



RESEARCH PAPER

**An Inquiry on disregarding Tradition in the Indian Subcontinent;
Taking Lahore as A Case Study**

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DOI

[http://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2022\(6-II\)70](http://doi.org/10.47205/plhr.2022(6-II)70)

PAPER INFO

ABSTRACT

Received:

March 03, 2022

Accepted:

June 21, 2022

Online:

June 23, 2022

Keywords:

Colonialism,
Otherness,
Postcolonial,
Traditionalism

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This research explores the dilapidation of Tradition from sophistication to taboo in the Indian subcontinent, particularly In Lahore. British Colonizer's supremacy manifests in the region under the British East India Company (Company) and later British Raj. The argument in this research is based on the supposition that the British manipulation and resultant 'Othering' caused the traditional sophistication to become distasteful. It is established through national and international postcolonial literature, and then its impact on Natives is documented, taking Lahore as Case Study. The research concludes that the 'othering' by British colonizers inculcated an inferiority complex in Natives. Resultantly, natives wished to be 'like Colonizer and abhorred their Tradition. It is recommended to overcome the inferiority complex and appreciate the traditional ways that might prove the right choice.

Introduction

It is hard to discern postcolonial matters without deciphering colonialism. Colonialism is the political and economic domination of a people of an area by foreign settlers (Merriam Webster, 2022) and forcefully expanding their sovereignty over dominated people or natives of that area (Jaware & Mangwani, 2012). From the 15th century A.D. to the late 19th century A.D., the period is marked by European colonialism when 3/4th of the earth was European Colonies. Natives were enslaved and oppressed in those colonies since the colonizers exploited them and their resources for economic and political interests. Moreover, under 'Cultural colonization', natives' minds were so manipulated that they started to assimilate the Colonizer not by force but by their consent (Jaware & Mangwani, 2012). Nandy (1989), in his book '*The Intimate Enemy*', described the manipulation mentioned above as psychological plunders and Chastisement to accept the cognitive categories of new social norms. However, this manipulation is invariably noticed and becomes the precise gauge of dominance and oppression of natives by the Colonizer. Similarly, Ngugi (1993) uses 'cultural bombing' and 'linguistic oppression' to denote the manipulation mentioned above (As cited in Digole,2012).

Likewise, Césaire (2001) describes that '*colonization was neither benevolent enterprise nor to push back the edges of disease, oppression and ignorance but the pirates, merchants, gold digger, ship owner and wholesale grocers, and behind this all, the malignant projected shadow of refinement which, at a certain point in its history, finds itself indebted, for internal reasons, to outspread the struggle of its economies at world scale*' (p.10-11)

Notably, in the Indian context, according to Reijai (1995), to achieve political, social, and economic sleaze, the British manipulated the educational system, literature, and Eurocentric Historical Construct to rationalize their rule. From the mid-eighteenth century, The Indian subcontinent, including present-day independent Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India, was under the British (Sengupta, 2019) in the form of the Company and British Raj. The Company practiced the political authority to distort law and order and misused India's wealth. Instead of getting an improved quality of life in colonies, the natives were exploited for their humbleness and cordialities (Hobson, 2005). This research deliberates the exploitation and manipulation of natives as 'Otherness'. The Whiteman's superiority indoctrinated a subservience in natives for being traditional. Consequently, natives tend to replace their cultural, philosophical, and religious values with 'foreign' values. Fanon (1952) narrates the Similar confounding effects of othering by colonizers on the psychology of colonized.

This article probes the 'othering' and its confounding effects through National and International Literature. Postcolonial literature is extensively scrutinized to reveal the 'otherness' of natives in the subcontinent. The trajectory of traditional sophistication in the subcontinent to taboo is traced with the help of a relevant literature review. The sophistication of Traditional is described through a dedicated section in the article. The tangible expression of Traditional sophistication to taboo is expressed through the built environment taking Lahore as a case study under the British Practice of otherness/racism.

Literature Review

The Postcolonial Literature is very insightful to appreciate the cultural clash of colonizers and natives, where the former believes themselves superior and later couldn't think of themselves as inferior based on othering by the former. This postcolonial literature and theory cover the socio-cultural effects of colonizers from the beginning of colonialism until the contemporary independent era. Natives were called old-fashioned traditional and were considered 'others'. Through postcolonial literature, this section of the article discerns how being traditional developed an inferiority complex in natives?

Interpretation of Colonizers' Othering through Postcolonial Literature

'Otherness' is an expression of 'Modernity' as an opposite of 'Tradition'. Under colonizers, the indigenous class and caste systems were replaced by another system, with only two classes: 'Modern' or 'Other'. Henceforth, everyone is 'Other' except those following the 'Modern'. The more dominated British, the more adaptation of their lifestyle by the local elite has prevailed in the city – this distress of being 'others' induced inferiority in Natives about their traditions and ways of life. The Colonizer obliterated local Culture with exposure to their norms and language (Fanon, 1952 as cited in Chandio et al., 2017) to demonstrate that the Indian subcontinent had been

historically devoid of civilization and Culture (Sandhu 2014). Such cultural obliteration of natives and authority had been practiced in all colonies, termed as 'association' in French and 'suzerains' by the British (M. Beliso-De Jesús & Pierre, 2020). The colonizers imposed their standards on the natives considering them less human and other (Sharmin, 2018).

This dilemma of considering natives' as less human or other is widely discussed in postcolonial literature. For instance, In *Beloved*, Morrison (1987) gives voice to the repressed other. She describes otherness on both physical and psychological levels. In the same way, *Foe* by Coetzee (1986), in which Susan's illogical anxiety echoes the extensive fears of colonial, oppressed society. The fear of anthropophagy turns quickly into an excuse for subjugating and domestication of the apparent cannibal. Still, as Susan's crazy fright shows, the fear is internal to the white Colonizer. Similarly, the impression of the Colonizer's apathy and resultant inferiority to natives is truthfully narrated by Angelou in her book *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969). Said (1995) writes about the othering in the introduction of 'Orientalism' '... The Orient is not only in line with Europe; rather its cultural competitor, and one of its genuine and utmost repeated metaphors of the Other' (p.1).

Ball (1857), in his *History of the Indian Mutiny*, explores the mythical character of an Indian sepoy, who was very loyal to the East India Company and later became rebellious on learning that the Company was tricking him. Likewise, Ali's *Twilight in Delhi* (1995) is an excellent narration to understand the decline and eventual fall of the native Culture and Tradition under EIC and later the British Raj. Similarly, Mastur's *Aangan* (2012) describes the lives of natives in the early 20th century. How the father, a native officer, served under the British of Aalia (main character of the novel) was punished in prison. He could not make it home till his death on an English officer's less respectful behavior. And the aunt of Aalia, on earning a master's degree in English, would behave indifferently and consider 'other' to her siblings.

Native's Reverence for the British Officers and the Aim of the Company

The othering, mentioned above, by the British induced inferiority in natives. As a result, they became so reverent to English that natives would consider COMPANY some respectable old lady (Hockley, 1883), and the British officers were her offspring (Cheema, 2018). Sidhwa (1989, p.40) describes the socio-political scenario and understanding of natives' sincerity and reverence for the Colonizer's authority and indifference to their Culture, *'If we must pack off, let's go to London at least. We are the English king's subjects, aren't we? So, we are English!'* An account of the high stature of reverence is found in a drama film, *The Rising* (2005). Numerous scenes in the movie show that natives were deceived and disgraced, but they were so loyal to the English that wet nursing by Indian maids to the English kids resulted in severe weakness of their kids. But the native women would continue nursing white kids and ignoring theirs, unaware of the Colonizer's aim.

Aim of the Company

The Company's industrial development, like watt's steam engine, spinning jenny, and Crompton's mule, would remain inactive without resources provided by the Indian drain. The Company's practices deteriorated the Public Realm and caused social disruption and economic loss for Indian producers. The Bengal Famine of the

18th century is a dreadful cue of the consequence of corporate negligence and admitted as a 'desolation' by George Chesney, a Civil Servant at the India office, after a century of this unfortunate incident (Robins, 2012, pp206-207). In the same decade of the Bengal Famine, the directors of the Company installed a 10' across and almost 8' high new painting (Roma's allegory of *The East Offering Her Riches to Britannia*) in the Company's revenue committee room, where cash flow was monitored, at London headquarters. The cause was very explicit, *The Offering*, the Company's achievement in the commercial domination in Asia. Three women in the painting represent three countries: India, China, and Britain. The fair Britannia, sitting high, looks down at India, who offers her crown full of pearls and rubies. At the same time, China offers Porcelain and tea. A convoy of labourers with their goods is moving westward. In addition, in the background of the painting, there is a merchant ship full of treasure from the East. This shows the flow of wealth and offerings from the East to the West (Robins, 2012, pp1 -2).

Manipulation and Othering by the Company and Later on by British Raj

"A commercial company enslaved a nation comprising two hundred million people" (As per Tolstoy, in his letter to a Hindu on December 14, 1908, as cited in Dalrymple, 2019). A similar account about East India Company is found in *the lion and the tiger: the rise and fall of the British Raj, 1600-1947*, when Judd (2005) pursue to answer how a few external intruders were able to sail through the whole of sub-continent with no apparent rigid resistance. "Were they interested in advancement or manipulation? Did they live up to their mission of civilizing the uncouth races? (Ahmed, 2009)

According to Karl Marx, the Company was not only a human disaster but an offshoot of modernization. Sherwood informs the readers that England was not an impartial presence and didn't have a benevolent face; instead, they fought to get authority over the land belonging to the natives. For instance, Lord Cornwallis, governor-general in the late 18th century, took control of land under Mughal Emperors and replaced the Nawab's rule with the Company's regulations. Chatterjee, 2005, p.18). The majority of English, at that time, positioned in India under Company, were exerting political and military pressure, thus conjugating the purposes of trade and conquest (Grossman, 2001)

The London Times narrated the massive and brutal killing of natives in 1871; this unreasoned enagement set itself into the sheer hatred of dark-complexioned skin (quoted in Judd, 2005, p. 84). Furthermore, the racial basis is found in the development of Indian military regiments; the Sikh, the Mohammadan, the Dogra, and the Gorkha regiment. Each of these regiments was considered to beat the other unit on the battlefield. Even in the train system, separate compartments were provided to accentuate the difference in social status, and a separate compartment was reserved just for British officers (Imtiaz, 2013). This reticence with the natives was not limited to the train compartment but in railway housing. European officers were given high ranks and spacious residences, while natives, who would not get high positions, were given smaller homes.

Moreover, a buffer space between European and native places was maintained to accentuate the reticence (Khan, 2013). Likewise, the areas like Lawrence Garden in Lahore were formed to limit the interaction between colonizers

and colonized (Glover, 2008). Kipling narrated a similar concern (1959) "*a Sahib is a Sahib, and no companionship can transform the fundamentals of racial difference*" (p. 109).

Sophistication of Traditional Indian Subcontinent

The Company's first meeting with natives in 1614 is narrated as the first significant interaction between sophisticated Mughals and the grimy ambassadors (Dalrymple, 2019).



Figure 1. A woman in Dhaka clad in fine Bengali muslin, 18th-century. Source: (Hughes 2014)

It was a time when Eastern sophistication and affluence were the lures for Europe. The British had nothing to export to the East even after a century's working of EIC in India (Robins, 2012, p. 7). Before Company's plunder, Bengal was considered a 'Paradise on Earth' due to its wealth and prosperity. The quality of Bengali textiles attracted European merchants, and cotton imports from India drained the weavers in England (Robins, 2012, p. 60). The sophistication of clothing, simplicity of gorgeous native elegance, exquisite ways of living, and cleanliness is altogether depicted here (Fig 1.)

In the Company's early days, the English noblemen on their tour to the Indian subcontinent would get inspired by the sophistication of Indian Culture. For instance, the English noblemen would commission large-scale portraits depicting India-inspired attire to commemorate their proud tour (Smylitopoulos, 2012). During the 18th century, importing goods from the East in Britain caused anxiety regarding the danger of importing foreign wares (Molineux, 2005). The Company employees, on their return to Britain, would have a lot of money, and their returning home to Britain somehow meant they were invading Britain (Smylitopoulos, 2012)

Lahore's Traditional Built Environment, From Sophistication To Taboo

The sophistication was not limited to Indian wealth, textile, attires, and goods of import, but the built environment was of great attraction for the foreign visitors. For instance, according to Fra Sebastián, a Spanish missionary, '*Lahore is a stunning city with a large gateway. On my arrival in the city, I found many people in the streets, including pedestrians, riding animals, and small carts.*

This was receiving hour at court, so so many people on horsebacks escorted elites' (quoted in Qadeer, 1983,p.89). Similarly, as per Geddes (1917), 'for a tourist, who is already conversant with great examples of Muhammadan architecture, from Constantinople to all over India, Lahore is one of the most scenic with its multistorey building groups along with rich details' (As cited in Leonard,1986) (Fig2).



Figure 2 View of The Mosque of Wazir Ali Khan at Lahore by William Carpenter, 1856. Museum no. IS.57-1882

Lahore was labelled the finest city in the East, thrashing even Constantinople (Alam, 1986), As cited in Mahmood Mayo, 2012, p.87). The city's-built environment got boosted by the delightful addition of landscapes under the Mughals (Mughal, 2011). The city was organic in its layout, with twisting streets and narrow alleys. The city was a complex web of socio-cultural activities where Private and Public places fuse. Typically, the ground floor was used for commercial purposes and the upper floors as residences making the city life thrive round the clock. Many activities of daily living were at accessible, walking distances. Such walkable areas would enhance sociability and the overall ambience of the city (Yaseen, 2017). These essential qualities of the Traditional city were not only endorsed by Post Modern theorists like Jacob (1960), Alexander (1977), Rapoport (1990), Appleyard (1976) etc. but are endorsed by the charter of New Urbanism, too (Talen,2002). The informality in the primary urban structure of the Traditional city of Lahore had concerns with the human senses, as was evident in other Medieval cities of Spain and the Middle East (Broadbent, 1990, p.13).

Similarly, Traditional façade elements, Jharoka, brackets, and chajjas, added beauty to the building facades and served the function of Privacy, structure, and weather protection. Curvilinear, narrow streets, an essential element of a traditional city, would add to surprisingness and protection from strangers/outside(Broadbent, 1990, p.39). A curved street would not be seen by the passerby at once, as in a straight street where the passerby can see the whole street at

one end. Therefore a stranger will be reluctant to enter such curved streets compared to the straight ones. Moreover, the narrowness of the street would protect the user from scorching sunlight in summers and the bust of cold winds in winter (Broadbent, 1990, p.39). After annexation in the mid-nineteenth century, the British developed Lahore outside the city walls. The suburban areas (civil lines) with the colonial spatial imagination were developed to exert its influence. On the outskirts of the walled city, the British grew a new built environment (Glover, 2008, pp.57-58).

Table1
Changes in Lahore's Built Environment

Traditional			Modern British		
Physical characteristics	Induced qualities	Outcomes for the society	Physical characteristic	Induced qualities	Outcomes for the society
Twisting and curvilinear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Element of surprise • Low vehicle speed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interesting surprising • Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orthogonal planning where another end of the street is visible from one end. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No element of surprise • Encouraging high vehicle speed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monotonous Tedious • Prone to accidents
Self-ruled and Unpremeditated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No definite rules for building heights and property lines • No setbacks, windows directly opening in the street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ownership of the street space • Connection of residents with urban space • Natural surveillance • Safe space for children to play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controlled and premeditated space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definite property line • Setbacks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No ownership of street space • Alienation • Minimum surveillance • Dangerous space for children to play
Jharokas with jail work, balconies, bracketed projections In narrow streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picturesque view 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beauty and protection from harsh weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimalistic façade design in wide streets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intended and unremembered type 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indifferent • No protection from harsh weather

In contrast to the walled city's traditional curvilinear layout, an urban system with straight roads and a regular layout was developed (Qadeer, 1983, p. 83). The built environment of Lahore underwent major changes, and this new environment had an impact on society (as illustrated in table 1). Straight streets replaced the twisting and winding streets of the traditional built environment. These streets lacked the element of surprise and resultant interest of the user. On the contrary, straight streets were monotonous and boring for the user but useful for the speedy vehicles, thus making it dangerous for pedestrians and children to play.

Moreover, streets in the traditional setting were not built according to fixed bye-laws. Therefore, such streets would provide freedom of use for the residents and resultant strong connection with the street space. The windows and doors directly opening in the street would allow mothers to see their kids playing in the street while sitting inside the home. Opposing the qualities mentioned above, the bye-law street developed under the British lacked the bond between residents and street space and natural surveillance.

The traditional detail works like Jharokas, bracketed projections, balconies, and uneven building heights had superlative features of beauty, protection from severe weather, and a picturesque setting. With the minimalistic approach under the norms of the Modern built environment, planned wide streets lost their picturesque

beauty and weather protection. In short, the street spaces became less suitable for human beings and more for vehicles inducing alienation in the society

The goal of colonial officials was to create a different class of people among natives with English morals and opinions; the material environment was considered critical to achieving the goal. This had been a basis of policies wherever Europeans ruled (Glover, 2008, p. 199). Shortly, a new class emerged of natives who were Indian in color and blood but English in manners (Suleri, 2005, p.105). They were like Fanon's (1952) 'mimic men in *Black skin, and white masks*, who learned English but neither looked like English nor were accepted by English. Consequently, this class became eager to 'reform' their inherited Tradition with the Modern to at least be considered 'Modern' (Tuteja, 1992).

Consequently, the traditional walled city, once admired by foreign visitors, is now considered a city of dirty and dingy streets in the view of natives. As depicted in the novel *two friends* by a native writer, Nath (1899) '*the old city of Lahore has despicable streets, dilapidated houses, wobbled walls, and what not....*' (p.112), 'So much so that the modern built environment of Lahore city turned out to be as fascinating and captivating for the natives as the walled city was to the foreign visitors. For instance, in the description of Mall Road by Nath (1899) '*I dare not depict the multifarious charms of this exquisite road---the 'Upper Mall.' Its beauty is indescribable ...*' (p.115).

Conclusion

The colonial experience is an ongoing phenomenon even after the independence from the Colonizer (Sawant, 2012). Nandy (1989) explains through the example of India that after many years of independence, colonial ideology is still dominant in many spheres of life because the psychological state under colonialism represents specific cultural endurance and a piece of particular cultural baggage. Therefore, postcolonial countries continuously struggle with intellectual, political, and socio-cultural facets of life. The undermining by the British is explicit in the national and international postcolonial literature. The region-specific literature particularly narrates the wretchedness of natives' lives under colonial rule. Let alone the desire to be modern or like colonizers, the native wanted to refrain from their Tradition, particularly the class 'Indian in color and English in taste'.

The consequence of colonialism in the subcontinent halted the thinking of natives. Even after independence, they still feel proud of their Englishness. The sophisticated Tradition, textile, dressings, language, ways of life, and the built environment became taboo due to the undermining of the British. The traditional city of Lahore had an organic layout with curvilinear street patterns. The built environment was diverse and community-based. But the Modern built environment practiced by the British was greeted with passion by the Natives. The modern built environment still spellbinds the people in independent Pakistan, Despite the endorsement of the traditional built environment by the New Urban Agenda (2030) (U.N. Habitat: for a better future, 2020). and the charter of New Urbanism. Natives are reluctant to embrace their traditional values and built environment like their ancestor class of natives who were eager to 'reform' their inherited Tradition with the Modern during colonial rule.

The othering caused the severe inferiority complex in Natives that they pull all their efforts to prove themselves like colonizers or be Modern instead of retaining and feeling pride in their Tradition. We might need the courage, similar to the fearless character of the Turkish Novel *Snow* (2004), to get rid of this mimicry. Amidst the killing of high school kids by soldiers who supported headscarf girls, that daring boy (fearless character) shrieked: Damn the Godless secularists! Damn the fascist infidels! (p.169). The research concludes that it is needed to appreciate the Tradition instead of blindly following the modern. It is high time to strengthen our research to refrain from mere duplication of modern built environment rather according to our requirement

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