years old, self-indulged assimilated Salahuddin, called Sal, entirely different from his siblings, hunts for an American wife who'll 'be 5'9', fit and trim, nice, healthy body—with a 'green card' and fair and lovely skin tone" (Ali 8). In the post-9/11 scenario where Ghafur and Fatima desire to purge the society and spread enlightenment about the true version of Islam, conversely, Sal mocks them for their religious affiliations. He ridicules Fatima for wearing hijab and says, "I've got a classic idea. I'll make costumes for you and your radical ninja 'sisters', with a big M smack-dab in the middle—kind of like Superman but more lame. And more fundamentalist. That way you guys can stop those bombs in *style*" (Ali 9). Further, Sal asks Fatima to "please, please—keep me and all sane heterosexual men as far away from your insane, jihadi penguin squad as possible. Seriously, those girls need to wise up and stop complaining. Wasting your time on this newfound Muslim Justice League—" (Ali 10). American boisterous and promiscuous life allures Sal, and he reproaches the conservative Muslims' attitude after 9/11, where "[t]ypical Muslims—blame America for *everything*. Whine, whine, whine, nag, nag, nag. Listen up, Hij-Abbie Hoffman—people are still dying, just like they always have, and just like they always will. Enjoy it while you can, sis" (Ali 10). He doesn't see anything wrong with marrying a Jewish, Christian, vegan, or whatever girl if they love each other (Ali 27). Ghafur's wearing of a cap Sal calls a 'disgusting mess' and the beard on his chin a "filth, put[ting] Velcro on his face" (Ali 35). In the 9/11 aftermath, Sal prefers Americanness over fanaticism and Islamism: he says, "I'd rather have these 'reborn' Christians than those militant Muslims, all right? One group can hold hands, do some koombayas, and cry like babies over a campfire and the other can prepare for *jihad*!" (Ali 49). As the antithesis of his siblings, religion for Sal is a concoction of worn-out traditions and rituals – equal to nothing - and the pursuit of the material world and its pleasure for him is everything. He believes in a heartless head and survival of the fittest way of life; hence, his advice to Ghafur construes his rationale:

> There will be no jihad, no selfless poverty, no feeding the homeless, no noble sacrifice—nothing! If you have to remember one thing, Ghafur, remember this: you have to be a bull in this world. A bull among the cattle. You take your aim and you run; no stopping; no looking back; no regrets about leaving the little people behind. Survival of the fittest and the smartest. And know that in the end, if it's between the bull and the cattle, the bull will not hesitate. It will ram any obstacle out of its path. The bulls of the world are the people who succeed, Ghafur. Me! Everyone else is just cattle. (*Points to GHAFUR's heart*) This, bro, this… is gonna be your downfall. (65-66)

Sal's life rationale appears to concur with the US imperialistic policies in the 9/11 aftermath, where under the pretext of 'war on terror' America like a bull enforces its hegemonic stratagems on the third world 'cattle' countries. Likewise, Sal has no sympathy for Muslims and non-white Americans. Instead,

with a heartless mindset he discards and ridicules them on the basis of their faith and ethnicity. The author in the character of Sal implicitly criticizes post-9/11 America's bullish colouration of innocent people by branding them as radical, and terrorists on the basis of race, ethnicity, culture, and creed.

Thus, the Muslim family in *The Domestic Crusaders* represents the sufferings and voices of all the innocent people who after 9/11, are pigeonholed 'others' for their racial and religious identities. The play, according to Samman, "is an appeal to view the life of a Muslim family as a terrible reflection of all the mistreatments felt by all the family members. In the face of Western calls for Islamophobia, it has shouted loud, clear, and with force to demand that they modify their stereotypical and distorted images of Muslims" (238).

Hence, the play reflects on how three types of young characters try to manage the socio-psychological injury that they receive for their distinct identities in the wake of 9/11. Writing about the challenges faced by these characters after 9/11, Dhanashree Thorat notes, "[th]ese protagonists are the fictive foils to the Muslim youth who grapple with questions of identity, belonging, and citizenship. Above all, each of these youths strives to find an appropriate and satisfying response to their Othering" (37-38). Salahuddin, the eldest son, who considers himself a bull among cattle, emulates a hedonistic and social Darwinist way of life and disparages all cultural traditions and religious teachings. As a reaction, he denies his social Pakistani origin, and psychologically discards his ancestors' traditions. He dislikes his name 'Salahuddin' and cuts it to an American name 'Sal'. As a distracted character, he neither accepts his identity as a Pakistani nor does society recognize him as an American. Sal's dislike for Pakistani food, taste for fries and McDonald's, interest in white girls, rejection of Islamic Beliefs and rituals, and disgust for beard and hijab – mark him as a socio-psychologically perplexed character desperately trying to assimilate into American society.

In contrast, his younger sister Fatima believes that integration and recognition in American society can be acquired only through clinging to one's original identity. Wearing the hijab establishes her adherence to her Islamic identity. She criticizes Israel for human rights violations, while Sal would love to marry an Israeli girl. Fatima strives to persuade society of the innocence of American Muslims, who for their racial and religious identities are victimized after 9/11; while Sal does not blame America and on the contrary argues that Muslims are terrorists. Moreover, Fatima neglects her mother's desire to be a good housewife, prefers to be a lawyer, and raises her voice for the marginalized and discriminated, specifically Muslim women's identity, in post-9/11 America.

Ghafur's reaction and coping with the post-9/11 situation, to some extent, is similar to Fatima: he wears Islamic clothes, grows a beard, and reads religious books, but he is more hopeful that through interfaith dialogues he can convince and enlighten America and the western world about the real history and teachings of Islam. Moreover, Ghafur's response to racism correlates to Carter's perception that "[o]ne's racial–cultural group membership., may influence the choices of ways to cope. For instance, religious beliefs held by racial–cultural group members might influence choices in coping responses" (30). Ghafur and Fatima's adherence to Islamic and cultural ideals signify the placation of their ego-ideal, as Erikson theorizes: "The ego-ideal is of great importance for the understanding of group psychology. Besides its individual side, this ideal has a social side; it is also the common ideal of a family, a class, or a nation" (210). Carter also theorizes that "[t]he psychological meaning one attributes to his or her racial group has been defined as his or her racial identity ego status, which is one's psychological orientation to race" (18). Ghafur's racial identity and ego status affected by the blatant racial profiling at the airport psychologically convince him to abandon his study of medicine and as a history teacher combat the false accusations against Islam and defend his faith and innocent Muslims. He shows optimism to "create a new profession: the International Muslim Bollywood Educator Superstar. I.M.B.E.S. Immbbsse. Professor by day, dashing, FOB heartthrob by night. I'll drink my chai in slow motion, rip off my clearance-sale Calvin Klein, and whisper sweet nothings to my bee-u-ti-ful heroine" (Ali 68). That way, Ghafur can vent his resentment and manage psychological catharsis in a positive and useful direction.

Thus, Ghafur and Fatima for survival, as domestic crusaders, strive hard to find a commonality of Islamic values and history with the American culture. Khaled Ahmed Alamro maintains that in *The*

Domestic Crusaders, Wajahat Ali "addressed the issue of racial discrimination against Muslims after the events of September. Ali has tried to show the common culture of Islamic history and its connection to American culture" (192). Despite Ghafur and Fatima's critique of America, they ultimately locate themselves as Americans, interested in agitating in the national space. The trauma of 9/11, for them, is a lived experience, and their rejection of a transnational heritage is a way of claiming their rights in the American state (Thorat 61-62).

In conclusion, *The Domestic Crusaders* exposes young American Muslims' humanity, aspirations, beliefs, and sufferings after 9/11, and the transformations in their socio-psychological life. The texts discussed and the young characters analyzed suggest the idea of how innocent non-white Americans suffered for their racial, cultural, and religious differences after the 9/11 attacks. People on the basis of race, colour, and religion are stereotyped, marginalized, othered, and even physically and mentally tortured in the post-9/11 America. The paper determines how the post-9/11 developments i.e., America's 'war on terror', imperialistic policies, the surge of Islamophobia, and the rise of racial and cultural profiling give birth to anti-American resentment and resistance, which not only affects the socio-psychological life of the sufferers but also creates an unruly threat to American society and its people from the interracial citizen. Such 'paranoid threat' according to Bhabha's hypothesis, "from the hybrid is finally uncontainable because it breaks down the symmetry and duality of self/other, inside/outside" (165). Thus, the study advocates that the post-9/11 developments impact the socio-psychological life of non-white Americans in general and young Muslims in particular.

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