

COLONIAL LEGACY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN PAKISTANI LITERATURE: A STUDY OF *ICE-CANDY MAN* AND *THE RELUCTANT FUNDAMENTALIST*

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Abstract

*This study investigates the lasting effect of colonial governance on Pakistani national identity by conducting a literary analysis of Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man* and Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Utilizing Homi K. Bhabha's postcolonial theory, the research seeks to explore how concepts of trauma, hybridity, mimicry, and cultural dislocation are interwoven within modern Pakistani English literature. The main aim is to examine how these texts portray the psychological and social challenges faced by individuals navigating their identity in a global context shaped by postcolonialism and post-9/11. This paper explores various research inquiries: (1) In what ways do these novels represent the impacts of Partition and colonial trauma? (2) How do characters represent cultural alienation, broken identity, and defiance? This research addresses a gap in existing scholarship that frequently considers these times in isolation. This study explores the persistence of postcolonial concerns across different historical periods as reflected in Pakistan literature. The importance of this research is in its focus on literature as an essential counter-narrative to established history, demonstrating how fiction can restore muted voices and transform collective memory. Despite focusing on just two Anglophone works and a defined theoretical framework, the paper significantly adds to the fields of South Asian literary studies and postcolonial discourse. It creates new avenues for further exploration, especially regarding regional language writings, diasporic viewpoints, and gendered representations of postcolonial trauma in Pakistani literature.*

Keywords: Postcolonial theory, colonial heritage, national identity, Pakistani English literature, injury and recollection, cultural displacement, hybridity and imitation

Opening Discussion

"The empire might have fallen, yet its reverberations persist." A Critical Survey of Postcolonial Thought Emerging from the calculus of colonialism and Partition, Pakistani English literature has acquired that special vitality to examine identity, memory, and resistance. Ever since the formation of the country in 1947, the authors articulated through fiction their concerns regarding the psychological wounds left behind by colonial subjugation, communal violence, and the weight of modern-day global politics. English literary texts by authors from Pakistan often portray personal and collective crises, whether rooted in the trauma of Partition, the ideological maelstrom of the act of nation-building, or the cultural alienation of displacement and globalization. From the early works of Bapsi Sidhwa to the present-day narratives of Mohsin Hamid, Pakistani English fiction assumes that national identity continues to canvas a fluid and contested space shaped by both historical scars and contemporary anxieties. When it comes to reading these texts, postcolonial literature offers a critical tool to deal with the layered play of identities in post-colonial societies. Bhabha's (1994) theory of hybridization emphasizes identity as a third space created in the tension between colonizer and colonized, imitation and resistance; this hybridity is visible in language, culture, and the fragmented consciousnesses of characters caught between conflicting realities.

Fanon (2004) provides further input to this discourse by positing literature as a psychological space wherein colonized subjects regain their voice and assert agency that had been curtailed by imperial domination (p. 178). These theoretical approaches provide the interpretative lens through which Pakistani literature serves as a site of trauma and resistance. An important gap still remains in present scholarship. Previous examinations of *Ice-Candy-Man* and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* have focused on colonial legacies, Partition trauma, and national identity; however, these studies often seem to treat colonial legacy and national identity as problems separate or isolated from one another. The interaction of these two forces and the way proper ones together shape the architecture of contemporary Pakistani identities hardly remain explored. Furthermore, there remains little enough of comparativism to understand how the narrative techniques of just these two novels reveal, critique, and rewrite colonial ideologies while at the same time reimagine national belonging. Such neglect left a gaping hole for scholarly intervention.

This study hopes to fill that scholarly void with a comparative and thematic analysis of these two pivotal texts in Pakistani English literature: Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man* and Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. By situating one narrative in the immediate aftermath of colonial withdrawal and the other in a globalized post-9/11 world, the study links two different Historical traumas in order to trace the continuity and change of colonial legacies. The novelty of this study lies in bridging the divides of time and theme, with an emphasis on exposing literature as a tool to highlight the continuing impact of empire and its influence over cultural and personal identity in postcolonial Pakistan.

A Critical Survey of Postcolonial Thought

Postcolonialism is an analytical lens that investigates the cultural, political, and psychological impacts of colonialism and imperialism on colonized populations and countries. It examines how colonial authority influenced—and still influences—identities, histories, languages, and narratives, even post formal independence.

The phrase does not only signify "after colonialism"; instead, it examines the ongoing presence of colonial ideologies in societies after independence, frequently through education, governance, literature, and social frameworks. Ashcroft et al. (1989) state that postcolonialism "covers all facets of the colonial process from the onset of colonial interaction to contemporary times" (p. 16). It examines the ways in which colonized societies respond to, adapt to, or assimilate colonial influence. Bhabha highlights the hybridity of postcolonial identity—how people find themselves between cultures, using the colonizer's language while opposing its power. He states that in postcolonial settings, identity is shaped within a "third space" of negotiation (p. 123). Fanon, in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), emphasizes the psychological distress caused by colonization, asserting that those colonized adopt a sense of inferiority, and that decolonization requires a mental and cultural upheaval—not merely political. In literary studies, postcolonialism serves to examine works authored by or concerning previously colonized communities. It examines the influence of empire on narratives and contests Eurocentric perspectives on history and culture. Postcolonial literature frequently restores muted voices, reinterprets history through indigenous viewpoints, and challenges prevailing Western narratives.

The Relevance of Postcolonial Theory in the Pakistani Context

Post colonialism is not just a theory in Pakistan—it is a material fact grounded on the country's political structure, cultural conflict, and identity disputes. In contrast to the majority of the former colonies, Pakistan emerged directly from the colonial retrenchment, following the traumatic Partition of British India in 1947. The boundaries that define Pakistan today were not organically determined by cultural or linguistic identities, but were marked by colonial cartography and social cleavages fostered during imperial rule. The applicability of post-colonialism in Pakistan lies in the continuing influence of British colonial frameworks on the nation's institutions and collective psyche. The colonial legacy continues in Pakistan's legal code, education, administrative apparatus, and most strikingly in language dynamics, where English stands for power and prestige,

reinforcing class cleavages and cultural alienation. Scholars like Rahman (1996) posit that such a linguistic hierarchy imposed by the British continues to marginalize local tongues and reinforce elitism in postcolonial Pakistan. Additionally, postcolonial theory elucidates Pakistan's persistent identity crisis—a nation grappling to establish its identity beyond the dichotomy of Indian 'Otherness' and Western dominance. As noted by Ayesha Jalal, Pakistan's national identity has been largely reactive, influenced by its counter to India and dependence on Islamic solidarity, rather than by an inclusive, plural identity (Self and Sovereignty, 2000). In literature, these conflicts appear through stories that delve into trauma, displacement, gender oppression, cultural imitation, and the mental consequences of colonization. From Partition literature such as Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man* to worldwide postcolonial narratives like Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Pakistani fiction consistently interacts with colonial remnants, revealing how profoundly imperialism is interlaced with the nation's current state. Consequently, postcolonialism is applicable in Pakistan because it provides a strong theory to analyze the lingering-conflicts between past and present worlds, self and other, East and West—conflicts that continue to shape the politics and literature of society.

Literary Lens, Novels Reflect the Nation's Struggle

Literature, and especially the novel, is not just an aesthetic form but also a required cultural and historical document. In postcolonial countries such as Pakistan, literature is a space of resistance, reflection, and rebirth—illuminating the nation's psychological, political, and emotional ambiguity in forming its identity in the wake of colonialism. Pakistani English novels are especially effective in presenting the multifaceted nature of postcolonial identity. They do not just narrate history but reinterpret it through personal trauma, fractured memory, and cultural dislocation. So, for instance, Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man* (also known as *Cracking India*) is a fine example. It presents an account of the 1947 Partition from a gendered perspective. Through the voice of a child and the suffering experienced by female protagonists such as Ayah, Sidhwa reveals the ways in which women's bodies were transformed into landscapes of revenge, honor, and communal revenge. The novel presents Partition not just as a political division but more significantly as a deeply personal and gendered experience. Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, on the other hand, offers a globalized postcolonial vision. Grounded in the post-9/11 context, it tells the tale of Changez, a Pakistani man whose professional triumph in America is destroyed due to suspicion and Islamophobia. Hamid's novel shows how the colonial binaries of East and West, civilized and uncivilized, continue to shape postcolonial subjects in the postmodern world. Changez's gradual alienation embodies the larger sense of disconnection experienced by many Pakistanis in adapting to Western modernity and global power relations. Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, on the other hand, offers a globalized postcolonial vision. The post-9/11 novel is one about Changez, a Pakistani whose American life is filled with promise shattered by suspicion and Islamophobia. Hamid's novel shows how colonial East-West, civilized-uncivilized binarisms continue to shape postcolonial subjects in the modern world. Changez's sustained alienation is the macro-level struggle for belonging faced by many Pakistanis within the context of Western modernity and universal relations of power.

Research Premise

This essay contends that Pakistani English fiction is a rich prism with which to study the long-standing legacies of colonialism on national identity, cultural memory, and subjectivity. In terms of comparative reading of Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man* and Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, this contention demonstrates how postcolonial issues—gendered trauma, displacement, hybridity, and Western hegemony—continue to inform the psychological and social formation of Pakistani society. These novels demonstrate how literature both marks the nation's historical wounds and undermines dominant narratives, re-making identity after imperial rule and global modernity.

Literature Review

Recent literature continues to investigate the ongoing impact of colonial legacy on Pakistan's cultural histories, identity politics, and literary output. Current researchers stress how postcolonial themes have transmuted under global capitalism, religious nationalism, and digital modernity. Authors such as Nayyar (2023) and Younis (2024) contend that colonial ideologies continue to be entrenched in Pakistan's political and education systems and support hybrid frameworks of democracy and governance that oppress plural identities. Zeb et al. (2023) underscore how modern Pakistani English literature overcomes such residues of colonialism through innovative storytelling tactics, linguistic fusion, and re-appropriation of cultural memory. Naeem (2024) brings a gender perspective, discussing how artistic and literary representations subvert hegemonic nationalist narratives and reimagine Pakistani identity outside religious or patriarchal limits. Rizvi (2025), looking at postcolonial art pedagogy, charts how British colonial aesthetics persist in informing creative institutions even now. These newer works demonstrate that Pakistani literature is not merely involved in mirroring historical trauma but also actively reconstructs identity through unveiling and undermining current imperial forms. Through integrating transnational issues, gender politics, and epistemic resistance, post-2020 writers take the discussion beyond the traditional postcolonialism, and literature is rendered an essential space for critique and reconstruction within the 21st-century Pakistani scenario.

1. Trauma and Gendered Memory

Partition literature in South Asia is centered on the trauma of mass displacement, communal violence, and breakdown of identity. Minault (1998) and Butalia (2020) have indicated how women's bodies were made into sites of national violence as loci of honor and revenge in a disintegrating nation. Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man* provides a haunting gendered reading through the figure of Ayah, whose abduction and violation represent wider disintegration of society at the time of Partition. Hasan (2023) takes a step forward by indicating that decolonization must then extend beyond territorial freedom to cultural and psychic healing. Das (2000) takes this template to state narratives, demonstrating how nationalist projects in India and Pakistan have uniformly used the female body as a signifier of purity, victimhood, or national sovereignty. These studies and texts all point towards Partition trauma as not being a political event but a deeply gendered psychological breakdown, and literature becomes a way to reclaim subaltern voices. Trauma narratives like *Ice-Candy Man* become vital in not only returning to the past but also overturning hegemonic state-sanctioned narratives that conceal gendered suffering.

2. Post-9/11 Identity and Globalized Alienation

The post-9/11 era brought about a global climate where Muslim identities, particularly Pakistani ones, were put under increased scrutiny, suspicion, and racialization. The Pakistani English novels of this era reflect the alienation and fear felt by Muslims in the West. Azeem (2018), using Agamben's *homo sacer*, contends that post-9/11 Muslim protagonists are situated in a "zone of indistinction," suspended between legality and humanity. Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* takes center stage in this, with the American dream of its protagonist destroyed by the burden of Islamophobia. Naeem (2024) provides a rich analysis of the intersection of religion and gender in the postcolonial identity, discussing how masculine articulations and religious symbolism get politicized. Zubair (2012), using Bhabha's hybridity and Pennycook's poststructuralism, discusses how Changez's identity gets reconstituted by global power and lived experience. Awan (2016) introduces a linguistic dimension, where postcolonial play with English itself serves as a resistance. These novels illustrate how literature is a transnational field for the articulation of alienation, avoiding both Western neo-imperial surveillance and internal postcolonial identity crisis.

3. Hybridity, Language, and Postcolonial Selfhood

Postcolonial identity is irreversibly marked by hybridity—a state of being constructed by both native and colonial powers. Bhabha's work on the "third space" has been instrumental in describing

how postcolonial subjects inhabit fractured identity. Zubair (2012) applies this to Pakistani fiction, proposing that identity is an ongoing negotiation between incommensurate cultural codes, particularly in diaspora fiction. Rahman in his seminal work, recounts how the English language continues to be a symbol of privilege and power in Pakistan, reinforcing social stratification. Nayyar (2023) pushes the discussion further by proposing that postcolonial writers reoccupy narrative space by injecting indigenous thinking into English expression, turning colonial hegemony on its head. Zeb et al. (2023) corroborate this by outlining how contemporary Pakistani English writers blend linguistic forms and cultural references to subvert fixed constructions of identity. These writers collectively propose that hybridity in Pakistani fiction is not a linguistic state, but a site of resistance, self-reflection, and negotiation. Language itself becomes a political act, and fiction becomes the site where identity is unmade and remade in the shadow of empire.

4. Nationalism, State Narrative, and Historiography

The construction of national identity in postcolonial Pakistan has been shaped by state-centered discourses that privilege Islamic unity at the cost of often marginalizing sub-regional, ethnic, and linguistic diversity. Qasmi (2014) examines how state historiography imposes a hegemonic Muslim identity constructed on colonial dualisms, suppressing the pluralistic roots of the subcontinent. Qazi (2020), using Foucauldian discourse analysis, argues that school textbooks are ideological instruments that efface alternative histories and identities, particularly non-Muslim or women's experiences. Jahangir (2019) condemns the post-Partition nation-building exercise, arguing that the imposition of Urdu and Islam as markers of unity further entrenched internal divisions and alienation among diverse communities. Hoodbhoy (2023), in a broad historical sweep, substantiates this by arguing that the postcolonial state was unable to dismantle the colonial apparatus it inherited, particularly its education system and bureaucratic machinery. These studies demonstrate that literature—contrasted with state narratives—can subvert these ideological constructions. Both *Ice-Candy Man* and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* subvert exclusionary nationalism by placing the complexities, contradictions, and contestatory meanings of identity in a postcolonial nation still haunted by imperial legacy at the center of attention.

5. Gender, Power, and Postcolonial Resistance

Gender is front and center in postcolonial scholarship, both as thematic concern, but also as a method for understanding power, control, and resistance. Kandiyoti (2002) theorizes nationalism as necessarily patriarchal, employing the symbolic figure of women to express a sense of cultural purity. Das (2000) analyzes how security discourses and nuclear nationalism in South Asia deploy the body of women as a site of communal and state control. Naeem (2024) moves on to consider cultural resistance, analyzing how poetry, film, and literature deconstruct hegemonic gendered roles, queer and feminist embodiment in particular. Safeer (2016) regroups colonial writers like Kipling, proposing that their linguistic experimentation somehow furnished the basis for the postcolonial challenge to patriarchal norms in language itself. These works suggest that gender in postcolonial literature is less about representation, and more about challenging the structures of dominance handed down by colonial and nationalist projects. Sidhwa and Hamid both employ gender as a constitutive part of identity formation and resistance, whether through victimhood, solidarity, or symbolic opposition.

Unexplored Dimension

Prior research on *Ice-Candy-Man* and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* has examined themes of colonial heritage, Partition trauma, and national identity in Pakistan. Nevertheless, these studies frequently consider colonial legacy and national identity in isolation, failing to explore how their interaction influences modern Pakistani identities. Moreover, there is scarce comparative research on how the narrative methods in these novels reveal and contest colonial influences while redefining national identity. This study tackles this void by examining the intricate relationship between colonial legacy and national identity in both works, emphasizing how Pakistani literature navigates and reshapes the remnants of empire to formulate changing identities.

Research Methodology

This study has a qualitative, interpretive research design rooted in postcolonial literary criticism. The core method is thematic analysis based on the theoretical understanding of Bhabha (1994) highlighting literature's representation of colonial heritage and nationhood. Instead of depending on quantitative data, this research performs close reading and critical text analysis to establish repeated patterns, symbols, and narrative techniques in the novels chosen.

Thematic analysis was achieved through a multi-stage process. Closely read each novel first to determine overarching themes of identity, trauma, hybridity, nationalism, and resistance. Critical narrative strategies, including point of view, symbolism, diction, and temporal structure, were examined in context of these themes. Initial codes were developed from explicit textual material (e.g., dialogue, setting) and implicit layers (e.g., metaphor, irony). These codes were then sorted into analytical categories in line with the research questions and theoretical framework. This enabled the researcher to follow the way that each novel interacts with the legacy of empire while building individual and collective identities.

The choice of *Ice-Candy Man* by Bapsi Sidhwa and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid was not just made on the basis of thematic relevance but also because they are culturally, historically, and academically significant. Both books are extensively taught in Pakistani and global academic programs and are regarded as milestone works in Pakistani Anglophone literature. Sidhwa's book is representative of the genesis trauma of Partition, whereas Hamid's novel is representative of the post-9/11 identity crisis in a globalized world. Their contrasting historical context and stylistic variations offer an interesting comparative context for analyzing the manner in which Pakistani literature navigates colonial legacies and evolving national identity.

Results / Analysis

This part presents comparative thematic analysis of Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man* and Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* in order to examine how both novels question colonial heritage and national identity in postcolonial Pakistan. By narrative structure, symbolism, language, and character representation, the novels reveal the intricate ways historical trauma, hybridity, and religion make up the continued negotiation of identity.

1. Cultural Mixing: Identity in the Third Space

Both texts represent characters traversing hybrid cultural selves in what Bhabha (1994) refers to as the "Third Space." Lenny, as a Parsi child who has been educated in English, finds herself between the colonial and native spheres in *Ice-Candy-Man*. Her statement, **"God, I thank Thee that I am a Parsee."** (*Sidhwa, p. 10*), describes the complex identity she holds—privileged but marginal. Likewise, in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Changez is a figure of hybridity via his Western education and Pakistani heritage. When he insists, **"I was, in four and a half years, never an American; I was immediately a New Yorker"** (*Hamid, p. 33*), it is an articulation of his closeness to but marginalization from Western belonging. Yet, the post-9/11 context reveals hybridity to be unstable, as racial profiling and surveillance make the in-between space unlivable. This instability continues into the postmodern condition, where identity is mediated by global media, digital surveillance, and algorithmic profiling. Here, hybridity is not freeing but becoming ever more fragile and surveilled.

2. Colonial Legacy as a Persistent Structure

The novels indicate that colonialism is not just historical but structurally ingrained in postcolonial society. In Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy-Man*, Partition trauma is attributed to British divide-and-rule strategies: **"The land was divided, but the blood would not wash off so easily"** (*Sidhwa, p. 152*). Hamid considers how history shapes perception: **"One historical event could mold how countless individuals perceive one another"** (*Hamid, p. 45*). These words point to the persistent influence of colonial reason in mapping political borders and interpersonal relationships.

3. Fragmented and Negotiated National Identity

Both works undermine the notion of an unchanging national identity. Ice-Candy-Man illustrates fluid allegiances in the context of religious conflict: **"He says like the breeze—today a Hindu, tomorrow a Muslim, always a survivor"** (*Sidhwa, p. 87*). This implies identity is adaptive and survival-dependent. In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Changez observes, **"I was, and still am, an outsider in an unfamiliar place"** (*Hamid, p. 102*), confirming the duality and instability of postcolonial selfhood. This instability resonates with Bhabha's theory of mimicry, whereby the colonized self mimics but can never be the colonizer, unveiling the fissures in imposed identities.

4. Narrative Structure as a Tool of Resistance

Narrative point of view itself is a critique of colonial discourse. Sidhwa uses a child narrator whose innocence disturbs linear, official histories: **"I watch, but I do not understand—not yet"** (*Sidhwa, p. 12*). Hamid's dramatic monologue disturbs reader-objectivity and is orientalist suspicion: **"Tell me, do you think my story is implausible?"** (*Hamid, p. 8*). Both plays resist dominant Western narratives and provide voice to postcolonial uncertainty. In the age of the digital, these narrative modes also confront contemporary surveillance apparatuses and transnational narrative control, providing story-telling as resistance during times of algorithmic identity formation.

5. Memory and Trauma in Identity Formation

Memory and trauma play a fundamental role in formulating postcolonial identities. Memory of violence constructs collective identity in Ice-Candy-Man: **"The screams of that night echo still in my heart"** (*Sidhwa, p. 176*). In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Changez internalizes suspicion: **"The burden of suspicion trails behind me like a shadow"** (*Hamid, p. 130*). Such descriptions illustrate that trauma not only mirrors the past but also reconstructs the self after its occurrence. The persistence of these memories in the age of a digitally connected world further complicates recovery, as postcolonial subjects are perpetually reminded of their 'otherness' through media and virtual images.

6. Religion as Political and Private Self

Religion functions as both an identity marker and a divider. Sidhwa uncovers this in communal violence: **"A Muslim mob attacks a Hindu procession. A Hindu mob sets fire to a Muslim mohalla"** (*Sidhwa, p. 155*). Ice-Candy-Man's becoming avenging demon like after going through the Gurdaspur train horror is the combination of religion and nationalism: **"It bore the undead"** (*Sidhwa, p. 203*). And Hamid shows Changez's religion as reflective and symbolic: **"I had seen America as a companion. yet now she had become an angry partner"** (*Hamid, p. 75*). His increasingly bushy beard is a subversive act in silence, an indication of a reasserted self based on dignity and resistance.

Together, these thematic prisms show how Sidhwa and Hamid represent postcolonial identity as splintered, contested, and constantly framed by past and contemporary power relations. By taking Bhabha's theory of hybridity beyond the postcolonial and into the postmodern and digital era, both novels show how the construction of identity today is not merely political and cultural but algorithmic, transnational, and highly surveilled. Their narrative approaches and symbolic techniques critically lay bare the unresolved tensions of empire, modernity, and nationhood in Pakistani fiction.

Discussion

The comparative study of Ice-Candy Man and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* unmasks the way Pakistani literature materializes the inheritance of colonialism across generations. Through linking these works with the interventions of postcolonial theory—particularly Bhabha's theory of hybridity—it is possible to see that identity is not a stable cultural essence, but a site of negotiation produced by historical rupture and political gaze. In Lenny, hybridity is innocence of confusion; in Changez, it is self-aware ambivalence. Both characters embody Bhabha's "third space," where

identity resides in between cultural oppositions—between colonizer and colonized, insider and outsider, victim and participant.

Yet, the novels undercut Bhabha's optimism as well. Changez's postmodern self does not cohere in hybridity—it shatters under watching, culpability, and estrangement. This urges a digital/postmodern expansion of Bhabha's theory: in a mediated world organized around media, mobility, and conflict, hybrid selves are under new forms of menace—not merely mimicry, but profiling, erasure, and commodification.

These observations add to larger South Asian and diasporic literary scholarship. They indicate that Pakistani fiction provides not merely national, but transnational critiques—delineating how history, surveillance, and cultural displacement function across the world. Such fiction dissolves the distinction between local trauma and global identity politics, providing useful lessons for postcolonial, migration, and trauma scholars.

Conclusion

The present research has investigated the long-term impacts of colonial heritage and the multifaceted formation of national identity in Pakistani literature by comparing *Ice-Candy-Man* and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Through narrative devices, symbolic imagery, and thorough application of postcolonial theory, both novels demonstrate how Pakistani identities continue to be forged by historical trauma, cultural hybridity, and socio-political imperatives. Whereas Sidhwa depicts the unvarnished violence of colonial partition, Hamid observes the more insidious but no less dislocating forces of international imperialism and post-9/11 paranoia. Both texts subvert monolithic national tropes and affirm the power of literature as a site of resistance, remembrance, and reconstruction.

Aside from its theoretical interest, this research makes significant contributions to the practice of postcolonial pedagogy and literary teaching. These texts, which are already widely taught in Pakistan and overseas, provide fertile ground for reconsidering national curricula. Teachers and policy-makers might use such works to encourage critical thinking on history, identity, and power beyond the level of surface patriotism to subtle comprehension. This research also opens doors to future study of language literature in the region, in which colonial inheritances and identity politics appear in other forms. Such inquiry may also enlarge the conversation, making sure that the postcolonial experience is examined not just in terms of English-language accounts but also through native expression and folk traditions.

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