

CULTURAL NEGOTIATIONS IN TRANSITION: ANALYZING TRADITION AND MODERNITY IN *HOW IT HAPPENED* THROUGH STUART HALL'S LENS

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ABSTRACT

*This paper is a cultural analysis of the novel *How It Happened* by Shazaf Fatima Haider and uses Stuart Hall's cultural theory to analyze the blend of tradition and modernity. This paper advances the understanding of societal changes and the agonies of individuals amidst transformations by looking into the conflicts with dimensions related to cultural negotiation, character construction, and intergenerational conflicts. Through an analysis of the central characters Saleha, Zeba and Dadi, this article shows how Pakistani society is trying to balance the clash of tradition and modernity simultaneously, against a backdrop that increasingly ups the stakes for modern values and ideologies. The textual analysis brings forth changes that expose larger identities and evolution of a society. Further, the paper rationalizes the difficulties of understanding the fringes of modernity that push for cultural transition on the individual level. The paper critically analyzes how contemporary societies especially those located within a South Asian milieu cope with their traditional pasts and modern presents and how it determines cultural identity and social cohesiveness.*

Keywords: Tradition and Modernity, Society, Cultural Identity, Identity Crises, Stuart Hall

Introduction

Cultural negotiations and the interplay between tradition and modernity are captivating themes in contemporary societies, especially in postcolonial contexts. This transition within familial structures, generational dynamics, and societal norms is quite evident in Pakistan. Haider's novel *How It Happened* (2012), humorously yet insightfully investigates these tensions from the perspective of a Shia Muslim family coping with the complexities of arranged marriages. The novel humorously highlights how traditional cultural practices contradict emerging modern influences and bring forth deeper struggles of identity, power, intergenerational conflicts, and societal evolution.

Shazaf Fatima Haider is a well-known Pakistani writer and *How It Happened* is an amusing and astute symposium on ways of dictating marriages in Pakistani society. The plot humorously investigates the customs of a Shia Muslim family in Karachi that arranges marriages. In narrating this story, Haider incorporates powerful observations on social mores, gender expectations and family structures. The study analyzes the negotiation of culture in the novel *How It Happened* by Stuart Hall's cultural theory. Hall's seminal work on cultural identity, hybridity, and hegemony

provides an apt framework for dissecting how individuals and communities contest, construct, reconstruct, and deconstruct meanings in a rapidly changing world. By applying Hall's concepts, this study explores the novel's portrayal of intergenerational conflicts, identity formation, and the hybridization of cultural practices, and gives insights into the cultural evolution of Pakistani society.

Stuart Hall's *Cultural Studies: A Theoretical History* (1983) anthologizes lectures and discussions from a seminal cultural studies conference of its era. It is an interdisciplinary inquiry into the political contestation of contemporary culture and its historical antecedents. It concerns how culture solidifies and changes individual lives, daily life & social relationships as well as power.

The novel depicts the collision and amalgamation of traditions and modern influences. Through Hall's perspective, one can analyze how characters negotiate and contest cultural representations and meanings. The clash between the older and younger generations' values reflects the negotiation of meanings within a cultural context. Hall's concept of cultural encounters and hybridity is relevant in understanding the characters' navigation through the hybrid cultural landscape. The characters create their own unique identities that don't fit strictly into traditional or modern categories, echoing Hall's notion of the 'Third Space' where new cultural meanings emerge.

Furthermore, Hall's theories on power dynamics and cultural hegemony shed light on how certain cultural norms and traditions maintain dominance within the family structure. The struggle between preserving traditional values and embracing modernity reflects power struggles between different cultural forces within the societal context of the story. Eventually, cultural theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the complexities of cultural identities, representations, negotiations, and power dynamics within *How It Happened*. Through Hall's lens, the novel unveils the dynamics of cultural encounters, identity negotiations, and the clash between tradition and modernity within Pakistani society, offering insights into the construction and contestation of cultural meanings and identities in a rapidly changing world.

This research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of cultural transitions and how norms are affected by intergenerational clashes in postcolonial societies like Pakistan. It provides valuable insights into the interplay between tradition and modernity, fostering a meticulous appreciation of identity construction in contemporary literary canvas. Moreover, this study enriches fictional discourse by providing a comparative framework for analyzing cultural shifts in diverse contexts. This research utilized Hall's theoretical framework to highlight the role of literary text as a site for critiquing and transforming culture and how transitions in cultural norms are negotiated in terms of modernity and traditions. The research aimed at

1. Exploring cultural negotiations and identity formation in the novel.
2. Analyzing the clash of tradition and modernity in *How It Happened*.
3. Understanding how characters like Saleha and Dadi react to these cultural transitions, reflects broader societal struggles in Pakistan.

Literature Review

South Asian literature explores the transition and tension in tradition and modernity by investigating gender and family roles, especially in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Mohammed Hanif's *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*. Haider's *How It Happened* follows the tradition and explores the family dynamics from a humorous a satirical point of view. Her use of

humor, satire, and wit renovate her novel into a narrative that is engaging and reflective of deeper societal issues.

Tradition and modernity are one of the significant aspects of cultural studies often not perceived as binary opposites but compelling and interrelated constructs (Kholodniak, 2023). Tradition is related to cultural practices, attitudes, and values transfused across generations, often symbolizing constancy and continuity. Modernity on the other hand is related to societal transformations motivated by industrialization, globalization, and technological advancements. Hall's cultural theory reveals the subtle ways individuals and communities negotiate these shifting paradigms and bridge the dichotomy.

Haider's *How It Happened* is a well-received literary work and analyzed from various perspectives. Akram & Khan (2021) study the quality of marital relationships in the novel by utilizing five dimensions proposed by Allendorf and Ghimire (2012) consisting of satisfaction, communication, togetherness, problems, and disagreements. Majeed, Rashid & Asghar (2021) analyzed the novel from a postcolonial perspective. The researchers probe the irony, nostalgia, and postmodernism in the novel by using the theoretical framework proposed by Linda Hutcheon. The research concludes that nostalgia is an inevitable factor and recurs in thoughts and perceiving reality. Akram (2019) did a comparative analysis between *Pride and Prejudice* and *How It Happened*. The author concludes that the monitory considerations are secondary to the preferences of the characters. Batool, Ali & Javed (2022) investigate motive and the impact of using code-switching, hybridization and echo words by characters in *How It Happened*. The methodological framework for this inquiry was drawn and influenced by the work of Shazaf Fatima Haider. Results show that code-switching is a deliberate artifice used by the bilingual author to illustrate the emergence and projection of many identities as well as assimilation in cultural, social, and religious themes. The study concludes that code-switching in the selected text portrays the communal customs of contingent social order along with demonstrating the author's ingenious and artistic caliber.

Socio-cultural meta-narratives are studied by Zahid, Mujahid & Hussain (2023) by applying Jean Francis Lyotard's (1979) theoretical framework of postmodernism. The study is a postmodern analysis that envisages grand narratives concerning marriages, religion, sect, and gender in local culture. The research addresses how this novel contests epistemological and sociocultural meta-myths dating back through millennia, particularly focusing on how contemporary Pakistani society is distinguishing itself with locally grounded narratives. The study concludes that Shazaf Fatima Haider, through her postmodern characters, challenges the long-standing Meta Narratives of Pakistani culture and replaces them with local narratives. The researchers Yasir & Hashmi (2022) illustrate that society, media, and books have put women under many pressures leading to stereotyping for centuries. The research is a feminist stylistic reading of Haider's novel *How It Happened* to explore how the portrayal of women is contracted into stereotyped figures in a sexist culture. Analysis Sara Mills' Feminist Stylistics has been used to analyze the texts. The results of the study suggest that both men and women create gender stereotypes for themselves which creates challenges for them. The stereotypical roles of women - which many Pakistani females grow up watching their mothers, aunts, or sisters perform- make it hard for other ladies in the environment.

Stuart Hall's cultural theory proves to be an apt tool for analyzing cultural identity negotiation and power dynamics (Hall, 1980). His influential concepts such as the encoding/decoding model, cultural hegemony, and Third Space offer the tools to unpack the

complex interplay between tradition and modernity (Griffin, 2006). Hall describes culture as an evolving and dynamic process of meaning-making formed by power relations, accentuating how identities are constantly shaped within socio-cultural and historical contexts (Makus, 2013). This theoretical framework enables a thorough exploration of cultural conflicts and shifts as depicted in literary text, particularly in postcolonial societies such as Pakistan where conventional and contemporary influences often collide.

Cultural theory provides us with the tools to probe literature in ways that seem to single it out as a privileged source of information on these front-critical and personal issues as they dramatically interweave into one another. In Hall's theory, culture is fluid, messages are decoded /encoded and the power also has its direct influence on society. His ideas of cultural identity, representation, and the production of meaning allow us to read cultural assumptions and power structures in literature. The novel by Haider matches Pakistani society with its inherent complexities; take, for instance, familial structures, gender roles, and societal expectations.

Hall Stuart's Cultural theory is utilized to understand the relationship between culture, media, and film. Prysthon (2016) studies hybridity and multiculturalism in the movie 'My Beautiful Laundrette'. The researcher demonstrates how cultural theory helps to create a dialogue between a film's subject matter, social structure, and production context. Kim (2021) used Stuart's cultural theory to analyze the role of counter-hegemonic cultural formation from the periphery. The study analyzes the role of BTS pop music and its spread as perceived as a global culture. However, there is no significant utilization of Hall Stuart's cultural theory to analyze literary work.

After analyzing all previous literature on the same topic, researchers have found a clear gap regarding Tradition and Modernity in *How It Happened* through Stuart Hall's Lens. The present study aspires to fill this gap by offering a systematic examination of representations related to societal changes and people undergoing crises through cultural negotiations, character responses, or inter-generational conflicts.

Research Methodology

This research gathers data and employs a qualitative textual analysis approach. The novel *How It Happened* by Shazaf Fatima Haider is a major source for locating text in terms of textual analysis. Researchers went through that text with a fine-toothed comb, closely analyzing the dialogue, narrative devices, and sections relevant to the themes of modernity and tradition. The researcher applied Stuart Hall's perspective in unraveling the negotiations of culture within the narrative and discovered finite evidence of how tradition and modernity are represented in the text through thorough data collection and analysis.

Theoretical Framework

Hall's framework posits that culture is a site of power relations, signification, and political struggle not a thing in the world which exists outside of human life. Culture is discourse and representation which make sense with other people around them about themselves and their place in the universe. Hall's work on culture, tradition and modernity was pioneering because whereas other researchers treated culture as a passive mirror that merely reflected existing social structures, Hall demonstrated the active process of culture in the formation of social reality. According to Hall (1996), "Culture is not just a reflection of social reality but an active process of meaning-making and contestation" (p. 27). This illustrates tradition and modernity as discursive forms that are paradoxical and occasionally contradictory. Therefore, tradition and modernity can exist together in a dialectical connection that impacts the cultural landscape of civilizations rather than being

completely at odds with one another. Hall adds, “field of cultural practices that shape the understandings and conceptions of the world of men and women in their ordinary everyday social calculations, construct them as potential social subjects and have the effect of organizing how they come to or from the consciousness of the world” (Hall, 1989, p.49).

Additionally, Stuart Hall (1996) has argued that “there is more to identify a common cultural identity than identifying one as a thing in and of itself” But like everything historical, they are always changing (p. 209). Within changing social contexts, identities are always being re-negotiated and (re)made through processes of identification, rather than as fixed essences. Hall further elaborates on the role of language and representation in people’s relationship with the self and others, emphasizing the important part of discourse in shaping cultural identity. Hall (1997) points out about meaning as well that “meaning is not inherent in words or signs, merely waiting to be decoded. This is something that one must always work at, something that needs to be perpetually negotiated” (p. 131).

Hall’s Cultural Studies allows us to understand how tradition and modernity are related and how cultural identity has become varied and flexible in contemporary society. He declares that “cultural battles matter because 'social subjects can be ‘won’ to a new conception of themselves and society” (1988, p.10). These ideas of Stuart Hall works particularly when it comes to gender, family, and societal expectations in *How It Happened*. This theory explains how we may examine the cultural dynamics existing in this background. Hall believes that cultural texts are not simple products given the ideologies inherent in them, which is a reflection of power relations (Hall, 1977).

Consequently, this article reveals that Hall’s approach to cultural studies offers several advantages concerning reading and understanding these investigations into culture. By focusing on context, power dynamics, and the range of interpretations, the researcher can get a more nuanced appreciation of how *How It Happened* affected cultural dynamics, identities, and social relations. The use of Hall’s framework allows the researcher to gain better insight into the narrative and the broader social world it reflected by revealing how cultural meanings are made, contested, and negotiated within the narrative.

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

The findings of this study express that the narrative openly exposes a very traditional desi family that is contrasted with its more liberal younger generation-- mainly Haroon and his siblings. Despite this insistence by Dadi on arranged marriages and their strict adherence to cultural rituals, we see the tradition that is imposed upon members of households. For example, her careful grooming for the process of matchmaking shows how ingrained old-world habits are (Haider, p.45).

This clash between traditional practices and modern perspectives on marriage is one of the central conflicts in the novel. Dadi is the pillar of tradition. It is the significance of her advocacy for arranged marriages and traditional family honor. Such as Dadi calling in favors to find her daughter Saleha the right match for Haroon (Haider, p. 27). She is someone who believes in keeping the traditional carrot, as seen when she opines, “A good marriage is like a good biryani. It needs some time to prepare and put together all ingredients” (Haider, p.30). Dadi, the matriarch of the family epitomizes all that is old and traditional in this largely older generation world view. A strong tradition of arranged marriages and an insistence on cultural observance signal how deeply entrenched these traditions are in Pakistan. Dadi tries to avoid these rules and customs by checking the background, liking, and disliking nature of each other family members which are

called stop-over potential suitors- in turn preparing wedding profiles—and matchmaking (Haider, p.27). This she keeps saying “Marriage is not only between two people” (Haider, p.35).

Haider (2013) recounts how within her family hearing and in front of a possible candidate for marriage she had dramatically proclaimed ‘Ye Shadi Nahi Hogeel!’ (p. 16) which always got me a backhand slap as the general response to this forbidden sentence. Haider (2013) then heightens and enlarges the context of this sentence by writing that Malaika Phupoo had made a fuss which is not possible at all in reality. Here, for instance, Saleha does a “Scooby Doo” dance she saw on the television program “Kid’s Hour” (p. 21). The dance of Scooby doing some signature dance moves is back. This is the kids sliced Sunday morning programming on different channels called Kids Hour. The point is that, in “Mr. Galliano’s Circus” (p. 52) when Saleha totally in oriental style gives Dadi a back massage by standing on her, helping herself to balance as if she were one of the circus rope walkers shown in that book. (The Circus is a series of three books by British children's author Enid Blyton). This indicates that except for some matters of marriage, this family is very modern as shown in different episodes of this book.

Likewise, the word “McDonald's” (p. 22) tells about a well-known international fast food chain that is also available in Pakistan. Dadi doubts a few haram meat products sold in the restaurant. Then, she completely dismisses the notion of eating there. The idea of Haroon emerging, “an inveterate New Yorker” (p. 31) shows that the kids are convinced to participate in ancestor worship and behave according to how mature individuals do things on earth.

Haider (2013) details a graphic episode of dragonflies being hunted by iguanas — one he observed on the “National Geographic” (p. 31). National Geographic shows documentaries on how animals hunt! This reference shows the sense of avoiding those “girl hunters” willing to marry Haroon. Saleha and Zeba go a step further in bypassing the mothers of potential grooms to thank their channel for all this. This would also make clear how many of the subtleties are extra-textual references to an Indian drama, “Kyunke Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi” (p. 39). The mother-in-law-daughter relationship is very delicate in the sub-continent culture. The drama of an Indian play had been an eye-catcher for Pakistani housewives during 1998-2002, based on domestic politics and conspiracies against in-laws. The delicate and almost seamless relationship between Dadi and Ammi is best explained by Haider (2013), which tears to shreds when they view the drama. Here lies the views of Hall regarding culture, as culture involves practices of giving meaning to objects, people, and events. Similarly, characters indicate their views regarding other people and things.

Haider (2013) cuts right to the core of politics as she sees a candidate preening his feathers for Haroon “in perfect political attire”. The dress that she had on was a White kurta with a red dupatta and green bangles. She would look like an MQM candidate celebrating her favorite leader “Altaf Hussain’s birthday” (p. 46). Multitudes of implications are inferred from this reference, as exemplified by its cultural attitudes toward people. The political landscape of Pakistan where MQM stands as the major party in Sindh, and its followers dress by color their flag to prove loyalty.

Down the line, intertextuality signals to “Halakoo Khan and Hitler” (p. 86). The front row of the grandchildren, listening to other Abbu are disturbed by this development when Dadi says that we do not observe anything on these days except sorrow. Halakoo is one among the Mongol rulers of Southwest Asia and Adolf Hitler Austrian-born leader of the Nazi Party. These references are used to ridicule the religious Dadi about her superstition of fixing a date for celebration. Here we have a classical allusion from Dadi to the only grandson and her jewel in the family, “a brown-skinned Adonis” (p. 18). Adonis in the Greek tales, a good-looking novice likened to nothing else.

The reference to Sisyphus captures Alam Bhai's brief but doomed attempt to fold his legs while seated on account of his diminutive stature as a bidder in a marriage arrangement. He eased into a squat - difficult with his little legs, which were too stubby to fold properly. Altaf mentions this example of Hercules in the face due to non-comparability but Haider (2013) ironically intertextualizes it with a minor body.

Saleha becomes the prey for this sinister cousin who besieges her with their make-believe talk and wily smiles. This duo reminds one of Siamese cats in a movie, they are experts at schemes. The allusion to the national financial system, i.e. "Habib Bank", and "on I. I. Chundrigar Road" (p. 122) unveils a prospective candidate for Zeba. This example claims of arrogance and pride in the heart remains overtly evident through restricted outing on visible hair bun height.

Haider (2013) offers a hybrid cultural reference to illuminate the harrowing ordeal Zeba will undergo at confessing her affiliations with a Sunni boy as it is described that, "was suicidal" (p. 197). That part of the text made Saleha think in terms, of "Evil Knieval trying to jump off the Empire State Building without a parachute and hoping to land on his motorcycle and drive a hundred hoops of fire" (p. 197). It left her imagination figuring out what impossible situation Zeba was about to find herself trapped in. Evil Knieval is an American daredevil who had spectacular stunts from the early seventies that are still memorable for everyone.

Haider (2013) pervades the intertextual reference of, "platonic" feelings (105), a strange intonation Zeba studies to where her depths end for Alam. Platonic attachment is characterized by Plato as a close connection between two people that incorporates that neither sex yearns to exist or be arranged. Zeba was fending off the failed love efforts of Alam convincing her to wed him. It assumes text as an animal grows within a polysemy space with boundless potential of meaning and richness that may generate infinite numbers of reading. Zeba in *How It Happened* is written as courageous and confident. The fact that she is an enthusiastic reader of "Lolita" (p. 26) hints at a parallel with her characteristics. However, I think that her boldness can be fitting to the type of novel she is reading. The novel *Lolita* by Vladimir Nabokov came into classicization and among the most famous types of literature throughout the twentieth century. It also indicates a sexually articulate girl.

Tradition and Modernity and Clash of Narratives

In India and Pakistan, both countries follow a matriarchal system within domestic issues. A matriarch in control of all the family affairs and every other woman must adhere to these rules. Haider (2013) in his novel *How It Happened* breaks the conventional ways of society by presenting to readers young female characters. Dadi scrutinizes everything and these girls seem to fail the test set otherwise by her. During a visit to the family to Haroon's selection at Saima Apa's house for the first time, when her elder sister opened the door. Dadi calls her in as Saima and says "Good girls did not dare to open the doors to their prospective in-laws---they wait patiently in their rooms before being summoned by their parents." (p. 61). Daddy didn't enjoy it when Saima Apa intended to opt for her dress along with his mum In Dadi, "a fine Eastern bride was not a willing figure in the wedding (p. 89). Thus, this text traces Haider's journey to unveil present-day Pakistan, where tradition prohibits yet tries hard to embrace the new realities; of marriages not necessarily being made. Zeba is rebellious and speaks of orgasms, and politics and even says out loud "I don't cook. I don't like children. I don't want to get married" (p. 107). Zeba tries to defy the conventional role of a young Pakistani girl. Specifically, she also pushes back on the norm of arranged marriage.

Haider (2013) claims that the only options available to women are arranged marriages. Haider has also represented the extremist mentality in the context of arranged marriage explaining

it as, “The Bandian line was started with an arranged marriage, which is the only Islamic way to get married” (Haider, 2012, p.4). Indicating that according to fundamentalists' perspective daughters/sons are supposed to be treated rudely and their consent is never asked. She has attempted to erase this misbelief with utmost dedication as they curving the religion at their own sweet will (presenting it distorted) by putting a figure on behalf of Islam for worldly gains only. Consequently, the one true and universal religion has long since ceased to be. Islam gives equal freedom to marry of his/her choice but marrying with one's own free will is a taboo in Pakistani society. Dadi is a shining example of customs and traditions. Her words “Sensible Bandian women know that this love-shove business is all nonsense. We must do our duty to please God and our husbands. That’s it” (p. 11) expounds a metanarrative that women are led to think love truly does not exist.

Moreover, a list was made of potential candidates after Haroon returned from the US – with a checklist which was a series of laws and conditions the prospect had to do before being fit for Haroon. According to Dadi “She must not want to get a job. What are men for?” (p. 32). In her time, it was an era where women were stuck inside the house as they could not continue their education or work. Similarly, when Saleha first meets Omer, the future husband to her sister who is a Sunni, defies the grand culture of sects by uttering; “Not that I have anything against Sunnis, most of my friends are Sunnis and I love the fact that you get to open your fast ten minutes before we do...ah...I am pleased to meet you.” (p. 249). There have been instances where Shia and Sunni — the two major sects of Islam individually interpreted religion in a manner that led to criticism or hatred towards each other's religious practices.

However, as the plot progresses, Dadi’s character takes a 180-degree turn. At first, she clung to her true Bandian fashions but then was led astray. Ironically, Dadi has no doubts about offering Zeba - one of her granddaughters - the proposals that keep visiting. Dadi made sure that at Haroon’s wedding, Zeba Baji would do the honor of being in front of the camera, and everyone was going to see her with a bright shine. “Dadi wanted Zeba Baji to start as this would be one more opportunity to put her on display” (p. 116).

This theory of culture by Stuart Hall rejects the linear, archaic, and overarching narratives by offering hybrid narratives instead. Nonetheless, it is clear that not only the characters of Zeba and Saleha and Haroon Bhai enforce this division from cultural metanarrative by giving their thoughts during the chaos to find potential husbands for Zeba Baji. Haroon Bhai disagrees with Dadi’s proposal of Gullan Mian as a match for Zeba and lists his issues regarding personality and interests. Similarly, cultural narratives are read against the grain to redress minority voices. As in Zeba, a great sociopolitical accommodation of minority voices is enacted through the character. These lines added to her very vociferous resistance towards Gullan Mian’s proposal, “Dadi, are you seriously telling me that you expect me to marry a memento from the past? I can’t even look at him without laughing!” (p. 158). The bragging of her affair with Omar also signifies a violation of the traditional role of women as fragile and man-dependent.

Navigation between Traditional Values and Emergent Influences through Characters

The plots in Haider’s *How It Happened* negotiate an arrangement between the two levels of cultural identity, illustrating some formative strategies (and pitfalls) to remain connected to a traditional lifestyle while embracing new possibilities. This paper then looks at how the characters balance their cultural heritage with more contemporary influences, especially as they pertain to marriage customs and gender roles.

The traditionalist of the family is Dadi, from whose mouth not a single word that doesn't sound like it's been yanked out by its roots can emerge. This is clear from Dadi's firm acknowledgment of the premises upon which she relies, such as: "How else do you think this society is standing and our honor has been coherent all these generations if we didn't take arranged marriage policies seriously!" (Haider, p.27). She embodies the old status quo, always in conflict with younger people's new ways of thinking. Dadi is all about upholding traditional values even if they mean being politically incorrect. This is why Dadi believes in the original sanctity of these traditions and protests, "Marriage isn't just between two people it's a union of families" (Haider, p.29). Her conservative outlooks tend to put her at odds with the younger members of the family and play on a generational clash.

Although Haroon wants to respect his family values, he struggles with conforming to traditions and not accompanying this new partnership. His struggle is clear in his own words, as he says: "How can I satisfy what my family wants and still be satisfied with myself?" (Haider, p. 120). The person in Haroon reflects a universal struggle where cultural values and desires are juxtaposed. This journey exemplifies the quandary of honoring tradition while pursuing one's happiness. He plays the guy torn between his family traditions and self-satisfaction. He is a social misfit and his love with Zeba, who belongs to an outcast community, costs him against the temperaments of his family. Thereby, Haroon reflects on her veritable dilemma "I love him but how can I go against my family's wishes. That would be like betraying my blood" (Haider, p.121). This is, after all, what the journey of Haroon encapsulated in wanting to fulfill his emotional desires while simultaneously fulfilling traditional expectations.

Saleha, Haroon's sister, is the younger voice of boldness and modernity. In the course of this novel, Saleha displays her defiance as she says: "There are certain traditions that I will not abide by anymore" (p.75). It is a character that rebels against the status quo, promoting individual choice and female representation in what appears to be a predominantly patriarchal society. We can see a bit of Saleha's rebellion from within – "Why do I have to marry someone other than the one I love? It's my life, and I should have a say in it" (Haider, p. 76). The character claims that she wants to be in charge of her own life, and wants a say in everything, even choosing a partner. Her response to tradition is not so much pious as questioning and defiant. She is demonstrating her liberation desire for control and equality by rebelling against traditional norms.

Zeba too, has been a catalyst but an outsider as far as their community is concerned. Her affair with Haroon epitomizes the conflict between tradition and modernity. All the more when Zeba is modern and feisty over love stories of real life. She asks, "Why should love follow social norms?" (Haider, p.145). Zeba's character symbolizes modern liberty on a custom set-up. Her relationship with Haroon exaggerates the cultural clash between tradition and modernity. In her modern values, she is also an illustration of the potential power of current culture on long standing traditions.

Resolution and Reconciliation

Novel has a hopeful view of resolution and reconciliation between traditionalism and modernity. Even as the characters embark on their arcs from tradition, grow up to be new iterations of themselves (or even turn away) admit that they are not absolute rejecters— but nuance producers in a haven apart within an environment called for strong change. This is where they represent a bridge between the old and new as, "Dadi eventually accepts Saleha's choices" (Haider, p.201). In contrast, it shows acceptance of the idea that traditions can change and adjust over time while still holding steadfast.

The experience of the characters echoes long-held tensions between conserving cultural heritage, and modernity. A powerful look at the transformation of a society and one excruciating story in particular made unforgettable because of its connection with Stuart Hall's ideas of culture. The nature of the characters' endeavors in *How It Happened* mirrors a classic form of tension between self-determination and family pressure. This reflects the experience of negotiating who one is or wants to be within the bounds laid out in culture. The novel also looks at generational battles, internal conflicts, and the feminist viewpoints that go into shaping a culture. The Baghdadi family experience speaks volumes to the dual realities of preserving cultural practices in a modern society.

The investigation illustrates that genuine discrimination in the business of religion, particularly on certain sects still exists in South Asian Pakistanis. Therefore explained that the culture-based actions were to become textualized. Texts do need to be interrogated, and Haider correctly situates her argument at the level of readers and empirical proof against accusations based on textual evidence. The differences between the religious groups create pride along with society status and family name amongst the people of this region. Indeed, these claims appeared to be a natural development in cultural studies that many symbols and large segments of the textual field itself have taken flight from their empirical, social, and cultural foundations. Therefore, to extract the sociological methods for rethinking matters and functions of culture study, Haider resurrects cultural analysis features by concentrating on one agreement.

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to expose the shortcomings of the Pakistani family system and culture through the ideas of Stuart Hall. Dadi comes as disharmony for the younger generation, however, it is the younger generation that peer through those cultural norms and traditions with a critical lens than ever before. This paper concludes that it was the harshness of old people's traditions and their neglect of contemporary beliefs that contributed significantly to the disintegration between the two generations. In *How It Happened* this ideology of arranged marriage and holiness is a curse on the generational gap. This paper also examines how the novelist grapples with old customs and changing societal paradigms by scrutinizing characters, cultural contexts, and narrative techniques. Haider seeks to enchant us with a more subtle portrayal of society and simultaneously demonstrate that conflict of modernity and tradition has never been entirely addressed or resolved. Haider describes more on arranging marriages based on prejudices and religious partialities of the common public. Ultimately, it is hoped that in the future culture could have a better influence on reduction of religious inflexibility and significantly less bias society. Hopefully, it will help in strengthening the acceptance and mutual respect amongst different sects as well.

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