



Postcolonial Elements in Muhammed Hanif's A Case of Exploding Mangoes and Red Birds

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Keywords: Post colonialism, Orientalism, Subalternity, the West, the East, Satire, Humour	The present paper seeks to investigate the postcolonial elements in Muhammed Hanif's celebrated works <i>Red Birds</i> (2018) and <i>A Case of Exploding Mangoes</i> (2008). It aims to assess Colonial legacy in Pakistan and other Muslim states. It also aims to analyse the use of narrative strategies and literary techniques to challenge the popular colonial narrative. The theory of Orientalism put forward by Edward Wadie Said in <i>Orientalism</i> (1978), and subalternity notion presented by Gayatri Spivak in her famous essay <i>Can the Subaltern Speak?</i> (1988) are employed as theoretical model to evaluate the selected text. The researcher has used qualitative research method for the study. Through purposive sampling technique, relevant texts have been selected for the present study. The findings of the paper declare that Post colonialism still exists in former western colonies. In Pakistan it has been experienced in the form of dictatorial reign as well. The unnecessary western intervention and desire for dominance particularly that of America is easily noticeable in the novels, on Pakistan or other Middle Eastern state. The scholar finds out the prejudiced and unfair Western narrative about the East. The western narrative presents a backward, irrational, chaotic, uncivilised image of the East, quite contrary to Western portrayal. The Western interference whether directly through war or indirectly in other ways results in long lasting turmoil, chaos and devastation for the war affected. It also exposes the inefficacy of war aids that turn out to be self-serving, ill planned and insensitive programs. The study emphasises that dictatorship is a kind of post colonialism that deprives people from their fundamental rights, like action speech and writing. The incapable judicial system caused General Zia-ul-Haq's decline. The study has significance because it examines post colonialism in post colonized states through multiple means.
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1. INTRODUCTION:

The goal behind the present study is to explore the theory of Postcolonialism as well as its instances in the two novels i.e. *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (2008) and *Red Birds* (2018) by British Pakistani writer Muhammed Hanif. The study takes up major postcolonial concepts of two prominent theorists Edward Wadie Said (1978) and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988) as frameworks to apply the selected texts.

In addition to Postcolonial, there is another term post-colonial. While the two terms seem similar, there is some subtle difference depending on the context. Post-colonial typically implies a period after colonialism, whereas postcolonial focusses on the prevailing impacts of colonialism across space and time. Basically, post-colonial signifies the period after the end of colonial rule, generally denotes the time after a nation becomes independent after colonialism.

Postcolonialism chiefly focusses on racism, cultural dominance and chase for forgotten identity. Postcolonialism manifests that colonialism has left social, cultural and political prints on the colonized nations. Surprisingly they carry these traces with them as their cultural asset. Postcolonialism brings to light many significant issues like suppression, rebellion and marginalisation. . It manifests the socio economical, socio geographical, socio political realities of a formerly colonized region. Different states of the world have gone through the foreign intervention in different periods. This intervention encompasses most enduring impacts and turns out to be destructive for these nations in a few ways. Postcolonialism in literature, therefore emerged as a discipline to help understand these complexities. The term refers to a piece of literature dealing with the far reaching impact of colonialism. Additionally, postcolonialism strives to diffuse Eurocentric traditions. It attempts to rejuvenate the abandoned and forgotten colonized identities and challenges the concept that Western or European culture is more popular or superior to Eastern culture.

By following close textual reading method and analysis, the present study spotlights the theory of Postcolonialism and examines the writer's narrative strategies to strengthen or subvert the dominant colonial narrative.

Problem Statement:

The Britishers occupied or colonized various states around the world at different points in time and ruled for a long period. The colonized resisted and fought back for their independence. Indian subcontinent was declared independent and consequently two sovereign states Pakistan and India emerged on the map of the world. Likewise, Middle Eastern states got rid of colonialism and were enlisted among free states. Yet, the aftermaths of long-lasting colonial rule are still apparent in former colonies. Traces of colonialism are still easily observable there, in one way or the other. Therefore, the people couldn't cut ties with colonialism completely. The current issue pertains to the postcolonialism that Pakistani writer Muhammad Hanif has brought up in his literary pieces.

Research Objectives:

The study aims to achieve the listed objectives

- To inspect the field of Pakistani literature, by focussing on colonial legacy in *Red Birds* (2018) and *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (2008).
- Examining incorporation of narrative strategies and literary techniques in Hanif's works to accept or challenge the colonial master narratives.

Research Questions:

The present study strives to investigate the answers to the following queries.

1. How does Hanif portray colonial heritage in Pakistan and an unnamed Muslim state?
2. How does Muhammed Hanif's employ the literary devices and narrative techniques to accept or challenge the colonial master narratives?

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY :

This research utilises qualitative research approach to critically examine the novels *Red Birds* and *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* by Muhammed Hanif. Qualitative research approach deals with words or phrases. The paper aims to explore the postcolonial instances in the novels. Therefore, the scholar opts the qualitative approach for it deals with textual data and tends to examine the social complexities and norms. It usually offers a glimpse into human emotions, experiences and viewpoints regarding a specific issue. The study becomes more useful when the other scholars intend to interpret the underlying meanings linked to people's experiences and conduct. It largely relies on human experiences, the way meanings are derived and analysed in a specific social context.

3. Theoretical Framework:

Postcolonial theory serves as the main focus and base for the research to accomplish the goals of the study. The texts will be critiqued under the postcolonial lens to get a comprehensive understanding of the selected linguistic data.

Significance of the Research Work:

The study is significant because it tends to offer various instances of postcolonialism in the selected texts. It explores the theory of postcolonialism. It stresses on the valuable contribution of renowned postcolonial thinkers : Edward Said and G. Spivak. The study examines how the writer demonstrates unfortunate postcolonial remains in Pakistan's social, political setting by showcasing them in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (2008). *Red Birds* (2018) reveals the horrific enduring impacts of colonialism in a war torn Muslim state. Upcoming researchers will find the present research helpful in discovering the postcolonial elements in the novels. They can derive value from the postcolonial key concepts and the theorist's notable contribution can further assist them in their research. Moreover, the analysis section presents them a comprehensive overview of postcolonialism in Pakistan and Middle Eastern state as depicted in the texts.

Present study is delimited because firstly the scholar aims to find Postcolonialism only in Muhammed Hanif's selected works *Red Birds* (2018) and *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (2008). Secondly, the scholar attempts to analyse only the selected chunks from the novels. Additionally, the scholar's own perspective can influence the interpretation.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Postcolonialism- A critical approach:

Postcolonialism addresses two chief aspects. First is the historical angle which refers to the period when colonial regime was over. It specifically demonstrates the oppressed colonized struggle for peace, identity and freedom. Other is intellectual or political context that centres on evaluating colonial discourse, recovering oppressed histories, and spotlighting the emotions and experiences of the colonized. Numerous writers, from Pakistan, India, Australia and Ireland have highlighted the issues of colonial ideologies, injustice and violence in their postcolonial work. Additionally, the native uprising and struggle against their colonial rulers are the major themes. Postcolonial theory and literature aim to distinguish between the colonized and the colonizer. Postcolonialism in literature implies the work produced by the previously colonized people.

The field of Postcolonialism primarily focusses on racism, cultural dominance and chase for identity. It manifests the socio economical, socio geographical, socio political realities of a formerly colonized region. Different states of the world have gone through the foreign intervention in different periods. This intervention encompasses most enduring impacts and turns out to be destructive for these nations in a few ways. Postcolonialism in literature, therefore emerged as a discipline to help understand these complexities. The term refers to a piece of literature dealing with the far reaching impact of colonialism. Additionally,

postcolonialism strives to diffuse Eurocentric traditions. It attempts to rejuvenate the abandoned and forgotten colonized identities and challenges the concept that Western or European culture is more popular or superior to Eastern culture.

Postcolonialism as a critical approach evolved progressively in the early 1990s , primarily from the foundational work *Orientalism* (1978) by Edward Said and famous essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988) by Gayatri Spivak. These theorists confronted the conventional norms of Imperialism and Colonialism. They criticised the accepted viewpoints because of which the West imposed its will and control on the colonized states. As for Pakistan, Colonialism has always impacted its culture, society and history. The Britishers exploited Pakistan's resources, distorted the native culture and forced the alien Western values. Hanif's novels explore these complications not only in Pakistan's context but also in a war suffering Middle Eastern state. Furthermore, the selected novels inspect the means through which colonialism manages to shape and impact Pakistani and other Muslim states' political, cultural and social setup.

The postcolonial doctrine evolved gradually as a literary reaction to economic, cultural and political influence that colonialism caused. Ali et al. Expresses that postcolonialism refers to representation of race and identity in the modern age (p.1). Ali et al further proposes that The postcolonial writers also examine how the literature of colonial powers encourages negative images of the colonized to defend colonialism (p.2115). Ideas of Famous theorists like Gayatri Spivak (1988) and Edward Said (1978) contributed significantly on this matter.

The concept of Orientalism by Said in his celebrated work *Orientalism* (1978) provides the foundation for postcolonialism. He states that the West has constructed the Eastern image as backward, inferior, irrational and exotic exactly opposite to superior, rational, advanced. His work emphasizes that colonized' cultures, histories and languages were distorted by the colonizers. Through Orientalism, West maintains its supremacy over the East and also justifies its colonial rule. While comparing East and West, they represented the Orient as Other. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's concepts are presented in *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988). Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's postcolonial theory is put forward in her famous essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988). Spivak asserts that the subalterns and the marginalised cannot speak really. If they somehow speak, they are ignored by the powerful. And in some cases, the subaltern is powerfully quietened by the colonial authority. Spivak critiques Western thinkers who declare themselves to become the voice of the oppressed and the marginalised stratum. She argues that even the most compassionate and considerate efforts by the colonizers to portray the life experiences and emotions of the subalterns come to nothing for these are only the narrative fabricated by the prejudiced western discourse.

Different scholars explore postcolonialism. Sawant (2012), asserts that actually Said's *Orientalism* (1978) is the foundation for postcolonial framework. Tepeciklioğlu, (2012, July) examines that Post-colonial doctrine question the stereotype Western-dominated concept and also proposes a substitute and critical viewpoints. Maggio, (2007) explores Spivak's work and finds out that the discourse of the West and Postcolonial is limited , and it's fairly difficult to interact with people coming from different cultures. Praveen (2016) investigates that Postcolonialism encompasses issues of orientalism, subaltern, identity, rebellion racism and diaspora.

Muhammed Hanif- Introduction:

The selected two novels are creation of Pakistani English author Muhammed Hanif. He was born in Pakistan in 1964. British newspaper Guardian announced him 'Pakistan's brightest voice'. He has numerous highly regarded works to his name: *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (2008), *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011) and *Red Birds* (2018), a film: *The Long Night* (2002), and plays : *What Now, Now That We Are Dead?* (2008), *The Dictator's Wife*

(2008). He graduated as an Air Force pilot and later on entered the field of journalism . He was acclaimed on global scale due to his exceptional fictional work.

Introduction of the selected novels:

A Case of Exploding Mangoes:

A Case of Exploding Mangoes (2008) and *Red Birds* (2018) represent numerous instances of postcolonialism in the social, political and cultural setting both in Pakistan and in a Middle Eastern state. The plot of the first novel *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (2008) takes its origin from a true event; an airplane crash that caused the demise of Pakistani dictator General Zia- ul-Haq in 1988. Zia was a long term president (1977-1988) who imposed martial law and overthrew the government of one Pakistan's most popular leaders, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, to commence the totalitarian reign, the country never saw before. Hanif's darkly satirical novel depicts country's political scenario during Zia's rule. The central character Ali Shigri is a Pakistani Air Force cadet, who is determined to resolve the case of his father's mysterious demise. The government shuts the case by declaring it a suicide. Shigri finds himself caught up in a maze of political intrigue, inner betrayal and conspiracy while going through the complex power setup. During the barbaric rule, the masses undergo various crises and ordeals and suffer mentally and socially.

Red Birds:

The second celebrated novel *Red Birds* (2018) depicts the terrors and subsequent gruesome outcomes of war. It is a cutting ironic account of US war strategies where the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is depicted to be dishonest in its chase for peace and development in an unnamed Muslim state. *Red Birds* states the days and nights of camp people in a war suffering country. An American pilot crashes his plane and starves in the desert for eight days until a fifteen years old lad, Momo, rescues him and brings him to his refugee camp. Momo is obsessed by the ideas of money making. Ellie stays there and meets other characters of the novel i.e. Mother Dear, Father Dear, Momo's dog Mutt. . After many turns and twists, Momo and Mother Dear find Bro Ali and bring him home. But the ending is obscure and the writer leaves it up to the reader to interpret the ending in their way.

Analysis and discussions:

The selected texts of Muhammed Hanif are loaded with numerous instances of postcolonialism. The language of the novels encompasses plenty of satire and irony, humour, symbolism.

Red Birds:

In *Red Birds* (2018), Muhammed Hanif narrates the account of American bombing on an unnamed state in Middle East. *Red Birds* portrays characters, caught up in an endless war. Muhammed Hanif questions the desire for peace in horrible circumstances. Illustration of the tragic repercussions of war is the most striking characteristic of Hanif's writing. The US war policies and its unjustified interference in the Middle East are criticised thoroughly. Edward Said (1978) in his book *Orientalism* (p.1) used the terminology orientalism in his postcolonial theory. The idea of the other is also presented in his theory. Numerous examples of orientalism are found in *Red Birds*. Major Ellie wanders in the desert and the words of Colonel Slatter (his instructor) haunt him. Colonel stands as an epitome of orientalism in the novel).

You hear your man is down, you take off and fly the same route, complete the mission.

It used to be about fighting off fear, telling enemies that maybe they can bring you down but you'll still scorch their miserable lives" (*Red Birds*, 2018, p.9).

These lines by Colonel reflect the insensitive western mindset. It shows that their objective is to suppress and dominate the war affected people, at any cost. The people living in war place are struggling for their survival facing shortage of water, food, shelter, security

and other necessities of life. Yet the westerners completely fail to feel any humanity and sympathy for them in any way. Here the concept of orientalism and other is quite vivid.

The following chunk manifests the feelings of Mother Dear and Momo on the mysterious disappearance of their beloved Bro Ali. Both of them restlessly look forward to hear any news from Bro Ali. Mutt's words reflect the family's frustration:

The Americans say he went missing. They used to say he went up into the mountains on a mission and is still there. Now they say nothing. (p. 29)

If seen through military lens, western powers consider themselves supreme in terms of technology, rationality and conflict strategy. They disdain their opponents as inferior, irrational, backward and in need to be controlled. Mutt's speech clearly demonstrates the arrogance and insensitivity of Americans.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988) proposed the concept of subalternity. In her postcolonial essay, she stresses that the subaltern people's voices are not heard. They are ignored, quietened, or misinterpreted deliberately in powerful setup. In the selected novel, the writer has given voice to the subaltern or marginalised stratum of society. In the novel, Mother Dear stands as the best example of subaltern group. Firstly, being a female and secondly, being a member of the suppressed marginalised section.. The following line portrays Spivak's postcolonial ideas in the best way.

First, they bomb us from the skies, then they work hard to cure our stress"(p.67).

The questions of the subalterns remain unanswered. The powerful do what they think they should do. They are not accountable for their actions. Nobody can question them for their savagery. Mother Dear expresses her emotions as the powerful first bring chaos and destruction to their lives, then they act as messiah and come up with the solutions and cures for the burning issues they themselves have created. Their double standard is of no use to the poor refugees.

"I am never gonna be good at reading depressed people's feelings but I think he sheds a tear... Who can say no to Americans?"

Momo knows that Father Dear is hesitant to provide any details about Bro Ali. Being a subaltern, he cannot speak and if he speaks up, his voice will be unheard. Father Dear is concerned about the people around him. People work but are unpaid, young boys are missing. Americans don't consider the people at the bottom of financial or social hierarchy equal and don't regard them. It not an a painful issue for the natives but not for the foreigners. The aspect that the subaltern remains helpless and powerless takes up a major place in Spivak's theory.

Narrative Strategies and Literary Techniques:

The writer makes use of several narrative techniques and literary devices. The writer uses Multiple Perspective known as shifting narration. Different characters unfold the story through their own standpoint. The story is told in a non linear narrative style. The characters tell the story in an unfixed way or order.

An important literary device used in the novel is satire and dark humour. Hanif employs this device to critique the dreads of war and the foreign intervention . On reaching the USAID refugee camp, Major finds the entry board in a pathetic condition, whispering about the miserable state of the camp and its inhabitants. There the following chunk reflects symbolism too.

The RE seems to have dislodged itself out of embarrassment. (p. 92)

At another point, the poor governance of the colonials is clear. They can't enforce laws despite of unlimited power and resources.

NO LITTERING signs over piles of litter. (p.92)

The writer uses an important device of magical realism. There is repeated metioning of ghosts, red birds and angels.

Red birds are real. The reason we don't see them is because we don't want to. (p. 84).
Red birds mystery is not resolved. Mutt get to see them at different points. Red birds add to the surreal and enigmatic atmosphere of the novel.

I need to go tell Momo that there is a ghost under our own roof" (p.209).

Due to all these strategies and literary devices the novel grabs the readers attention.

A Case of Exploding Mangoes :

Muhammed Hanif in his ironic masterpiece *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* successfully portrays enigmatic situation of Pakistan's society and politics during the tyrannical reign of General Zia-ul-Haq.

The writer points out postcolonialism existing in Pakistani society in one or the other way.

"There is poetry in committing a crime after you have served your sentence....

The guilty commit the crime, the innocent are punished. That's the world we live in." (*A Case of Exploding Mangoes*, 2008, p. 5)

These textual lines manifest that if a person has faced the punishment for the committed crime, then he is free to do the same wrong again. The use of word poetry signifies that amusement gets attached to that crime. Hanif satirises the incompetence of judicial system as it fails to deliver the justice to the innocents. The clean-handed people have to go through the trial for the sin they have not done, while the guilty are honourably set free. This is a common practice in postcolonial countries. Under unfair circumstances, the rebellious reaction of a young man like Ali Shigri after undergoing an undeserved penalty is likely.

These lines effectively mirror Gayatri Spivak's Subaltern theory(1988) that states that the marginalised (subaltern) group is doubly punished , one for the crime committed and secondly because of belonging to a subjugated stratum of society. On the other hand, the truths and facts are distorted and the elites and the powerful are not held accountable for their wrongdoing. (*Can The Subaltern Speak*)

"They all saluted him, called him Chief even in their private conversations according to the telephone transcripts that General Zia had seen, and carried out his orders.

But could he really trust this clean-shaven, whisky-swilling, elitist bunch?" (p. 37).

The excerpt successfully illustrates Zia's paranoia and scepticism about his comrades. The writer uses the cutting satire to gives a profound understanding of military and political setup. Zia is perplexed as the apparent obedience and regard may actually be deceiving . He fears the underlying hypocrisy and rebellion. He cannot count on the whisky loving, clean shaven elite group.

You want freedom and they give you chicken korma" (2008, p.127)

The linguistic chunk reflects the authoritarianism which is the basic characteristic of postcolonialism. Ali Shigri, the protagonist, wants to break away from the grip of despotism but the powerful do not let them get free. Instead of becoming less authoritative and less harsh they try to compensate them with a tasty token, something appealing or delicious. It is just another strategy of the totalitarian rulers to maintain their control and authority over the masses to offer a superficial and temporary alternative to take their attention away from the real issue.

Major Kiyani doesn't believe in giving anyone the right of way on this narrow, potholed road. He maintains his speed in the face of an incoming truck, flicks the car headlights to full beam, his fingers tap to the music on the steering wheel and at the last possible moment it's the truck that swerves and pulls off the road (2008, p.92).

The lines describe the personality of a member from the despotic ruling elite- Major Kiyani. The unusual conduct of Major illustrates the military arrogance.. His dominating and assertive behaviour remains the same even on seeing a visible danger (truck) approaching on a narrow damaged road. He is not willing to give the way to anyone. He represents the autocratic elite who establish themselves as powerful and unaccountable. This excerpt aligns

with Edward Said's *Orientalism* that asserts that the occident defined itself by creating a backward and irrational image of the Orient while an advanced, and superior image of the Occident. (1978).

Narrative Techniques and Literary Devices:

Muhammed Hanif makes use of first person point of view. Ali Shigri the cadet protagonist unfolds most of the story. Story telling style is fragmented but philosophical. Besides General

Zia, a few real life characters are also part of the novel. The work has nonlinear narrative style to create suspense, complexity and irony. The most widely used literary devices in the literary work are satire and irony. Yet at many points symbolism is also observed. Another important device used is humour which makes the novel amusing and light in tone. The below mentioned lines depict the military interrogation procedure in a humorous style.

"Anybody who breaks down at the sheer volume of this should stay in his little village and tend his father's goat...because as a soldier, noise is the first thing you learn to defend yourself against" (p. 18).

Ali Shigri goes through interrogation because of his friend's disappearance . He remarks humorously that if a person cannot bear the high volume and the nonsense spoken by the interrogative officer then he should better stay at his town. To have strong nerves and high volume is the pre requisite to be a part of armed forces.

Once General decides to guise as a common man and reach out to the public and get their perception about General Zia. On the way outside army house the gatekeeper teases him by saying:

Don't feel like going home, old man? Scared of your woman? (p.278)

A police constable offers Zia to crack a joke about General and consequently the constable will allow him to go on his way. This is ironical as well as funny because Zia knows plenty of jokes about himself. The behaviour of the officer stands for the frustration of the whole nation.

Tell me a joke and I'll let you go... Come on, tell us a joke about General Zia.'(p. 282). The author presents such examples to demonstrate the hatred and helplessness of the masses towards the despotic and imposed rulers but in a light hearted way.

5. Findings:

The story of the first novel *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* revolves around an airplane crash that caused the demise of Pakistani dictator General Zia- ul-Haq in 1988. Hanif showcases the sociopolitical atmosphere of Pakistan. He satirizes the dictatorial regime and highlights the corruption and chaos it caused to the nation. The story of the second novel *Red Birds* revolves around the sufferings of refugees in a war trodden state. Hanif mocks the futility and senselessness of US war. He asserts the inefficiency and incapability of USAID workers and their programs. The novel also ridicules Third World Muslim countries for being entangled in rigid beliefs, moral decline and poverty.

Muhammad Hanif intends to expose the double standards in Zia's authoritarian reign in the first novel while the hypocrisy and pointlessness of war in the second novel. He incorporates humour and satire generously throughout the course of the novels. The writer highlights in *A case of Exploding Mangoes* that although Zia endeavoured to enforce Islamic Sharia laws his own conduct contradicted this. He was more into worldly pleasures and motives like corruption and power. Ali Shigri stands for Pakistanis who were yearning for a noble change in the irrational dictatorial system and hopeful for a prosperous Pakistan. *Red Birds* ridicules the underdeveloped Muslim nations, in the grasp of poverty, rigid beliefs and cultural decline. He also mocks the senselessness of US imposed wars targeting Muslim countries worldwide. The horrifying and lifelong consequences of war are explicitly illustrated in the novel.

6. CONCLUSION:

To conclude, the research reveals that postcolonialism continues to impact previously colonized states including Pakistan. The Western colonial powers aspire to occupy more and more lands and resources. They wish to impose their control and authority beyond their former colonies. Pakistan once a British colony is a free state now yet the colonial legacy keeps going and is experienced politically, socially and mentally as narrated in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*. This novel also exposes political and military hypocrisy of that era. It highlights sociopolitical evils and systematic decline like corruption, nepotism, injustice, favouritism, abuse of religion, suppression of free speech and action and American influence.

It is the fundamental right of every individual and nation to be independent and make decision according to their will. But western states like America view themselves unaccountable and think it their basic right to poke their nose into other nations' affairs. They declare the eastern nations irrational, backward and inferior and in want to be controlled by West. Same scenario is portrayed in *Red Birds*. America bombards a Middle Eastern state with the goal to dominate them and occupy their land and resources. The incompetence of USAID programs, horrible and chaotic repercussions of war are effectively portrayed. The author uses several narrative techniques and literary devices like dark humour, satire, irony, symbolism, magical realism. Additionally, he includes actual figures as General Zia etc. in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*. He sketches real life events like bombardment in Muslim countries, the pathetic condition of refugees and their camps- all these elements collectively make the novels a compelling and interesting read.

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