

**A Postmodernist Re-Presentation of
Pakistani Politics: Irreverent Historical
Revisionism in Mohammed Hanif's *A
Case of Exploding Mangoes***



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Abstract

This thesis aims at qualitatively analyzing Mohammed Hanif's novel *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (published in 2008) in the context of the postmodernist theories of historical revisionism. In doing so, it focuses on how a discourse apparently intended to be a hilarious political satire can illustrate the fluid nature of historical data and its potential to recreate the meaning of historical events. Drawing on one of the most important streaks of postmodernist thought – incredulity toward metanarratives – this study regards Hanif's corrosive comedy as a reinterpretation of President Zia-ul-Haq's regime in the history of Pakistan. As such, it analyzes the role of ideology in the (re)construction of historical constructs while treating history, in accordance with the teachings of theorists like Keith Jenkins, as nothing more than multiple open-ended discursive practices. In this regard, the debates surrounding the antagonistic interpretations of Zia-ul-Haq's character and legacy among the liberal and the conservative factions of Pakistani historians and political analysts are here set within the context of ambivalent nature of available facts. The study intends to show how, with a change of narratorial tone and perspectives, historical personages and events can be reduced to farcical images even when they deal with ideologically sensitive issues like military dictatorship and the use/abuse of Islamic laws in Pakistan.

Keywords:

Postmodernism, history, revisionism, Mohammed Hanif, Keith Jenkins, ideology, satire

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Chapter 1:

Introduction

The present study aims at a qualitative discourse analysis of Mohammed Hanif's comic novel *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*, published in 2008, to explore perspectives of social, political and religious history of Pakistan during General Zia-ul-Haq's reign within the postmodernist framework of Historical Revisionism as theorized by Keith Jenkins. Jenkins defines historical revisionism as an ongoing process of the reevaluation of historical events and processes described and explained by the historians.

This study explores how Hanif projects an alternative historical context of socio-political and religious challenges faced by Pakistan such as religious intolerance, Islamization program, Cold war, controversial laws and the suppression of dissent in the country during General Zia-ul-Haq's regime. Thus, this book holds immense significance as it suggests a new way of studying political history to understand the present Pakistan as a postmodern society. Keith Jenkins, in his work *Rethinking History*, also suggests that historiography has entered a new era of postmodernism and that alternative points of view should substitute the more conventional ways of historiography, which fail according to the standards of the postmodern world due to their emphasis on fixed nature of reality. This chapter highlights the structure of the study by pointing out its objectives, significance, etc., as well as introducing the primary text along with its author to the reader.

1.1. Overview of the Novel *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*:

A Case of Exploding Mangoes is a groundbreaking postmodern novel written by British Pakistani writer, Mohammed Hanif. This postmodern novel gives an alternative and revised account of social, political and religious events spanning the last two months before the deadly plane crash in 1988 that mysteriously killed General Zia-ul-Haq. Hanif narrates the novel through Ali Shigri, the protagonist of the novel. Shigri seems to represent Hanif's

own perspective and voices the long-suppressed dissent in the country. Shigri – a trainee pilot – who is arrested for allegedly conspiring to kill General Zia, undergoes torture during his trial in a deadly prison. The present study focuses on how Shigri, during his trial, unveils the ways in which the dissent in the country was being suppressed during General Zia's regime. Thus, Hanif unveils a new twisted history and tries to give voice to the marginalized segment of society by challenging the conventional history of Pakistan.

Hanif has tried to throw light on General Zia's personality traits as a dictator. He presents General Zia as a comic character in the novel, who is inundated by the fear of his death. He suspects every other person, distances himself from the general public and sees the world with his peers' eyes. Hence, Hanif challenges General Zia-ul-Haq's persona as a strong dictator and comically presents his first meeting with eight elite and liberal generals after assuming the office to hint at his narcissism wherein, he presents himself as a custodian of Islam. He quotes Islamization as the reason behind his overthrowing an elected government. General Akhtar at once senses General Zia's self-obsession and succeeds in winning him over. Later on, General Akhtar plays a pivotal role in developing General Zia's Islamization program and makes sure that Pakistani society strictly accepts the same. Therefore, the present study also focuses on the role of the secret agencies, and bureaucratic administrators whose identities are never made public, in shaping social, political and religious scenario of Pakistani society by employing the historical revisionism.

Hanif also dismantles General Zia's persona as a pious man by comically quoting his intimate encounter with an American journalist, Ms. Joanne Herring. Hanif quotes the incident of Ms. Joanne's visit to General Zia that made him nervous and happy. General Zia, generally very strict about modesty, could not keep her from hugging him tight and indeed enjoyed the close touch. In another incident, his wife finds out an obscene magazine under his beddings, which enrages her so much that she decides to expose him at a public gathering.

This seems in contradiction to his public personality. Thus, Hanif tries to present General Zia as an entirely different person than what we know.

Historical revisionism gives such freedom. For example, Jenkins also holds that “history remains inevitably a personal construct, a manifestation of the historian’s perspective as a ‘narrator’” (14). History is inescapably interpretive and relative with multiple sides to each argument (30) it’s historian’s concept rather than historical concepts. These are not impersonal, obvious or universal. Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to explore the other side of his personality under the framework of historical revisionism.

Further, Hanif also reveals how these historical events such as the famous rape case of blind minor girl who faced execution from his own perspectives. Zainab’s blindness in the novel symbolizes the inability of the weaker segment of the society to see through the reality in a capitalist society. Her trial and execution mock the irrational nature of the legal system introduced by General Zia. The same law remained effective for decades even after General Zia’s demise and posed a serious threat for rape victims favoring their perpetrators. Thus, the study strives to understand the long-lasting effects of the controversial laws on the present social, political and religious scenarios of the country by Hanif’s own perspective.

1.2. Popular Media and the Records of History:

Hanif also delineates a very crucial aspect of General Zia’s regime i.e. the suppression of dissent and control of media to keep his odds far away. His control over the media also furthers his narcissism such as, Hanif writes in the novel an incident where, General Zia placed all the newspapers lauding him as the custodian of Islam and a high ranked general on the table. He could not help him smiling and finally expressing his satisfaction with media. He made sure that no newspaper ever published criticism against him. He set up a media cell in the Army House where all news reports, editorials and other publishing material were censored by his team. Jenkins also argues that power politics stops anything from being said

and allows only particular things into the mainstream discourse. In this way truth drawing the line works as censor... and “is dependent on somebody having the power to make it true”

(38)

Using humour and satire as his narrative tools, Hanif has discussed the most sensitive subjects of politics and history in General Zia’s era as one of the most significant periods in the history of Pakistan. General Zia took very bold steps while implementing his Islamization movement, radically affecting the fate of millions of people but whether he, as an individual, was responsible for forcing a change in socio-political lives of the Pakistanis, or he was merely an instrument in letting history follow its path is a question tied up with a number of critical debates.

The media and newspapers of Pakistan during the reign of General Zia-ul-Haq showed just one face of General Zia but there are, of course, other truths, which have not been scrutinized in great detail in some cases. This creates the ideological ground for a study of the present kind that focuses attention on looking at history as a critical practice of many different narratives. Conspiracy theories attempting to explain General Zia’s mysterious death abound and, using the devices of humour and satire, Hanif tries to draw our attention towards all possible open ends that could be potentially the answers to the mysteries regarding the case. Hanif, through his hilariously comic book, introduces the new academic debate to explore all possible dimensions of a given history that hold significance in our lives as Pakistan is still struggling with the laws and reforms introduced by General Zia that changed the social environment of the country. Officially sanctioned histories are controlled and limited, forcing people to believe a specific narrative. General Zia is remarkable as a history-making figure since he took many serious decisions that had long lasting impact on countless people’s lives. Hanif challenges the orthodoxies and traditions of the society and he believes that the review of the historical records can reflect new findings in form of truth,

verification, and analysis, which would then incite an improved history. Hanif is biased while explaining General Zia's character as he is just figuring out General Zia it shows that how historians just blame one person by forgetting the consequences of their surroundings. The writers of fiction and historians come up with their interests and findings and what they take as truth.

Similarly, George Orwell's novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a classical literary example of political fiction in which people were supposed to believe the specific values of "totalitarianism, mass surveillance, and state's oppressive control of all persons and actions within society". Orwell, himself was a democratic socialist after Stalinist Russia. Orwell scrutinizes the role of alternative facts within politics and the ways in which they are manipulated and operated.

1.3. Introduction to Mohammed Hanif:

Hanif is a British-Pakistani writer and journalist who primarily writes for the New York Times, BBC news, the Daily Telegraph, the New Yorker and the Washington Post ("Explaining a Novel to Pakistani Intelligence"). He was born in upper middle class family in Okara. Since his childhood, he remained interested in reading and writing. He was a brilliant student and won many medals during his academic years. Moreover, he was also a keen observer of politics since his early age and turned a rebel of the social system during his youth. He is known as a social critique who mocks the society for its injustices. He also tries to spread awareness regarding serious matters of life among others usually through humor ("An interview with Mohammed Hanif").

While studying in England, he published many articles, which reflected his biased opinions for his country. He is among the famous contemporary writers of the present age. Previously, he has worked on one of his most acclaimed dramas, the Long Night-a feature film. Majority of his plays have also been staged at the Hampstead Theatre.

In his novel *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*, he clearly depicts the different view of General Zia's personality, his army personnel and how he controlled dissent by uncompromising force. He also discusses the role of deep state and superpowers in running the state affairs during his regime.

1.4. Research Gap

Even though General Zia-ul-Haq's regime has been pored over by historians and political analysts from many perspectives during the last three decades, this research is distinguished by the fact that it employs deals with the analysis of a satirical novel through employing the jargon of postmodernist historiography as theorized by Keith Jenkins. As such, this study would be different from other leftist attempts at historical revisionism in the present Pakistani context because it shows how serious and consequential the ideological disruptions forming the crux of an apparently innocuous text of comic or satirical fiction can be for historians holds a very significant position among postmodern Pakistani writers as a new area in academic research in Pakistan as it introduces an innovative method to explore new dimensions and asking new questions about the historical events. Thus, while in general terms the present research contributes in understanding the present social, political and religious scenario of Pakistan, in particular terms it would be different from other leftist attempts at recording history because it aims at foregrounding alternative historical narratives through the analysis of a humorous novel. The interchangeability of historical and literary discourses, as advocated by a number of postmodernists – including Keith Jenkins – will be practically demonstrated with reference to the socio-cultural realities of Pakistan in this research.

1.5. Research Objectives:

- To analyze how Mohammed Hanif has satirically reimagined the social, political, and religious scenarios of the final phase of General Zia's regime to offer provocatively new perspectives on some significant historical events of Pakistan.
- To study how Hanif's humorous and satirical narratology can be seen as a demonstration of postmodernist revisionism, particularly as theorized by Keith Jenkins, in historical practices.
- To study how Hanif's innovative approach to history flouts socio-political conventions as he unhesitatingly pokes fun at sensitive subjects like religious laws and nationalist ideology, which are generally broached only very cautiously in Pakistani academic traditions.
- To fix critical attention on Hanif's interest in bringing out General Zia's image as a tyrant who, exercising his power by controlling the popular media and by setting up a sinister deep state machinery, reveals ideological strains that are potentially inconsistent with his official portrayal as a zealous devotee of Islam.
- To bring out the implications of Hanif's irreverent historiography for inviting debates about the socio-cultural challenges posed by the installation of an apparently monologic official ideology on the heterogeneous societies like those of Pakistan.

1.6. Significance of the Study:

The present study contributes in the field of historical revisionism – commonly identified with postmodernist thought patterns – as a new area in academic research in Pakistan while it introduces an innovative method to explore alternative dimensions and asking new questions about the historical events generally considered as the only reality. Hanif's novel *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* plays a very important role in re-examining the personality of General Zia-ul-Haq and the events leading to his demise, and at the same time focusing attention on

such themes as power politics, hidden realities, military abuse of power, and miseries of the common man.

Exploring new ideas in this phase of our national history can be a great help in understanding the present day social, political and religious scenarios in Pakistan. As such, this study should be of interest not only to historians committed to assert the intermingling nature of historical and literary discourses, but also to political scientists aiming at a keener understanding of today's Pakistani society.

Chapter 2:

Review of Literature

This chapter comprises of a review of literature that analytically deals with the talent of Mohammed Hanif. This chapter deals Hanif's narration, style and language. It also presents book reviews of the novel *The Case of Exploding Mangoes*, makes comments on historiography in Hanif's novel(s) and passes the remarks on novels by other novelists and writers of history through historiographical perspective. It is hoped that the gathering of this research would point out in areas covered by previous critics and researchers.

2.1. An Overview of Historical Revisionism:

In historiography, the term 'Historical Revisionism' identifies the re-interpretation of a historical account. Historiographic literature was established in 19th century with the development of academic history. Since then, the historians became so much dedicated with their own groups and with their nation in writing history that, it raised many questions in the academic world of history ("The Use and Abuse of History"). From the ancient historians of the western world, like Herodotus, whose *Histories* were authored around the fifth century BC, and Cato the Elder, whose *Origines* appeared in the 2nd century, the discipline of history went through many phases before thinkers like David Hume and Edward Gibbon set the basis for its modern contours during the Age of Enlightenment in the 18th century ("Histories of Herodotus").

2.2. Historical Revisionism in Contemporary Postmodern Era:

Historical revisionism in the present postmodern world is being used to expose and challenge the images of public figures. DiLorenzo in his two books *Lincoln Unmasked: What You're Not Supposed to Know About Dishonest Abe* and *The Real Lincoln: A New Look at Abraham Lincoln, His Agenda, and an Unnecessary War* makes a groundbreaking claim by challenging the heroic character of Abraham Lincoln. He revealed that Abraham Lincoln was

actually a political tyrant who used to suppress his opponent's civil rights. The man who is known as "the great emancipator" actually supported the white supremacy and promised not to interfere with slavery prevalent in the South. He encouraged to question everything about Lincoln's presidency. Through many revelations in this book, he ignited a hot debate that breaks the myths about Lincoln.

He presented new evidences, new interpretations that unmask Lincoln as a political. Similarly, Roth in *The Plot Against America* imagines an alternative version of the American history. In this book, Roth imagines a heroic aviator and rabid isolationist, Charles A. Lindbergh who becomes American President in 1940. Shortly he develops a cordial understanding with Adolf Hitler and the new government embarks on a joint anti-Semitism mission. Philip K. Dick in *The Man in the High Castle* reimagines America in 1962 wherein slavery is once again legal. A few Jews who escaped hid under assumed names as some twenty years back US lost a war against Germany and is now occupied by Nazi Germany and Japan. Raico, a great classical liberal historian in *Great Wars And Great Leaders: A Libertarian Rebuttal* shatters the image of exalted leaders and the most beloved historical wars by showing them as wolves in sheep's clothes attacking human rights and liberty.

In the medieval ages the romantic idealism spirit was full of national ambition. Froissart's *Chronicles* by Jean Froissart exposes the events leading up to the statement of Edward II in 1326, and cover the period up to 1400, narrating events in western "Europe, mainly in England, France, Scotland, the Low Countries and the Iberian Peninsula, although at times also stating other countries and regions such as Italy, Germany, Ireland, the Balkans, Cyprus, Turkey and North Africa". But contemporary historians identify that the *Chronicles* have many shortcomings as a historical source: they contain wrong dates, have misplaced geography, give inaccurate guesses of sizes of arm forces and casualties of war, and may be prejudiced in favor of the author's sponsors (*Froissart's Chronicles*).

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in “*Can the Subaltern Speak?*” talks about the beginning of a consciousness inside subalterns, especially the Third World women and non-Europeans, which they articulate by speaking against western politics of representation through knowledge of history and culture. She wants the victimized and silenced subalterns to have their own say. She also attempts to rehabilitate the existence of the women writers in academic tradition. She questions women’s double oppression and silencing on the basis of their gender, caste and race. She criticizes the so-called objective knowledge of western scholars which is constructed with well-organized political power and economic interests (48).

2.3. Historical Revisionism in Modern and Classical English Drama:

Early Morning by Edward Bond is a black comedy that presents a deliberately crooked version of the court of Queen Victoria who is presented as a homosexual. Her two sons are made conjoined twins. This made the play very immoral, in the beginning it was condemned but later came to be observed positively. The critics of the time criticized the play and oppose the idea of making fun of queen by representing her lesbian.

Shakespeare is well-known as an author of history plays besides his other accomplishments. He is known for mixing history with fiction. He made many statements historically important. For instance, Shakespeare’s statement “You too Brutus” was so much celebrated but according to Suetonius, Caesar did not say something like that Plutarch believed that he had silently died while, Shakespearean studies have owned this statement by changing these words into ‘Et Ut Brute’ which may mean and “You Too Brutus”. This is how Shakespearean studies have given life to the very real pain. Julius Caesar was deceived by his most beloved friend and it was Shakespeare who made this statement historically important (*Henle Latin First Year*). It is Shakespeare who gave the real sense or feelings or most importantly emotions to the occasion to be felt by heart. So, he agreed with Suetonius.

Above all, he was the historian who made these words effective and had given essence to them. He made many statements remarkable in English literature.

Shakespeare recycled Holinshed's work broadly in *Macbeth*, but in revised form. For instance, three witches in *Macbeth*, whom Holinshed labels as “mortals of the elderwood ... nymphs or fairies”. Nymphs and fairies are generally seen as beautiful and young, but Shakespeare portrayed his three witches in *Macbeth* as horrible, dark, and uncanny. Though, the Chronicles lacked any narrations of *Macbeth's* character, so Shakespeare was unexpected on numerous points (6). The characters of Banquo and Fleance were also taken from Holinshed's works, but they are now reflected to be creations of the 16th century (7). Shakespeare is believed to have used the revised version of the Chronicles as the foundation for most of his history plays, the plot of *Macbeth*, and for portions of *King Lear* and *Cymbeline*. Shakespeare also deconstructed the character of Joan of Arc by presenting her as villain who was seen as saint and savior in France (*Joan of Arc: A Hero or A Villain?* By Kathryn Neves).

2.4. The Novel and Political Propaganda: Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*:

In the twentieth century, the interrelations of a novelist's art and political propaganda has been a very complex issue, reaching in many directions. Novelists have provoked severe reactions in this regard many times. For example, during the Great Depression, John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* presented the Joads, a poor family of resident farmers drove from their Oklahoma home by drought and economic crisis. It represents the condition of internally displaced persons looking for a good future. It presents the plight of migrants in America who were otherwise villainized in news making general public opinion. Steinbeck was criticized as a socialist propaganda by the Associated Farmers of California who got offended with the book's representation of California farmers' behavior toward the migrants. They condemned the book as a “pack of lies” (11).

2.5. Historical Revisionism and Postcolonial Thought:

Hughes in “Truth be Told: Some Problems with Historical Revisionism in Kenya” emphasizes that historical revisionism is very important as it appeals to both state and non-state actors during the period of profound social and political change. He applied historical revisionism to rewrite the history of Kenya after civil conflict as it struggled to cope up with the post-election crisis of 2007-8. This resulted in an increased demand for ‘true’ history to be written in the scholarly circles. He reviewed the literature on resistance, social memory and patriotic nationalism to problematize his research.

Kopecek in *Past In The Making: Historical Revisionism In Central Europe After 1989* argues that contrary to the radical postmodern representation of the past that discards the traditional distinctions between reality and values and interpretation and explanations, several reality checks should be taken into account while writing historiography. Though, one might like to adopt the postmodern argument to the extent that it blurs the distinction between a scholarly and unscholarly interpretation of the history. It might also seem that apart from inviting the collective aggression of contemporary historians or breaking established rules of formal logic revisionism remains difficult to be differentiated without proposing an absurd argument or suggesting a bold historiographical hypothesis. Thus, in the light of these epistemological uncertainties, the “border between legitimate reexamination of historical narratives and attempts to rewrite history in a politically motivated way that downgrades or denies essential historical facts,” stands to be an interesting yet difficult to approach problem (1). Further, Kopecek defined historical revisionism as reexamination of the views on the past.

Cattini in “Historical Revisionism: The Reinterpretation of History in Contemporary Political Debate” argues that one should be very careful while talking about historical revisionism because the academic world is different from falsification and political use of

past. The word “revisionist” became a fashion in the end of the nineteenth century when Lenin called the socialist reformer, Bernstein a traitor. Cattini argues that we all are revisionists such as, the interpretations coming from universities or cultural pundits who try to dismantle the truth at times mythologized of traditional historiography.

Chinua Achebe is one of the renowned scholars, who challenged the historical representation of the Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. He stood against Conrad’s depiction about Africans in this book and wrote *An Image of Africa* wherein, he presented their narratives to counter the representation of Africans by Conrad. He claims that Conrad’s work should not be celebrated, as he was a racist (176). He gives new perspectives and facts, which rejects the grand narratives about historical facts. Thus, this is one of the prime examples of how revisionism works for revising histories about nations.

“Historical Revisionism in Pakistani Textbooks: A Case Study of Public School Curriculum” by Khan is one proper example of how distorted history in Pakistan is used for acquiring some political agendas. Khan presents an important role of ‘historical revisionism’ to highlight how the historical events given in the curriculum books is a crucial evidence and example of distorted history by old historians that led to the religious intolerance and extremism in Pakistan.

Khan revises the historical events and argues that the rise in hate crimes and targeted terrorism can be linked with the revisionist history that is taught through textbooks in the country. She concluded that through distortion and suppression of real historical facts and manipulated language, a specific narration is generated to create religious and ethnic resentment against minorities, India and West.

2.6. Keith Jenkins’ Approach to Postmodern Historiography:

Keith Jenkins in his book *The Postmodern History Reader* suggests that historiography has entered a new era of postmodernism and that the alternative points of view

should also be presented while writing history, as the conventional ways of historiography, have failed to keep up with the standards of the postmodern world due to their emphasis on fixed nature of reality. According to Jenkins, historiography is a postmodern phenomenon that subverts the conventional history.

Keith defines historiography as “writings of historians” in which their object of enquiry is past (7). Keith is of the view that a historian should be conscious of the constructed nature of history and how things seem to operate in the power politics of particular social formations.

The past is gone and it is historian who makes up history on slender evidence (8, 30, 49). We are only left with traces of the past, to know what really happened in the past is difficult in both theory and practice as historians operate “under all kinds of presuppositions and pressures” (13). The certaintist claims of knowing the real or objective past are flawed (13). It is this claim that makes it a discourse (12). We cannot really get to the truth because “the truth(s) of the past elude us... history is intersubjective and ideologically positioned; [and] objective understandings and unbiased narratives are illusions (67).

2.7. Review of *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* as a Work of Historical Revisionism:

Some articles by different researchers and comments by a few critics and scholars on Hanif’s works are quoted in this section to lend a perspective to the present research:

For example, Hassan writes that Hanif in his debut novel rewrites and reimagines an important part of history of Pakistan and tries to lessen the effects on the present conditions and attempts to heal the wounds on the personal and national consciousness. The postcolonial writers are trying to present their perspective to the world through historiography. Thus, Hassan believes that Hanif has reimagined historical facts about General Zia to soothe the nation. Similarly, Awais and Qasim in “*A Case of Exploding Mangoes* as Postmodern

Fiction” also argue that Hanif’s *novel* is a metafiction historiography, postmodern parody and pastiche which deconstructs the prevalent stereotype about General Zia’s regime.

Hanif fictionalizes the history in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* and blurs the boundary between truth and fiction by mingling the history with fiction. A historical metafiction also includes and blurs the boundaries between the history and the fiction and sometimes there is a simultaneous crossing of boundaries in a highly self-conscious way (113).

In traditional historiography, writers frequently create stereotypical characters. These stereotypical characters are caricatures that lack individual characteristics. Even in this novel, these characters are marginal however, dominate others in the mainstream as General Zia’s regime is presented through their angle. In the same way, historiographic metafiction are the works that fictionalize the real historical events and figures. Hanif also fictionalizes different events of the Zia era as the actual events are blended with fiction very expertly. Hanif recreates the events in gripping way by catching the reader’s attention in the beginning and holding it till the end. Thus, the novel gives a fictional color to the other side of history.

2.8. Significance of General Zia’s Regime and its Impact on Pakistani Society:

Hanif has chosen General Zia’s regime because it holds a remarkable historical significance in the present day evaluations of Pakistan in a variety of situations, particularly because the Pakistani society is divided between liberals and conservatives.

Siddique in his book *The Jurisprudence of Dissolutions: Presidential Power to Dissolve Assemblies Under The Pakistani Constitution And Its Discontents* argues that General Zia’s regime marks an era when political instability further exacerbated and ambiguity in constitutional milieu increased (38). He assumed himself powerful enough to amend constitution. His regime further narrowed the fundamental rights and political activities on regular basis. A whole new concept of religious conservatism and the

opportunistic use of religion to legitimize the rule led to the controversial and flawed personal morality standards and blasphemy laws (43). Judges and politicians were openly intimidated. He created parallel military courts as well as Federal Shariat Court to intervene in the matters related to Sharia (44). Throughout his regime, General Zia received strong cold war support from the US and West due to Russian invasion of Afghanistan and the resultant 'jihad' narrative (48). Further, his government was elected in general elections of 1985 on a non-party basis that strategically banned and marginalized the politicians. Some politicians boycotted the election suspecting the fairness of the elections, which makes General Zia's regime distinct from previous military rules (50).

Thus, as mentioned in above quoted book, General Zia's regime was unique as it was the first time religion was used to achieve political goals. Yaseen et al. in their article "Hypothetical Political System Of Martial Laws: A Case Study Of General Zia-Ul-Haq" also confirm that even though General Zia was a powerful dictator, yet he had to find a way to prolong his rule so, he introduced the "Islamic-political system" and was successful in maintaining his hegemony through exclusion of political parties.

Zahid also confirms the same in the book *Dictatorship in Pakistan: A Study of the Zia Era (1977-88)* that General Zia carefully constructed and implemented a typology of constitutional and political measures that further impoverished and polarized the country than ever. He grossly misused religion, law and institutions during his regime.

Further, elaborating on why the Islamization program was introduced by General Zia Mohammed in "Causes of General Zia Ul Haq's Islamization Program" argues that Pakistan that was created in the name of religion lost this identity immediately after its independence. Therefore, General Zia's Islamization program was aimed to revive the national identity of the state. In "The Politics of Postmodernism: Parody and History" Linda Hutcheon defines the historiographic metafiction as those popular novels that are both extremely self-reflexive

yet ironically also lay claim to the historical events or personage (5). Hutcheon further defines a metafiction as a text that self-consciously attracts itself as artifact while questions the link between real and fictional (42). Siddique argues that Hanif's *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* revolves around his mysterious death and it is difficult to determine the difference between the truth and fiction. Narrator retells General Zia's story from a different perspective and challenges the traditional ways of representing him as a dictator and hero. Hanif presents him as a caricature whose decisions are motivated by lust and uncertainties and uses religion to fool the nation.

2.9. Mohammed Hanif's Writing Style, Language and Themes:

Tanvir in "Praetorianism in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*: A Critical Analysis" writes that Hanif through his comic allegorical fictional novel *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* exposes various examples of General Zia's praetorianism. Being a skilled critic and experienced analyst of international political scenario, Hanif employs the devices of irony, political satire in allegorical way using real and fictional characters known by the Pakistani people and the International Community for their significant role in Pakistani armed forces and political government. Hanif's novel is very valuable document that very aptly describes the other side of Pakistani politics, army's role and its interference in public and civil politics. This novel also throws light on General Zia's personality as the Chief of Army Staff and afterwards as the elected president, who remained a perfect example of a praetor throughout his regime.

Hanif's most recent novel *Red Birds* is full of dark comedy and witty eviscerations of war. The novel illustrates the cruelties and selfishness of the human beings (Guardian). He gives authentic evidences to support his ideas and attracts his readers to believe whatever he tells. Hanif suggests some dramatic characters that although look funny yet expose some alarming realities about themselves. In this novel, a character Momo had lost her brother and

had a mournful mother. Her character is also a symbol that represents the war-devastated youngsters of a traumatized nation. Hence, Hanif exposes the detrimental effects of war on common people. He attracts his readers with the real-life characters to show harsh realities (Bloomsbury).

The Guardian describes the novel, *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* as “woven in language as explosive as the mangoes themselves, is wickedly cynical and reveals layers of outrageous - and plausible - corruption.” Washington Post concluded that in this novel, Hanif has his own story to tell the one that defines the expectations at each turn. However, The New York Times regarded the novel as “eerie timeliness”.

2.10. Hanif and Other Postmodern Pakistani Writers:

Bapsi Sidhwa's *An American Brat* exposes the atrocities faced by minorities during General Zia's regime. She represents the central character Feroza, a Parsi girl who tries to run off the Islamization in Zia's regime, suffers from identity crisis in the new country, America but eventually adjusts in the American society. In Hanif's novels, he also shows the transformation of characters through the politics and religious extremism. He questions the Islamization through Zainab's character. Sidhwa's novel responds to post-colonial mentality and shows the sufferings of the common people at that time. She appeals to those characters who were the most neglected in history and were the most surviving one.

Sidhwa highlights the dilemma, effects and influence of misuse of religion by dictators due to which common people suffer throughout their lives and sometimes have to leave their own countries cursing their political scenario. She also demonstrates the miseries experienced by different sects in Pakistan at that time due to rapid shift from Bhutto's liberal and tolerant democracy towards General Zia's religious extremism. These were the major tuning points in the history. This shows how history switches the democratic leader Bhutto's reputation as a good leader to a traitor. This shifting point damaged the freedom of media,

which was not allowed to show the realities to the people (David Montenegro). Sidhwa and Hanif both represent how General Zia had misused religion and made the common people suffer (Bapsi Sidhwa, *The Man and the Dictator*).

In Saba Imtiaz's, *Karachi, You're Killing Me*, it is clearly demonstrated that if there is ever anything you can count on at Pakistani cultural events it is Zia who was responsible for creating mess at higher level. Imtiaz has exposed General Zia's oppression and held him responsible for killing of many innocent people in the name of religion. She called General Zia a religious hypocrite and regretted the misuse of journalism during his era (74). She illustrates that how journalism in Zia's era had changed so rapidly and how it played in the hands of the elite class. Haseeb Khan in his article compares Imtiaz's novel *Karachi, You are killing me* with Hanif's *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*. Khan comments that both novels indicate towards the misuse of religion and powers on the part of General Zia during his regime. Media was suppressed and history was molded. People were trapped in state organized religion and Zia was molding their minds through media and public was not allowed to express their opinions publicly.

Thus, in light of the above mentioned literature, it is evident that *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* is a fiction in which Hanif has comically reimagined historical facts about General Zia to soothe the nation and heal their wounds inflicted by the military dictator. Keith Jenkins's in his book *Rethinking History*, believes that any historian's productivity should be seen as a narration but not as a final verdict. A work of history is as much about the historian's own interpretation and ideological positions as it is about past incidents. This means that different historians will certainly assign different meaning to the same historical experiences.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This chapter discusses the methods and tools of analysis chosen to facilitate this study. After a discussion of the methods whereby the primary resource would be approached, there is an overview of the theories that would provide the necessary jargon for exploring the novel's themes and characters.

3.1. Qualitative Discourse Analysis:

This is a qualitative discourse study. This research probes the mechanics of postmodern historiography as revealed in the novel. A close reading of the primary resource has been undertaken to interpret all the major events in its plot to formulate a methodical understanding of its key themes, which are then integrated into broader discussions of the theory and practice of religious politics in the relevant phase of Pakistani history. Because the analysis of the literary text appears intertwined throughout the study with knowledge gleaned from textbooks of Pakistani history as well as some significant texts on theories of postmodern historiography.

3.2. Theoretical Framework - Rethinking History from Postmodern Perspectives:

Jenkins is of the view that a historian should be conscious of the constructed nature of history and how things seem to operate in the power politics of particular social formations. Jenkins defines historiography as “writings of historians” in which their object of enquiry is past (7). The past is gone and it is the historian who makes history on the basis of slender evidence (8, 30, 49). We are only left with traces of the past and to know what really happened in the past is difficult in both theory and practice as historians operate “under all kinds of presuppositions and pressures” (13). The certaintist claims of knowing the real or objective past are flawed (13). It is this claim over truth that makes it a discourse (12).

Jenkins holds that we cannot really get to the truth because “the truth(s) of the past elude us... history is intersubjective and ideologically positioned; [and] objective understandings and unbiased narratives are illusions” (67). Historian’s empathy or complete understanding of past by going back to a particular time and reliving it is faulty; keeping in view “the otherness of the past” (55). With a present-minded historian, “there is no presuppositionless interpretation of the past” as all interpretations are made up in the present (49), the historian cannot simply evade his present bearings/mindset to travel to somebody else’s past and attempt to think as they did (49). What is in the present minds is producing and bringing the past into our present (48).

3.3. Jenkins on Historical Sources:

Jenkins holds that “originals” or sources of the past are nothing “genuine” (67). According to him “sources are mute” and it is historians who speak as many historians use the same sources but come up with different readings (46). Jenkins says that “past cannot be made to function as a cause of discourse or as a prediscursive check (on itself)” (60). From this, Jenkins builds a powerful argument that one must not be taken in by the fallacy that the past has any verifiable existence except through the representation it is given by the discourse created by a historian (60). One dimension of the conclusions that he draws from this argument is that the “past” should be seen not as a cause but only as an effect of a discourse and cannot supply evidence for a historian’s accuracy (60).

Jenkins refers to a similar idea presented by Roland Barthes, who notes the inverted order of the cause-effect relationship between the past and the historical account by using the past as evidence corroborating the truth claims of their history instead of realizing that this past issues only as an effect of the historical account itself.

3.4. Jenkins’ Views on Power Discourse:

According to Jenkins, history is a discourse, “a worldly, wordy language game played for real, [which] reflect[s] the distribution of power that put these metaphors into play” (67). Jenkins points towards the power relations of dominant and marginalized and holds that in such social formation, “truth [is] always created and never found” (38).

If we cannot really know and if history can be anything then the question is “how specific histories came to be constructed into one shape rather than another”. Whatever we know is a question of power (13). The popular interpretations of our culture “are not there because they are true... (brilliant histories can be marginalized if their subject matter is unpalatable) but because they are aligned to the dominant discursive practices” (79).

Power politics stops anything from being said and allows only particular things into the mainstream discourse. In this way truth drawing the line or putting a full stop works as censor and “is dependent on somebody having the power to make it true” (38) Truths as “useful fictions” are held in place within a discourse solely by power. Somebody has to create and maintain them. The powerful use “truth” and such metaphors to exercise their authority these are the devices to begin, operate and close interpretations (39).

3.5. Foucault’s Theory of Power/Knowledge in Discourses:

Foucault in *Power/Knowledge* exposes a regime of truth saying that truth is always inside the domain of systems of power. It is always controlled and constrained. All societies have their ‘general politics’ of truth i.e., discourse which is accepted and agreed upon as true. It separates from the false that is unacceptable as the generally agreed upon truth is result of power and part of grand power regime that controls the regime or mechanism of truth. It only plays an the economic and political role rather than being what it is actually meant for; it is beyond a search for truth. Truth always has connections with power structures which make and sustain it (qtd. in *Rethinking History* 39).

History is a ‘field of force’; in which past is organized by and for interested parties. It always comes from somewhere, for some purpose and leads to some direction. These directions are contested (have to be fought for)” (85). It is a field that “centers and marginalizes views of the past” pushed by the concerned powers. Jenkins says that “history is never itself, is never said or read (articulated, expressed, discoursed) innocently, but that it is always for someone” (85)

3.6. Empowerment of Multiple Discourses:

Jenkins talks about the groups/classes “hidden from history.” He questions “what might be the consequences if such omitted ‘groups’ were central to historical accounts and the now central groups were marginalized” (9). Through historiography certain ideological groups are writing themselves back in history as having a power over one’s own discourse making history as per one’s desires is empowering (85). Jenkins points towards the significance of multiple interpretations saying that “this interpretive flux, when viewed positively, is potentially empowering to even the most marginal in that they can at least make their own histories” (79). Jenkins says that “history can be seen as the way groups/ classes make sense of the past by making it theirs” (45) History is what is chosen to be popularized in people.

For Jenkins, past is like a text full of old stories (narratives) to be translated and made meaningful (41). We cannot tell “if they correspond to the real world/past”, because these already-there narratives seem to form reality (11). History is “a series of discourses” and “interpretive readings of past” by historians trying to give meaning to the world (6-7). Their reading is not prophetic or natural know-how of the facts but “learned” and “informed” (9). In picking fragments and arranging them into “narrative structures to give shape to time and place ... histories [are] more comprehensible than we have any reason to believe the past

was” (16). History is a shifting discourse as it is always on the move, getting de-composed and re-composed (11).

Historians and writers of fiction have much in common as Jenkins says that past is temporary fiction, it “is as notional a concept as ‘the real world’ to which novelists allude in realist fiction – only ever existing in the present discourses that articulate it – all these things destabilize the past and fracture it, so that, in the cracks opened up, new histories can be made” (79).

3.7. Multiple Narratives in History:

The doubts on knowing the true history can be traced in multiple histories about a past and historians being sure of each of them being true. Moreover, “there is no fundamentally real text/account [that] allows us to verify all other accounts against it... what has gone before is always apprehended through the sedimented layers of previous interpretations,” none of which is more accurate (14).

Jenkins holds that “history remains inevitably a personal construct, a manifestation of the historian’s perspective as a ‘narrator’” (14). New readings come into view on changing the gaze (16). History is inescapably interpretive and relative with multiple sides to each argument (30). It’s historian’s concept rather than historical concepts. These are not impersonal, obvious or universal.

3.8. Ideological Positioning of History:

Jenkins denies any possibility of ‘unpositioned centre’ (82). Usually marginal narratives are excluded from mainstream knowledge because they are considered ideological and thought to have external motives and a particular position for persuasive purposes. However, Jenkins is of the view that there is no difference between “‘history as such’ and ‘ideological history’”. The dominant historical narratives are also ideological, try to position

people and give views about the past not inherent naturally and spontaneously inside “the subject,” i.e., that past event (21).

Jenkins believes that history is never for itself; it is always for someone (21). Each generation attempts to re-work and re-order its own history (23). History as an ideological construct and contested discourse is being constructed as interpretations by affectees of power dynamics as both dominated and dominant have their accounts of the past, the opposing narratives in turn as part of legitimization exercise can be delegitimized as inappropriate by any side as these groups continuously “seek to mobilize people(s) in support of their interests” (21). However, it is ironic that the most popularized positions have been in the interests of stronger group with more authority as dominant voices can silence others (21, 23). At the same time, this phenomena is liberating, for it throws out old certainties and those who have benefited from them are capable of being exposed. And in a sense everything is relative (historicist) (30).

The dominant poses itself as universal and only way to see things. To quote Jenkins, All accounts are problematic and relative, the point is that some are actually dominant and others marginal. All are logically the same but in actuality they are different; they are in evaluative (albeit ultimately groundless) hierarchies... Because knowledge is related to power and that, within social formations, those with the most power distribute and legitimate ‘knowledge’ vis-à-vis interests as best they can. (31)

Jenkins criticizes and denounces the existence of a shared center that is general agreements about historical facts and disagrees with Skidelsky’s idea that “interpretive activity goes on but... is located on the margins where it does not call into question that shared centre” 41 Jenkins deconstructs the “so-called [balanced] centre [as] just a congealed interpretation” (42). Moreover he says that “‘our’ centre is just ‘ours’ not universal” (44) A centre is one of many ideological positions. There are no centres but only locally positioned

patterns of dominance and marginality. These are all historiographically made up and so they must be read historiographically too (44) Jenkins criticizes the academic historians as custodian of “dominant discourse [which] is interested in... arguably the transmission of a certain type of historical culture” (64). Due to academic articulation of such preferences and guarantees we begin to copy it.

3.9. Lyotard’s View on Metanarratives:

Lyotard’s defined post-modernism as the ‘death of centres’ with its ‘incredulity towards metanarratives’ (71). With postmodernism old meaningful frameworks that presupposed the dominance of various centres (i.e. euro-centric... logo-centric) are no more seen as legitimate, universal and natural but as temporary useful fictions which were manipulated to articulate specific interests (71). Jenkins defines postmodernism as exposing the constructed nature of all historical narratives with particular interests not universal truth.

Jenkins criticises the knowledge of history from postmodern perspective and says that “the objects of knowledge seem to be constructed arbitrarily, thrown together in the manner of collage, montage and pastiche, so that... ‘Modernity seems to be . . . a way of shaping a sequence of moments in such a way that it accepts a high rate of contingency’” (75). This fragmentation is not something to be pessimistic about. It reflects the time we live in.

3.10. Irony of the Postmodern Condition and Redescription:

The dominant discourses linked with power shut down any interpretation they wish not to be popular by incorporating redomesticating these narratives that do not go in to their favor (79). According to Postmodernism, there are no true foundations for any ideological positions: “every idol has had feet made of clay” (76). Without true foundations, the dominant narratives can easily manipulate post-modern pastlessness, re-describing it for their own interests. But still in this post-modern pastlessness, a space always remains there for multiple historical narratives so that people can actually have real effects in the world (80).

Jenkins talks about the ironic re-description and paradox of counter narratives in postmodern world wherein “anything can be made to look good or bad, desirable or undesirable, useful or useless, simply by being re-described... And it is this ‘re-descriptive turn’ that has encompassed ... the past/history” (77). The past can be variously redescribed as uncountable equally legitimate histories and varying constructs (77). Today in postmodern conditions, more people have begun to have their say. Without existence of centres and metanarratives we find a mass of genres getting used or abused throughout our consumer culture and democratic space. Such constructed and slippery historical narratives are affected by local as well as international point of views none of which has requisite permanence (78).

3.11. Ambivalent Historical Figures: Hitler as a Case Study:

As an example of the ideological issues probed in this study, and for setting a precedent for the “histories” of military dictators, a comment on the ambivalence of well-known political leaders in contemporary historiography would be beneficial for indicating its direction. Adolf Hitler, for many the archetype of modern dictators and one of the most notorious men history has ever known, can be a very typical case-study because he has had his character dramatically reinterpreted many times. In treating Zia-ul-Haq as a military dictator who was once potentially regarded by a community as a savior but whose politics revealed on closer inspection too many seams that did not blend with the ideals he was meant to stand for, a brief comparative perspective can be developed through a spotlight on the role of Hitler – the archetype of dictators who were able to create myths of absolutely catastrophic proportions around themselves. The purpose of this comment is not to assert a direct comparison between the personalities of Zia-ul-Haq and Hitler but to bring out the uncertainties of historic practices evident in the reevaluations of such figures.

The notoriety of Adolf Hitler notwithstanding, there have been a number of eminent historians still looking into the deconstruction of the generally known views about events

leading to the Second World War. The ambivalence surrounding such multiple, contradictory narratives can be treated as a very helpful illustration of the kind of historical revisionism Hanif has projected. Evans in *Lying About Hitler: History, Holocaust, and the David Irving Trial* revised the motive behind the holocaust and argued that it could be seen as only a response against the atrocities faced by Germans in the Great Britain during early 1900s and that Hitler might not be interpreted as a cruel dictator behind the holocaust who was intentionally targeting the Jews. Just like Hanif who uses Ali Shigri's trial to explore the ambiguous historical mysteries, Evans also uses the famous trial of the Nazi historian, David Irvin as a lens for exploring the large range of some difficult questions about the nature of the historian's enterprise. Evan argues that historical revisionism presents a re-interpretation of the moral meaning of the historical record.

In *Hitler's First War*, Dr. Thomas Weber has tried to piece together a historically different picture of Adolf Hitler from the perspectives previously unseen. Previously, a large number of historical works on his life have virtually suggested that World War I and its aftermath helped form his political views and that he was very close with his regiment, many of whose veterans formed the core of National Socialist Party. However, Dr. Weber's groundbreaking book rejected all these beliefs and ideas that it was indeed the experience of WWI that actually radicalized him and made him "Hitler" and eventually led to the brutalization of the German and European societies.

Dr. Thomas Weber commenting on his research on reexamination of historical image of Adolf Hitler said that myth of Hitler as a brave soldier was used by the Nazi party from the starting to extend their appeal beyond far right. The Nazi party went to a great length to protect this myth. Dr. Weber further argued that during his research for the book, he discovered a memoir of one of the Hitler's comrades which was significantly altered between its first publication in 1933 and the outbreak of the Second World War."

Breaking the previously held belief about Hitler, Weber revised the history as WWI created and radicalized him and this led to the formation of the Nazi Movement. “But his life in the war really was his Achilles heel and the story could collapse like a house of cards. “I’ve been trying to show that this is a totally made-up story. Hitler was untypical of the regiment and he was not really radicalized in the war.” He suggested that the fact Hitler was awarded the Iron Cross had more to do with being known by the officers who could make recommendations, than his heroics in battle with the majority of awards made to enlisted men presented to support staff of regimental or divisional HQ staff rather than combat soldier.

In accordance with the pattern set by the revision of the historical records of Jefferson and Hitler, Hanif in his book has tried to revise the historical image of General Zia as the righteous Muslim leader who brought about the Islamization revolution in the country.

Chapter 4

A Reexamination of Zia-ul-Haq's Regime: Setting *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* in the Context of Postmodern Theory

4.1. Overview of the Chapter:

In this chapter, Hanif's hilarious unorthodox views on some historical events in the life of General Zia will be set in the context of well-known views voiced by some stalwarts of postmodern thought. While Zia was historically seen and believed to be the righteous leader, the discussion here would bring out how Hanif has portrayed General Zia's personality in a manner that radically subverts the official historical account, and has shown how religion was used for gaining political support and how top military personnel was involved in moral corruption under his leadership.

4.2. Introduction of Islam into National Politics:

Faruqi asserts in "The Novel in the Twenty-first Century, Text and Context," that Hanif's first satirical novel, *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*, has played a very significant role in criticizing the decades of army rule in Pakistan as a response to deep state (5). For example, He tried to reevaluate the political motives behind General Zia's taking over the rule in his first novel, *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*, wherein he gave an alternative historical account of the times. According to Hanif, Zia-ul-Haq used religion for the sake of his personal gains in history, and was a hypocritical Muslim who just used his power to impose his personal view of religion on his countrymen.

4.3. Zia's Ambivalent Heritage and Jenkins' Historiography:

General Zia-ul Haq, along with his top military officials and two American diplomats, died in a mysterious plane crash on August 17, 1988. Since then, the general has remained a controversial figure in the Islamic country and commentators have regarded his heritage with a remarkable duality. Zia-ul-Haq's supporters hail him as a "hero" who had barred imperialist

Soviet designs in the South Asian region, while on the other hand the liberals hold him guilty for the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and militancy in their country.

This ambivalence can be explained easily in the light of Jenkins views on postmodernist historiography: According to him, a historian should be conscious of the constructed nature of history and how things seem to operate in the power politics of particular social formations. Jenkins defines historiography as “writings of historians” in which their object of enquiry is past (Jenkins 7).

The past is gone and it is historian who makes up history on slender evidence (8, 30, 49). We are only left with traces of the past, to know what really happened in the past is difficult in both theory and practice as historians operate “under all kinds of presuppositions and pressures” (13). According to him, the past is not history and it is historian’s biased opinions that make the facts for public. The certaintist claims of knowing the real or objective past are flawed (13). It is this claim that makes it a discourse (12). We cannot really get to the truth because “the truth(s) of the past elude us... history is intersubjective and ideologically positioned; [and] objective understandings and unbiased narratives are illusions (67).

Empathy is faulty on account of “the otherness of the past” (55). With a present-minded historian, “there is no presuppositionless interpretation of the past” as all interpretations are made up in the present (49), the historian cannot simply evade his present bearings/mindset to travel to somebody else’s past and attempt to think as they did (49). What is in the present minds is producing and bringing the past into our present (48).

4.4. Hanif’s Condemnation of Zia’s International Policies:

Hanif has condemned Zia-ul-Haq for promoting extremism in Pakistan, in a hilariously satirical voice. However, some prominent Pakistani scholars such as Ahmed Rashid and Ijaz Khan argue “that the alliance between the Pakistani state and religious extremists had started much earlier than Zia-ul-Haq's rise to power” (Pakistan's Islamization -

before and after dictator Zia-ul Haq). So, blaming Zia-ul-Haq for everything is unfair and unjustified. Khan argues in one of his papers that:

Pakistani decision makers have found religious extremists a natural choice for alliance as tools of foreign policy due to, a) its own religious identity basis; b) perception of India as a Hindu state which has not accepted Pakistan as an independent state; c) The United States also considered Islamic forces as good allies during the Cold War against the Soviets; and d) the centrist, post-colonial state dominated by the military has always considered secular, nationalist and democratic forces a challenge to its hold on power (Understanding Pakistan's Pro-Taliban Afghan Policy).

4.5. Tucker's *Past in Making*:

Tucker also argues that a historiographer attempts to confuse knowledge with fiction. In revisionist historiographies, proper competitors to conspiracy theories would give alternative explanations of the historical evidence for conspiracy theories (6). For example, Hanif writes in chapter two about the first meeting of eight Army Generals with General Zia right after the imposition of military coup of 1977 to decide the further course of action. General Zia called his top Army personnel for "...finding legal cover for the coup and enlisting politicians who could be trusted to support the military regime" (19). As, General Zia's coup was just in action after overthrowing an elected liberal government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, he feared any rebel from his military personnel as evident from Hanif's account of the situation in chapter two, that General Zia was not sure about the loyalty of his military personnel right after the coup:

He wasn't sure how much the eight generals who formed his council trusted him or—more important—respected him. 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?...it was understandable that in the first Corp Commanders' meeting after the night of the coup, General Zia was a bit shaky, not sure what these generals wanted from him, not sure what they wanted him to do with this country...General Zia knew that he could not take their loyalty for granted. He would have to kill the cat at the very beginning. (16)

The dichotomy of “trust” and “respect” shows the intricacies of professional relations between members of the corridors of power, reinforced by the espionage activities to which the general is shown to submit his own subordinates. The novel’s important theme of appearance versus reality is taken up in the next sentence as the General ponders over the inappropriate appearance of his closest associates in relation with the leaders of an Islamic country. Then, the idea of military dictator being “a bit shaky” (16) dramatically subverts his position of extreme authority.

Therefore, General Zia thought of making it clear to all of them that he was their commander and the savior of Islam and that he had taken the responsibility as the chosen one by himself. Hanif has tried to throw light on an important historical event where General Zia thought of introducing himself as a savior of Islam to win the public’s and Army’s support. Hassan Askari Rizvi, in his book *Military, State and Society in Pakistan*, comprehensively analyzed Zia’s Islamization program. He stated that “Islamization main focused was regulative, punitive and extractive and Zia little attempt to bring socio-economic equality under Islamic law” (Causes of General Zia Ul Haq's Islamization Program). As Jenkins in his book *Rethinking History* explains, the past is not the history but the personal and biased opinions of the writer.

The alternative explanations of the historical evidence for conspiracy theories consist of most notably the positive correlations between historical events and processes and the interests and motivations of small social groups (Tucker 22). The sociopolitical and historical

scenario shape and drive the motivations of small social groups to speak for themselves and produce counter-narratives.

4.6. Karl Marx's Opinion on Religion:

A very helpful perspective on Zia's alleged manipulation of religious identities as a maneuver for power is provided by Karl Marx, who states in *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* that religion is the "opium of the people". Marx opines that religion is the "creation of humans that mirrors the inequalities of the society in which it exists, so the poor become the righteous, the wealthy will find it difficult to enter heaven" (?). Religion is therefore a wish-fulfillment fantasy: it is how those who follow to it would want society to look if only they had power.

According to Marx, "the ultimate aim of the fight against religion is not religion itself, but rather the type of society which causes the suffering which creates the need for religion in the first place". Religion is therefore an "understandable but misguided response to the suffering" caused by exploitation in feudal and capitalist societies. Religion, as a kind of spiritual opium, prevents people from realizing that their suffering is not the 'natural' state.

To achieve this realization, however, people first need to throw off religion because its very purpose is to make them accept their subjugation by preventing them from understanding their true situation.

Hanif has subjectively interpreted the impulses behind General Zia's taking over the government. Richard Rorty and Hayden White, the relativist and skeptical philosophers from Stanford University claim that "it is not possible to prove the probability of any historical truth of any historical event in the revisionist historiography". In history and historiography "our beliefs about the past, history, is in constant flux; our beliefs are constantly being revised". In that sense, all historians who conduct research are "revisionists" (Historiographic Revision and Revisionism).

4.7. Praetorianism in Pakistan:

In “Praetorianism in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes: A Critical Analysis*,” Mohammed Yar Tanvir argues that there had been a large number of nations around the world, where an individual, group or organization overpowered the whole country and nation with their illegal usurpation of power and government known as praetorianism. Pakistan is also one of those countries. As defined by Professor Headrick that praetorianism is a type of militarism that is oriented to the inferior life of a nation, frequently related to the underdeveloped countries where the military does not wish to fight or win an international war rather tries to maintain its influence in the national political system by controlling the decisions that could affect the interest of the army by either ruling the country, working as a corporation, supporting a particular political party or faction. The same issue is raised by Hanif in his novel, *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*” where he has tried to re-evaluate the events leading to General Zia’s demise.

4.8. The Shift from History to Metahistory:

Conger, in “Perspectives and Origins of Revisionist History,” argues that just like a journalist should report events keeping all the biases aside so must the historians. However, complete objectivity is almost impossible since history is a continuous and chronological narrative. The sense of continuity assistances us grasp concepts however in reality the events do not happen in a perfect sequence rather like a trail of dominos. Thus, the roots of the modern revisionism have sprung from the theoretical struggle for objectivity. Winston Churchill wrote that “United wishes and good will cannot overcome basic facts” (Cristen Conger). He also wrote in his War Memoirs: “Truth is incontrovertible. Panic may resent it. Ignorance may deride it. Malice may distort it” (qtd. in “Truth is Incontrovertible”). But according to Jenkins we are only left with traces of the past, to know what really happened in the past is difficult in both theory and practice as historians operate “under all kinds of

presuppositions and pressures” (13). The certaintist claims of knowing the real or objective past are flawed (13). It is this claim that makes it a discourse (12). We cannot really get to the truth because “the truth(s) of the past elude us... history is intersubjective and ideologically positioned; [and] objective understandings and unbiased narratives are illusions” (Keith Jenkins).

Tucker argues that there is no substantial difference between historiography and fiction. In *Metahistory*, Hayden White writes that “historical narratives... are verbal fictions, the contents of which are as much invented as found and the forms of which have more in connection with their counterparts in literature than they have with those in the sciences” (6). Similarly, Gannon also argues that there is no objectivity in history. The very act of selecting a topic, for example, is privileging certain facts making them “historical”—over others. In writing a biography of George Washington, one makes the claim that Washington was historically significant and important.

The same is also reaffirmed by Qureshi in “An interview with Hanif” that Hanif’s novel centers on the mysterious death of General Zia, the military dictator of Pakistan while casting a satirical eye on the significant decade in the history of Pakistan. The themes of the novel include the issues of religious extremism, class anxieties, global politics, masculinity, sexuality, patriarchy and oppression. Hanif has contextualized and represented Pakistan by providing a deep insight into the reasons how Pakistan became a nation it is today. Richard J. Evans has claimed that scholars try to reinterpret and reason the impulses of the people which are held differently in the historical works.

4.9. Islamization and the State:

Islamization first emerged as nascent state policy under Pakistan People’s Party government led by the late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1971-77). Bhutto used emotive religious phrases like Masawat-i-Mohammedi (The equality of Muslims) and Islamic Musawat

(Islamic equality) as part of his political rhetoric to justify his views and win support for the socialist policies of his government. His government was also responsible in 1974 for yielding to the decades-long campaign that the followers of the Ahmadiyya sect consider their founder Mirza Ghulam Ahmad a prophet, and thus rejected one of the pillars of Islam” (Rizwan Hussain).

4.10. The Theme of Hypocrisy in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*:

It is evident from Hanif’s account of General Zia’s first meeting with the top Army generals wherein *he* made his intentions clear, "My dear generals, let's get one thing clear before we hear your protests and your suggestions: There is no God but Allah.” (17) He began the meeting with recitation of Quranic verses and asked General Akhtar to translate them into English as none of the sitting eight generals could understand a single word recited in Arabic. Hanif shows them corrupt in their religious matters. This new thing laid the foundation of inclusion of religion in the mainstream politics. As the army generals seemed perplexed by this new experience: “But a meeting was a meeting and mixing religion with the business of running the country was a concept not comprehensible to them.”(17). It shows that how Hanif vilifying Generals of army. Hanif also uses religion to make him notorious in front of the people.

Further, the agenda behind the meeting dismantles the reality and hypocrisy behind the military coup that it was inevitable to save Pakistan from becoming a secular state, which won army’s support as all of generals during the meeting affirmed General Zia earlier that: "By Allah's grace you have brought this country back from the edge of destruction, by Allah's mercy you have saved this country when the politicians were about to push it over the edge of a precipice.” (18)

4.11. General Zia’s First Speech on National Television:

General Zia in his first speech on TV to the nation as a head of state declared that Pakistan was created in the name of Islam and it will continue to survive only when it sticks to Islam and it was the main reason behind his introducing an Islamic system as an important condition for the country. In *The Future of the Past* (1989), the historian C. Vann Woodward also indicated the pretense behind historical events that change the fate of the nation. Woodward argued that these events bring with violence and often called as the 'revolution'. Though, these revolutions are still unnamed.

General Zia saw himself as the soldier of Islam. For example, justifying his position as a savior General Zia uttered during the same meeting, "A country that thinks it was created by God has finally found what it deserves" (17). We have just toppled an elected bloody government, how the hell are we going to run this country? Is Allah going to come down and patrol the bloody streets? (18). In the name of God, God was exiled from the land and replaced by the one and only Allah who, General Zia convinced himself, spoke only through him (19). This shows that General Zia was seeing himself as a revolutionary figure holding the shield of Islam. According to Hanif the state has used political figures to fuel hatred in people.

In *Pakistan, a Modern History* Talbot writes that it is still unresolved that whether the motivation behind General Zia's rule was coming from his piety or his political calculations. He remained conspicuously silent on the dispute between the Zikri (heterodox) and the religious scholars (Ulamas) in Balochistan where he needed to maintain stability during his regime. Thus during his regime, the secular and leftist parties accused him of manipulating Islam for political ends. Hassan Askar Rizvi in his book, *Military, State and Society in Pakistan* comprehensively analyzed Zia's Islamization program. He stated that "Islamization main focused was regulative, punitive and extractive and Zia little attempt to bring socio-economic equality under Islamic law".

4.12. Suppression of the Dissidents:

The whole novel revolves around the lazy and irreverent Ali Shigri narrating the story of the General Zia's regime and his trial for conspiring to kill General Zia in revenge. Ali's father, Col. Quli Shigri, had died in what was called a suicide, but Ali discovered that his father was killed by a rogue ISI officer, Major Kiyani, under General Zia's orders. Ali's revenge plot consisted of stabbing General Zia in the eye with his under-officer sword, a move he practiced daily in secret. However, Ubaid devises a new plot to kill the General by crashing a plane on top of him. He even went so far as to steal a plane for the job, but in doing so, he accidentally landed Ali in prison at Lahore Fort, a torture center built by his deceased father, Quli Shigri. Hence, Hanif unfolds many mysteries that led to the demise of General Zia and challenges his harsh decisions for torturing the dissidents and suppressing their opinions from coming into media, landing himself into danger.

Another very important aspect highlighted by Hanif in the book is of the secret trial of prisoners and suppression of the dissidents through violence and force. Ali Shigri, the central character of the novel through whom the whole novel is narrated, is a PAF pilot and Silent Drill Commander of Fury Squadron, who was under trial for conspiring to kill General Zia after disappearance of his close friend and roommate, Obaid Ullah and Colonel Bannon. Ali Shigri's father, Colonel Quli Shigri was once found hanging with the ceiling with a loose fan with hands tied up. He was mysteriously declared to have committed suicide despite of being one of the most powerful colonels in General Zia's regime who was responsible for building torture cells in Lahore Fort and other hidden prisons for prisoners in military custody alleged of either conspiring to kill General Zia or refusing to accept the status quo.

4.13. Revealing Hidden Facts: Saba Imtiaz's *Karachi You are Killing Me*:

Saba Imtiaz's novel *Karachi You are killing Me*, portrays the essence of religious riots in Zia's era. Through her character Ayesha Khan, a journalist, she exposes the media's role in

censoring the protests of the people outside the roads also she exposes the media was not allowed to capture the common people's protest against the government because of the raise in CNG prices. The marginalized classes protested for their basic rights.

As Keith said that, marginal narratives are excluded from mainstream knowledge because they are considered ideological and thought to have external motives and a particular position for persuasive purposes. However, there is no difference between "history as such" and "ideological history". The dominant historical narratives are also ideological, try to position people and give views about the past not inherent naturally and spontaneously inside "the subject" i.e. that past event (Jenkins, 84).

4.14. Religion, Politics and Fractured Ideals: Zia-ul-Haq:

McDonald in *Recovering the Past: A Historian's Memoir* suggests that the revisionist historians challenge the mainstream and traditional historical perspectives and events. They raise new views against the odds and traditionalists, which should be freshly judged. Therefore, Hanif is seen justified in his reinterpretation of historical events present at the time of General Zia's military coup. Marshall says that Hanif revises those damaging points of history, which turned out the fates of the people to the worst. The religion is the tool to change some games in the region.

Hanif re-analyzes historical incidents in a comical way and shows how these events were changing the fates of millions of people. These incidents were the turning points in the political history of Pakistan. Marshall in "Politicizing Religion" says that religion nearly always influences politics. The eventual faiths and beliefs influence the vision of the past, justice, law, mercy, power, human nature, and evil. Religion guides to assure human rights but it is manipulated for the interests involved at the higher level.

Other events of moral corruption and hypocrisy inside the military circles during General Zia's regime were humorously quoted in chapter three by Hanif, when the cadets

were directed to wear double-starched uniforms even in June and be present for roll call during five time prayers. A majority of the cadets got skin allergy. The scars on their bodies bled badly. Therefore, the army doctor advised them to wear white non-starched loose shalwar kameez, give up all the routine tasks including prayers and take rest in the mosque inside the training centers, so that they spend their time remembering Allah. However, they were busy playing cards and taking drugs in the mosque, becoming alert only at the time of the second commandant's round. In Ali Shigri's words, "When our boys in white see the 2nd OIC approaching they scramble to collect their cards and coins and transform themselves from a bunch of one-rupee rummy-rascals to devout young men." (21)

Liquor consumption was common in the military circles and General Akhtar, who had backed General Zia's Islamization and played a pivotal role in the progress of General Zia's Islamization by ensuring that the general public strictly observed the true spirit of Islam and who seemingly never in his life ever have had a sip of the liquor, could not resist his impulse gulping a full glass of champagne at the Afghan cultural night held in Islamabad. Hanif has tried to reexamine the popularly known and believed motive behind General Zia's and his top military personnel's toppling an elected government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. This looks contrary to General Zia's claim in an interview given to media that Islam was used for personal gains by some politicians in Pakistan.

His words seem contrary to what he had been executing for personal interest. For example Brigadier T.M. who was responsible for personal security of General Zia was always standing behind him even during five prayers and Hajj, was himself exempted to perform any of these. He himself felt emotionally detached with prayers and Hajj and wondered whether he would ever be able to feel any connection. Brigadier T. M. was exempted from the prayers, that were compulsory for everyone and the attendance of all military personnel was supervised by General Zia himself in the Army House, for his own

security reasons. Thus, Hanif tries to challenge General Zia's image as a savior of Islam who had become paranoid with fear of his death.

Hanif has also challenged General Zia's image as a Muslim hero by portraying him as a selfish comic character who was obsessed with the fear of death. General Zia, who was declaring himself as chosen one, was himself not following, what he was imposing in the name of Islam and even doubted himself internally as a true Muslim but kept on pretending that his mission is to implement true spirit of Islam for gaining political support to rule the country. Therefore, Hanif has shown an alternative image of General Zia and makes an effort to show the dissent from the common people who were suffering the most. For this purpose, Hanif has narrated the novel from the perspective of Ali Shigri who represented the condition and opinion of the common public. Krasner in *Historical Revisionism* writes that historical revisionism involves the reinterpretation of the recorded history while allowing new dimensions whether beneficial or not. Similarly, the present work by Hanif can mirror new discoveries of reality and truth, evidence, and interpretation.

4.15. Hanif's Reevaluation of Zia's Image as a True Muslim:

General Zia was concerned about his position as a just ruler in front of Allah, one example of which is found in the second chapter of Hanif's novel: When Zia opens a copy of the Quran to consult Allah's opinion regarding his position as a ruler, he constantly finds the ayah regarding Prophet Jonah's plight inside a whale's stomach, making him worry about whether or not his moves were commendable. Therefore, this proves that he was never sure that he was always implementing the true spirit of Islam. For instance, when he went to pray behind the mullah began to recite the same verse of Holy Quran it further shattered to Zia who began to suspect the legitimacy of his decisions as a ruler. He began to envision what if he was trapped inside the stomach of a whale how he would fight the darkness and manage to

swim out of its stomach. This shows how he was actually conscious of potential test from God due to his illegitimate and forced decisions in the name of Islamization (12).

This is in contrast to what we know to be true of General Zia that he was complete conscious of Islam and knew exactly what he was doing to implement the true teachings of Islam as I. A. Rehman in one of his articles claims that Zia took decisions by himself but Hanif challenges his image as a dictation maker rather argues that he was a decision taker that he repeatedly took guidance from everybody around him and seemed to be under influence of his military personnel (40 YEARS OF ZIA).

Therefore, his claim to be the chosen one was mocked by Hanif to whom it seems contradictory to his real personality owing to his inability to take decisions by himself in contrast to what was claimed by I. A. Rehman that General Zia had obtained the kind of supreme power and independence that he never hesitated to execute any of his decisions. Hanif has described the events that took place in two months and seventeen days leading to the mysterious plane crash of 1988.

Hanif has also highlighted how General Zia used the religion card to instill hatred against other religions which was most evident in chapter two, when during his first meeting with his important military personnel when General Akhtar uttered the word 'God' instead of 'Allah' during the meeting. This enraged General Zia who laid down the foundation of religious intolerance in the country saying that:

Let's stop pretending God is Allah. It's a Western construct...But do we want to become like them? Christians call Jesus the son of God. Are we to understand that some god came down while Mary was fast asleep and..." Here he made a circle with the thumb and forefinger of his left hand and poked at it with the middle finger of his right hand. "Jews are pretty close to calling Moses their God. You might think that it's all the same to our people, God, Allah, same difference?"..."But who should be

telling them that we believe in Allah and not in any other god? Didn't Allah choose us to clear up this confusion?"... "Even Hindus call their six-armed monsters their gods. Isn't that a reason enough to stay away from this word? (18)

Hanif therefore shows how General Zia's regime was turning point in the history of Pakistan. This period marked the beginning of hatred against people of other religions known as minorities. Hanif has described another incident in chapter four, when General Zia mocks Hinduism and recalls the time when he had to visit India to attend Indira Gandhi's funeral. It was when he first experienced his hatred against the Hindu religion as he explained that experience; "They built a pyre of wood, poured some melted butter over it and then Indira Gandhi's own son lit the flame. (I) stood there watching as Indira's body, draped in a white cotton sari, caught fire. At one point, it seemed she was going to get up and run away but then her skull exploded. (I) thanked Allah for giving them Pakistan so their children didn't have to witness this hell on earth every day". (32) Thus, this account represents his religious intolerance against people of other religions.

4.16. Bapsi Sidhwa's *An American Brat*: A Comparative Comment:

Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *An American Brat* exposes how the rapidly changing social, political and religious environment of Pakistan during General Zia's regime were affecting the religious minorities of that time. She represents through her protagonist, Feroza, a Parsi girl who fled from Pakistan to America due to extreme religious intolerance during General Zia's regime. Sidhwa details how punishment on road by general public had become a common phenomenon in bazaars. She also gives an account of how it was before General Zia that young girls in Western dresses would go to college and schools on their own bicycles.

Hanif and Sidhwa both reinforced General Zia's character as a pioneer of the Islamization movement that resulted in religious intolerance. Thus, Hanif also tries to give an interpretation to these events through his novel that changed the social, political and religious

environment of the country forever. In *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, the philosopher Karl Popper writes that "each generation has its own troubles and problems, and, therefore, its own interests and its own point of view" (473).

Popper argues that it is a right of each generation to re-observe and reinterpret the history in their own way. Quoting the reason, he argues that as an interested student of history, historians are keen to revisit the historical events to understand the contemporary problems. However, the achievement of such goal is impossible if having to stick the inapplicable idea of achieving objectivity as the historians hesitate to present their own points of view. He concluded with the argument that the historical writers should not think that their point of view if consciously and critically applied to the problem, would be inferior to that of any writer who innocently believes to have achieved the level of objectivity that permitted him to present the events in the past as if they actually happened (473). Hanif believes that he has captured the scenes behind the screen, which damaged the people and destroyed the lives of millions of people with the intolerant behaviors. Hanif believes that Pakistan has badly been destroyed in the name of religion and he marked Zia's rule as the worst era of the history of Pakistan (Mohammed Hanif, *Blasphemy, Pakistan's New Religion*).

4.17. A Summation: Marnie Hughes Warrington's *Revisionist Histories*:

Marnie Hughes Warrington in *Revisionist Histories* promotes the concepts of boundaries, space and orientation (27). Warrington argues that spatial imagery and language are used to construct temporary textual space excluding the direct, passive and conventional ways in which readers are encouraged to navigate to a new vision of history using the entry and exit points and signposts of the writer (34) In the same way, Hegel believes that history is preceded as a succession of amendments (8). Revision is not determined by chance or with the historians' commitment to win prestige in their academic circles. After Roland Barthes,

being a revisionist is a question of trying to make history with greater clarity and try to put the past in the right place rather than seeing it as a referendum (108).

Conger in “Revisionism as a Negative Term” argues that out of the large literature on revisionism, only a small number of revisionists histories are ultimately accepted as fact and Hanif’s *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* is one of those. Despite of this fact, the rise of modern historical revisionism in the academic environment has a significant impact on the discipline. Conger argues that despite of the skeptical public regard for historical revisionism, the discipline of historical revisionism would continue to explore new questions and angles to analyze history of the nations.

Thus, surely the narratives are not always perfect histories when they first are revised rather are fictional or imperfect. However, even though we probably want to believe that the histories about our leaders who helped shaping our national identity were altruistic or morally upright because in some way, their characters define our own identities. But as it is a fact that the past is never very crystal clear such as it is hard to believe an altruistic young president telling his nation lies or an epic romance between an Englishman and a Native American princess (n.pag.). He concludes that historical revisionism has only leveling the playing field for playing (revising history) for the players (revisionists) and the visitors (readers) and everyone in between (n. pag.)

Chapter 5:

Islam and State Apparatuses: Zia's Exploitation of Popular Media in A

Case of Exploding Mangoes

5.1. Overview of the Chapter:

This chapter will explain how in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* Hanif has provided an important historical account of General Zia-ul-Haq's regime i.e., the control of national media to strengthen his government and what most 'liberals' dubbed as the suppression of public opinion for his own personal gains. This chapter will also shed some light on the socio-political scenario of that time and the events that led to Zainab's political execution in the name of religion.

5.2. Walter Lippmann and Noam Chomsky's Views on the Making of History:

Lippmann in *Public Opinion* explains the idea of a specialized class – that first there is a class of citizens who play some active role in running the state affairs. This specialized class is a small percentage of population that analyzes, executes, decides and run the matters in the politics, economics and the ideological system. Naturally, whoever talks about these ideas as to how to run the said matters pertaining to the “others” becomes a part of the specialized class. The “others which are out of the small group of specialized class consist of big and majority of the population known as “the bewildered herd”. (119)

Lippmann warns us against becoming the victim of the trampling and roar of the bewildered herd. Therefore, sometimes we have to lend their weight to the members of the specialized class. In other words, the bewildered herd is dependent upon the specialized class assuming this group as their leaders. However, In *Media Control* Chomsky warns the nations against the usurpation of rule by the specialized class. According to Chomsky, the specialized class is a small group of individuals belonging to elite class who think that they can run the affairs of the state. There is another narrow group consisting of the people with real power

and who own the society who becomes a part of the executive group if the specialized class comes forward claiming that it can serve the interests of the specialized group.

Hanif mocks his media policy that helped popularize and glorify his own image in popular media. He says that General Zia-ul-Haq introduced Islamic values to be implemented in popular print and electronic media for his personal stakes. For example, an important task he assigned to his Information Minister was to make sure that all the newspaper editors complied with his agenda of being represented as both a righteous Muslim and the savior of the country. These editors used to say their ritual prayers five times a day under General Zia's leadership, and in return got free liquor and parties in five star hotels every evening, as Hanif exposes their moral corruption in chapter 10 of the novel.

Falkvinge opined after studying warfare through history, from Roman times onward, the consistent observation is that people in power use that power to maintain and expand that power. General Zia-ul-Haq lived up to this model of power-hunters and the manner in which he controlled the brains responsible for the national media industry in the name of Islam deconstructs his image as a devout Muslim leader (n. pag.).

5.3. The mainstream media and Zia-ul-Haq's contribution

The entire mainstream media was busy in disseminating General Zia's ideology. There were articles, TV programs and national magazines that were all praising General Zia-ul-Haq.

Hanif writes that as General Zia was going through the newspapers in the morning after broadcasting his very special address to the nation, he found himself celebrating his success with the remark, "The nation's press had finally shown some spark"; it was showing General Zia as a powerful Muslim leader and savior of Islam. He spread the copies of all the newspapers on his dining table together until the shiny surface of the table was all covered with his pictures and his speech (49). Hanif ironically indicates towards the issue of how

General Zia was spreading his ideology using the source of media: “The editors had used their imagination while reporting his speech. Every newspaper had it as the banner headline. The message had gone out loud and clear. "The Battle for Our Ideological Frontiers has begun” (49).

Thus, in chapter 10, Hanif reexamines General Zia’s public image as a popular figure in history by arguing that General Zia-ul-Haq had been using the notable editors for creating his positive image as he had assigned the editors an important task of influencing and shaping public’s opinion about him by portraying his image as the true Muslim and patriotic leader: “He was particularly pleased with the three-picture strip idea that the Pakistan Times had come up with to illustrate the main points from the extempore part of his speech”. (...)

There was a caption under a picture draped in a cotton sheet with his head sprawling on the black marbled wall of Khana Kaaba in Mecca. There were three captions in one of the captions it was written that firstly “I am a soldier of Islam appeared under his official portrait, in which he was wearing his four-star General's uniform”. And there was a second caption in which there was written that “then, as an elected head of the Muslim state, and in the last “I am a servant of my people” was the caption for the third picture, which showed him in his presidential dress, looking dignified in a black sherwani and his reading glasses, not imposing but authoritative, not a military ruler but a president (Hanif 50). Hanif mocks at his idea of calling himself a servant of people who elected him while there was no election and he appointed himself and some of the hidden powers selected him for the millions of people for their interests.

Hanif has pointed towards the significant role of media in shaping people’s opinion such as, in *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky show that “news” is created by the state propaganda with the consent of highly prejudiced elite, which is presented on daily basis. They expertly dissect

the ways marketplace and economics of publishing shape the news. Issues are framed and topics are revealed by them (Chomsky, Herman).

Herman and Chomsky further argue that since the mass media serve as a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general populace so the intended message reaches to them. The primary function of the media is to entertain, amuse, inform as well as to inculcate the individuals with the values, beliefs and behaviors that integrate them into the other institutional structures of their society. In the modern world with concentrated wealth and class conflict, to fulfill this role involves systematic propaganda. Hanif has ironically revealed how General Zia-ul-Haq had been manipulating the minds of the public through media, who he called as his 'subjects' as if he was experimenting with living beings and felt pleased with it.

The Information Minister was assigned the task of producing pro-General Zia news and make sure that nobody ever criticizes his rule. The prime time news bulletins were a product of Army House, and if someday the Army House could not produce one due to immense engagement then the same old news packages praising General Zia were played again and again, Hanif writes that: "Heads of state, especially the heads of state of developing countries, seldom get the time to sit back and admire their own achievements". (Hanif 50)

In "Pakistan: Civil-Military Relations in a Post-Colonial State" Ejaz Hussain also narrates the politics in Pakistan from the elitist mindset which is fundamentally marked as an ultimate force capable of using even 'forceful measures' to democratize, form and integrate the state in Pakistan. This leads to one wondering if the same elite including the civil-military bureaucracy politicians were involved in 1971. Hussain argues that this form of rule is defective it encourages the rule of the elitist class over a monolithic nationalism. Further, it undermines the role of masses in the political development of the country. It also encourages

the armed forces to exert unnecessary violence for so-called national consolidation to achieve their own political, organizational and institutional interests.

Gordon in “The Meaning and Value of Dissent in a Democratic Society” defines dissent as the rejection of the views that majority of the people hold. He argues that besides the governments the mainstreams media also play an important role in undermining the dissent in the countries. He further elaborates that analysis from critics such as Seymour Hirsch, Amy Goodman and Noam Chomsky etc. are absent in the major newspapers in the United States. Moreover, the mainstream media also inadequately covers the issues of healthcare, immigration issues and wars in the Middle East etc. The issues that are raised by the mainstream media are often covered in a cursory and biased manner thus, giving only a superficial picture of the issues to their audiences (Herbert Macaulay 2).

Gordon argues that the mainstream media like to pretend that they are merely reporting the news without even realizing that they are also serving as the knowledge-producing agency. A majority of the media does not cover the voices of opposition but also through their superficial coverage of the important news; diminish the possibility of the rising of the ordinary citizens to engage in the acts of dissent (Gordon 2). Hanif also highlights the same role of the mainstream media during General Zia’s regime who was introducing a whole new concept of a narcissist dictator who came into power in the name of Islam but became a helpless slave of his power and position as revealed in chapter ten:

On any other day, General Zia would have read the editorials, looked for negative comments, scanned the adverts for female models not properly covered, but he was so content over the coverage of his speech, his heart was so full of tenderness for the newspapers and journalists... this was one of those rare moments when General Zia could recline in his chair with the newspaper in his lap, order another cup of tea and let the collective goodwill of his one hundred and thirty million subjects engulf his

body and mind. With his red pencil he jotted a note in the margin of the paper to tell the Information Minister to nominate the editor of the Pakistan Times for a national literary award (Hanif 50) . Hanif shows that how Zia-ul-Haq controlled banned the media and showed what only goes in his favor (115).

5.4. Arundhati Roy’s “Peace is War”:

Roy has also defined the role of media in making the minds of the people. For instance, she says in her essay “Peace is War:”

Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, for instance had a controlling interest in major newspapers, magazines, television channels, and publishing houses. The Financial Times reported that he controls about ninety percent of Italy’s TV viewership. During, a trial on bribery charges, while insisting he was the only person who could save Italy from the left, he said, how much longer did I had to keep this life of sacrifices? That bodes ill for the remaining ten percent of Italy’s TV viewership. What price free speech? Free speech for whom? (57)

Roy elaborates in her essays and speeches that how international media controls the print and electronic media to make up the minds of innocent people. To her, ninety percent media is controlled by Italian Prime Minister.

5.5. Hanif’s Portrayal of General Zia-ul-Haq’ as a Hypocritical Muslim:

Hanif has highlighted the character of General Zia as a pious ruler who used to teach the morality to his subjects, the public. Hanif has quoted a historical event in chapter 12 according to which the First Lady, General Zia’s wife, found a copy of an obscene magazine near his bed. Shattered and bewildered she reflected on his hypocrisy and reconsidered his image as a gentleman always lecturing on piety: And then, there was her husband, the Man of Truth, the Man of Faith, the man who lectured women on piety on prime-time TV, the man who had fired judges and television newscasters who refused to wear a dupatta on their

heads, the man who made sure that two pillows could not be shown together on an empty bed in a television drama.

Hanif mocked that how a man who made cinema owners blot out any bare legs or arms of actresses from the film posters; the same man was sitting there staring at these globes of white flesh with such single-mindedness that it seemed as if his own wife had been born without a pair (Hanif 51). According to Jenkins, if we cannot really know and if history can be anything then the question is “how specific histories came to be constructed into one shape rather than another”. Whatever we know is a question of power (13). The popular interpretations of our culture “are not there because they are true... (brilliant histories can be marginalized if their subject matter is unpalatable) but because they are aligned to the dominant discursive practices” (79). Hanif blames General Zia-ul-Haq unfairly so it shows that how only a single person is blamed in history for making mistakes while there were so many faces controlling the country.

5.6. The Leader and the Man: The First Lady’s Imagined Views:

One has to wonder how it is true in historical perspective so this is how historians write history by mixing fiction in reality. This incident enraged the First Lady so much that she thought of exposing him at a public charity event that General Zia had hosted for handing over envelopes containing cash in which the whole media was invited and General Zia was busy posing for newspapers as a generous and compassionate leader. "She thought of unfurling the newspaper in front of the camera and giving a speech, telling the world that this Man of Faith, the Man of Truth, this Friend of the Widows was nothing but a tit-ogler” (Hanif 62).

Further, in chapter ten, Hanif has also poked fun at what is supposedly a dark secret about General Zia’s alleged relationship with an American primetime news anchor on Lufkin Community Television and Pakistan’s Honorary Ambassador to the United States, Miss

Joanne Herring, who had ignored any of General Zia's attempts to avoid her advancement, kissed General Zia on both cheeks in their first interview together. She eventually became someone who he realized that was someone special to whom he whom he could not apply his social rules about women. When Miss Joanne Herring came to Army House interview him, General Zia became restless and nervous in her presence:

General Zia uncertain whether to kiss or hug or extend his hand from behind the safety of the desk. Then as Joanne lunged towards him, the self-control that had helped him survive three wars, one coup and two elections vanished. He left the table that was to be his defense against temptation and moved towards her with extended arms, unable to focus on her face or her features ... Her left b— pressed lightly against the strain of his safari suit and General Zia closed his eyes, his chin resting on the satin b— s— on her shoulder (Hanif 53) .

The extent to which such a richly detailed caricature of Zia-ul-Haq's lust is based on available historical records is highly doubtful but Hanif's motive in constructing such a narrative – which, without the humorous element, would appear down right outrageous to many conservative Pakistanis – is to lash at the underside of a dictator who went so far as to promulgate the Islamic punishment for adultery i.e., publicly stoning to death. However, this punishment was applicable in his case. This sounds absurd. Hanif was not an eyewitness to Zia's chin resting on a satin strap even if he was, the punishment of stoning to death does not apply to cases of resting the chin somewhere.

5.7. Thomas Jefferson and his Slave:

Another example of revising history about national heroes, which may help in building a perspective on Hanif's satire, is the case of Thomas Jefferson, the third American president and the principal author of the American Declaration of Independence. Jefferson was a proponent of democracy, republicanism, and individual rights, motivating American

colonists to claim freedom from the Kingdom of Great Britain and form a new nation; he produced formative documents and decisions at both the state and national level. Thus, he is known to be an ardent freedom advocate who spent his life fighting for the rights of the suppressed.

However, recently a historian Stephen O'Connor's *Thomas Jefferson Dreams of Sally Hemings*, reexamined the Thomas Jefferson's secret relationship with Sally Hemings, his African American slave. Connor highlighted the DNA evidences that proved that Jefferson and Hemings had six children while Jefferson kept her enslaved. Jefferson also enslaved their children and freed them one by one as they entered adulthood. Further, Hemings was Jefferson's late wife's half-sister, the product of an alleged relationship between Jefferson's father in law and one of his slaves.

Historical accounts affirm that Jefferson and Heming's relationship spanned over decades, beginning when Hemings was only an adolescent while Jefferson was in his forties. Connor argued that the relationship between Jefferson and Hemings was not consensual rather Hemings was only a child and Jefferson literally owned her while she was not in any position to give/withhold her consent. What the great president of the United States did to Hemings was rape. Thus, Connor's groundbreaking new research that proved some hidden realities behind Jefferson's personality years after his death revised the history about the American hero.

Qureshi argues that in this novel along with criticism on Zia's policies in Pakistan Hanif has tried to highlight the global politics and its consequences on the third world countries, especially Pakistan, allegorically. Look at the following lines. Baby o says: "I, the imperialist Eagle, swooped down on Obaid's Third World Dove; he fought back, and for the finale sat on my chest drawing blood from my neck with his cardboard beak." (Qureshi 17)

The same third World Dove, Zia-ul-Haq, was drawing blood from the neck of his public on one hand and from the Afghani's on the other.

5.8. The Myths of Free Speech and Media Control:

Hanif through the representations of the people at that time shows that how international media was exposing the country in worst terms and how innocent people were going through all discriminations. By his character Ali Shigri, he gives the idea and impact of the unidentified powers who were responsible and culprits of bigger decisions in country. Ali Shigri in Hanif's novel is the living example of freedom of speech at that time even in army his father got bad treatment and was later found dead just because he was exposing the corruption in the army. The concerned authorities fueled the violence and the laws were self-made and self-imposed. Arundhati Roy in her essay elaborates the role of media in manufacturing news. To her, news are manufactured and produced for instance her lines in Instant- Mix imperial Democracy she elaborated that:

In the United States, the arrangement is more complex. Clear channel communications is the largest radio station owner in the country. It runs more than twelve hundred channels, which together account for nine percent of the market. When hundreds thousands of American citizens took to the streets to protest against the war on Iraq, clear channel organized pro-war patriotic "Rallies for America" across the country. It used its radio station to advertise the events and then correspondents to cover them as though they were breaking news. The era of manufacturing consent has given way to the era of manufacturing news. Soon media newsrooms will drop the pretense, and start hiring theatre dictators instead of journalists (Instant- Mix imperial Democracy 3).

Roy illustrates that it is not journalists that expose news but the international establishment is closely following the newspapers. They hire puppets and control media through their power and rule. The ruling classes suppress media so that they can have their influence in public.

5.9. Creation of Negative Public Opinion:

In *Media Control*, Chomsky argues that historically an alternative conception of democracy is that the public must be barred from managing of their own affairs and the means of information must be kept narrowly and rigidly controlled. Chomsky gives an example of government propaganda operation. That was under the Woodrow Wilson Administration. Woodrow Wilson was elected President in 1916 on the platform "Peace Without Victory." That was right in the middle of the World War I. The population was extremely pacifistic and saw no reason to become involved in a European war. The Wilson administration was actually committed to war and had to do something about it. They established a government propaganda commission; called the Creel Commission, which succeeded, within six months, in turning a pacifist population into a hysterical, war-mongering population, which wanted to destroy everything German, tear the Germans limb from limb, go to war and save the world. That was a major achievement, and it led to a further achievement. There was very strong support from the media, from the business establishment, which in fact organized, pushed much of this work, and it was, in general, a great success. Among those who participated actively and enthusiastically in Wilson's war were the progressive intellectuals.

Hanif has also emphasized on how General Zia had been controlling the media at that time and generating public's opinion by their religious emotions. Media at that time was completely under his control and his Information Minister was dictating the notable editors at that time. General Zia would look into copies of newspapers, magazines, journals and advertisements for filtering out any point going against his rule. Headlines and prime time

bulletins were an approved product of the Army House. When confronted with criticism from the international media, he knew how to handle his people by playing with their religious sentiments.

5.10. The Blind Zainab's Rape Case:

Hanif has quoted Zainab Bibi's rape case in this regard. When one morning, the novel says, Zia was going through a copy of *The New York Times* from his morning papers, he found a picture of Zainab Bibi on its front page. The headline, "BLIND JUSTICE IN THE LAND OF THE PURE" immediately enraged him which he regarded it as a conspiracy by the Western media and commanded his Information minister to publish a counter-narrative as a "Jewish Propaganda", "What was wrong with the Western press? Why were they so obsessed with sex and women? This was the third story in the international press about Blind Zainab. A simple case of unlawful fornication had been turned into an international issue. Why?" (Hanif 72). The Information Minister informed General Zia that the owner of the New York magazine was a Jew. This news gave him a sense of relief. Hanif has portrayed him as if General Zia had done something wrong with this news but it was the international media that was giving that case hype.

5.11. Hanif mocks Jewish Propaganda:

General Zia always knew when he was right. Knowing that it was a Jewish conspiracy, he yelled at his Information Minister not to waste time and order the mainstream media to put out a press release that all this fuss about the blind Zainab is a 'Jewish Propaganda'. He also ordered his Information Minister to bring a large Persian Carpet for the owner of New York Times and invite him for a lunch the next time they visit America.

Hanif ironically mocks this incident that particularly falls into the category of a 'Jewish propaganda' out of General Zia's two categories i.e. Jewish and Hindu propaganda. "And since the story had appeared in the New York Times, you couldn't really put it on the

Hindu propaganda pile” (Hanif 74). Hanif shows that how propaganda is made for public to believe.

5.12. Noam Chomsky about Propaganda:

Herman and Chomsky in *A Propaganda Model* argued that in countries where the levers of power are in the hands of a state bureaucracy, the monopolistic control over the media, often supplemented by official censorship, makes it clear that the media serve the ends of dominant elite. It traces the routes by which money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalize dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their messages across to the public (Chomsky).

Hanif has further dissected the way General Zia had been suppressing the general public’s true opinion or dissent from being covered by the media. For example, in chapter twelve, General Zia and his Information Minister had completely held the public back from giving any reaction to record any protest on TV or newspaper. Pakistan's media is also complicit in such propaganda and imaginative fragmentation of reality. Such as, General Zia held a public ceremony at the Army House where he was to distribute cash prizes to widows and blinds.

At the event, one of the widows refused to take the envelop in front of the camera and raised the slogan free blind Zainab who could not recognize her rapists to expose the hypocrisy of the state. Hanif quotes the incident to indicate towards how force and threat were used to silent public opinion. The protesting young woman refused to receive the charity but instead demanded justice for blind Zainab who could not recognize her rapists. She asked him if it was her fault that she did not recognize her rapists. Speechless General Zia looked at his Information Minister as if asking from did he get that woman from and raised his brow ordering him to take immediate action.

The Information Minister stood his ground; imagining the camera was taking his close-up, his mouth broke into a grin. He shook his head, and composed a picture caption for tomorrow's papers: The President sharing a light moment with the Information Minister. Brigadier TM could stand disorder at one end of the queue, but now there were women wagging fingers and shouting at both ends, those furthest from him cursing the last woman in the queue and this one right in front of him defying presidential protocol. He took out his revolver and moved towards the cameraman. "Stop filming." "This is good, lively footage," the cameraman said, his eye still glued to the camera. Then he felt something hard poking his ribs and switched off the camera. (Hanif 66)

Another example of suppressed dissent was also given in chapter fourteen where Hanif has described how public that used to protest against the trial of blind Zainab was also handled by General Zia who would never let the same being aired on TV or published in the national newspapers. He would generate the propaganda to tackle that it was a conspiracy by the liberal elite women belonging to APWA who wanted to spoil the other women. General Zia realized that a statement blaming the Jewish press and talking to the US ambassador would not solve the Blind Zainab problem when yet another group of women staged a protest in Islamabad the next day. "All rich begums," the Information Minister told him. "More chauffeurs than protesters." (Hanif 75). This scene exemplifies the potency of media for imaginative revisionist re-presentations of reality; in this case, the information minister actually revises the present as it occurs for future headlines.

Noam Chomsky in "Introducing Three Dimensions of Audience Fragmentation" argues that media only presents fragmented representation of reality. The picture of the world that is presented to the public is only the remotest representation of reality. The actual truth

is buried under layers of lies upon lies (19). It is thus obvious that Chomsky suggests that propaganda inhabits an interesting sphere of excess democracy as it deters the threat of democracy under the condition of freedom. It is not like a totalitarian state where it is done by force. Those achievements are conditional to freedom (20).

Thus, as Nelson in “Re-Imagining Identity and Nation in South Asian Diaspora Fiction” argues that Hanif in his novel, *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* actually imagines a concentrated effort on the part of Pakistani media to shape the public opinions. Nelson argues that despite Pakistan’s and the United States’ governments the mainstream media has played a significant role in inculcating the sense of nationalism that got around imagination and reality to form a kind of fragmented representation of multiplicitous Pakistan as it was based in hyper-reality, the superseding of reality by images of reality. This kind of nationalism is based in the postmodern culture (Nelson 4).

The point can be reinforced by the one made by Arundhati Roy in her essay “Peace is War:”

In countries of the first world, too, the machinery of democracy has been effectively subverted. Politicians, media barons, judges, powerful corporate lobbyists, and government officials are imbricated in an elaborate underhand configuration that completely undermines the lateral arrangement of checks and balances between the constitution, courts of law, parliament, the administration and, perhaps most important of all, the independent media for of structural basis of parliamentary democracy.

Increasingly, the imbrication is neither subtle nor elaborate (57).

Roy in these lines shows that how media and democracy is under checked and everything is filtered even in the first world countries. It is power that controls knowledge.

Belavusau discusses that the utterance in the historical revisionism matters since general laws might lessen the expression of a political opinion whereas, the exercise of scientific freedom might be limited by laws protecting other fundamental rights notably human dignity. Academic freedom is an integral part of the right to freedom of speech that implies a wide range of liberty for the construction of historical narratives (Belavusav 7).

Herman and Chomsky in *A Propaganda Model* argue that in countries where the levers of power are in the hands of a state bureaucracy, the monopolistic control over the media, often supplemented by official censorship, makes it clear that the media serve the ends of a dominant elite. It traces the routes by which money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalize dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their messages across to the public.

Thus, General Zia was using a group of intellectuals to control the opinion of the whole country as elaborated in the Leninist political theory that there is a vanguard of some revolutionary intellectuals who take state power using the force bringing them to state power, and then driving the stupid masses toward a future that they are too incompetent to envision for themselves.

5.13. Lippmann's Concept about Suppression:

The same concept is given by Lippmann as a 'specialized class' that has been discussed earlier in the chapter. Lippmann argues that the specialized class is the people who analyze, implement, decide and run the things in the ideological, economic and political systems. This is a small percentage of population. This specialized class, consisting of the army generals who were involved in running the state affairs for their own interests, has been highlighted by Hanif in the above-mentioned account of suppression of dissent from coming into media during General Zia's era leading to some conspiracy theories about the alleged involvement of military in the same. As Keith Jenkins argues, the proof for revisionist

conspiracy theories consists of the relationship between the attributed interests of small groups and large scale historical events. The revisionism connects the motives of the small group with the large-scale historical events. The interests of the small groups are interconnected with the interests of the higher level. Jenkins holds that “originals” or sources of the past are nothing “genuine” (67). Rather, “sources are mute” and it is historians who speak as many historians use the same sources but come up with different readings (46).

Further, according to Keith Jenkins, history is a discourse, “a worldly, wordy language game played for real, [which] reflect[s] the distribution of power that put these metaphors into play (67). His following dictum, while pointing out the power relations of the dominant and the marginalized, that “truth [is] always created and never found” (38), seems the most appropriate closure for an analysis of the manner in which Zia-ul-Haq’s government used the façade of Islamization to control and exploit the resources of popular print and electronic media.

Chapter 6

Hanif's Satirical Reinventions of the Deep State in Zia-Ul-Haq's Regime and the Plane Crash of 1988

6.1. Overview of the Chapter

This chapter discusses Hanif's depiction of the role of the deep state during the reign of General Mohammed Zia-ul-Haq in his novel *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*. In particular, the focus of the chapter will be on Hanif's subversion of the commonly accepted image of Zia-ul-Haq as a self-assertive dictator into a man subservient to the dictates of the will of the machinery constituting the deep state, which affected the shape of the whole nation. Moreover, this deep state, it will be revealed, was integrated in some international political circles that eventually cast long-lasting impact on Pakistani economy, defense, culture, religion and politics.

6.2. Role of Important Military Personnel:

Jenkins argues in his book *Rethinking History* that revisionist historians reevaluate the historical events and processes they describe and explain as result of reevaluation of past events, or through a revision in the system of values that historians employ to evaluate historical events, actions, and actors (5). Hanif has given a detailed introduction of General Zia-ul-Haq's right-hand men, who were not only influencing him at each step but some of them were also involved in his domestic affairs. For example, one of the most important persons was General Akhtar, the chief of Inter-Services Intelligence and security in charge of General Zia-ul-Haq, who won General Zia's favour in the very first meeting with eight generals to decide the further course of action immediately after General Zia's military coup of 1977. General Akhtar, in the said meeting, not only succeeded in impressing General Zia but also all the attendant generals:

The other generals stopped thinking and moved forward in their chairs to listen to General Akhtar. "By Allah's grace you have brought this country back from the edge of destruction, by Allah's mercy you have saved this country when the politicians were about to push it over the edge of a precipice. I want to thank...our visionary Chief of Staff to whom Allah has given the wisdom to take the right decision at the right time"... the eight men, despite their different levels of affiliation to religion, diverse tastes in whisky and women, and various English accents, reached the same conclusion: General Akhtar had beaten them to it (19).

In this passage, General Akhtar's replacement of the word "God" with the more orthodoxly evocative word "Allah," which he repeats no less than three times in a short speech, indicates the Machiavellian maneuvers of high profiled generals eager to prove themselves faithful to which ever moral climate the current leader might point them to. But the hollowness of this high sounding rhetoric is revealed at the very moment by Hanif's typical satire probing the generals' personal decadent lifestyle. Side by side with the deconstruction of the religious rhetoric, Hanif's unsparing satire makes the reader see through the generals' sly comparison between the apparently incompetent politicians and the heaven-sent military "savior" of the country.

Eventually, the influence of this act spread through the country and nobody was ever allowed to say God instead of Allah as Hanif ironically says: "...all (other) names slowly started to disappear: from official stationery, from Friday sermons, from newspaper editorials, from mothers' prayers, from greeting cards, from official memos, from the lips of television, quiz-show hosts, from children's storybooks, from lovers' songs, from court orders, from, telephone operators' greetings, from habeas corpus applications, from inter-school debating, competitions, from road inauguration speeches, from memorial services, from cricket players', curses; even from beggars' begging pleas. In the name of God, God was

exiled from the land and replaced by the one and only Allah who, General Zia convinced himself, spoke only through him. General Akhtar remained a general until the time he died (19). Hanif has blamed General Zia-ul-Haq and he himself was not present there and by his fiction he made General Zia-ul-Haq victim but the usage of the word Allah in preference to God has nothing to do with General Zia-ul-Haq's tyrant rule as God is not a proper translation for Allah because the denotations and connotations of the two words differ.

However, in chapter 20, Hanif reveals a very important theme of General Akhtar secretly envying General Zia-ul-Haq – since the former, while taking care of the important state affairs, had been awarded three stars as the latter enjoyed the fruits of his labour in his five titles, addresses to the UN and the potential nomination for the Nobel Prize. This made him feel like a helpless and weak laborer who was being exploited by his master. General Akhtar also encouraged journalists to label him as a silent soldier but when stood in front of the mirror he could not deny to himself that he had become a shadow of General Zia-ul-Haq (97). Hanif shows that how generals were obsessed with Zia-ul-Haq's position and were thinking to replace him for power.

Moreover, General Akhtar also played a pivotal role in the political success of General Zia. Hanif writes that if General Zia wanted to become a president, General Akhtar would influence the election results by ensuring that the ballot boxes were always stuffed in time and he was also expected to arrange the spontaneous national celebrations all over the country once the votes had been counted (97). Moreover, General Zia had not only handed over General Akhtar all the important policy decisions but also heavily relied on him for his personal security as General Zia had become paranoid with the fear of his death that he did not seem to trust anyone around him except for General Akhtar and a few military personnel.

Hanif explains how General Zia had become overwhelmed with fear and suspicion in chapter two, "Before morning prayers on 15 June 1988, General Mohammed Zia ul-Haq's

index finger hesitated on verse 21:87 while reading the Quran, and he spent the rest of his short life dreaming about the innards of a whale. When during the Morning Prayer, the imam began to recite the same verse 21:87 about the plight of Prophet Jonah inside the stomach of whale. This scared him so much that General Zia-ul-Haq began to cry loudly while praying.

As the prayer ended, General Zia-ul-Haq turned his face left and right, blessed the whole world and immediately grasped General Akhtar's arm for help. He wanted to say something but his words stuck in his throat. In this condition, General Akhtar held General Zia-ul-Haq's hand and touched his back to calm him down. This gave him bravery to finally complete the request, "Can you please raise my security level?" (19). General Akhtar agreed eagerly and grabbed his hand confidently. General Zia started crying and his tear dropped out of his left eye while his right eye looked at imam with suspicion, "Raise it to level red please" (19). Hanif shows that how it was really difficult for a dictator to come back to normal life while General Zia-ul-Haq was considered very brave General but Hanif has portrayed him as a very weak General.

According to Jenkins it is historians who write history to describe the past. To him past has gone and it is historian who makes up history on minor evidences (49). There are very few traces of the past which are left and to know what really happened in the past is difficult in both theory and practice as historians operate under all kinds of and pressures. So, how Hanif mocked confidently is unable to be justified as there is no final truth.

Hanif has introduced another important character in General Zia's life, i.e., Brigadier Tahir Mehdi aka Brigadier T.M whom he had selected to ensure his personal safety. Brigadier Tahir Mehdi was full of suspicions and was thought of as the shadow of General Zia-ul-Haq for a long time. Brigadier Tahir Mehdi's armed commandos used to form a two-layer safety ring around General Zia all the time. Brigadier Tahir Mehdi was the only man who had complete access to General Zia's office as well as his family around the clock.

General Zia-ul-Haq had even cancelled all the public gatherings that could take him out of the Army House. Brigadier T.M even mistrusted the residents of the Army House after isolating General Zia-ul-Haq from the public. Brigadier T. M. with his behavior had been successful in instilling fear in General Zia too, who could now kill anybody he suspected to be after his life, “Who wants to kill me?” (30). He had cancelled all his public meetings and said he won't go to the President's House even for state functions. (32).

Hanif as portrayed him as a paranoid but on the other hand in reality General Zia-ul-Haq was a battle-hardened veteran who had been decorated in his days as a soldier for his bravery. He fought many battles like World War II Indo-Pakistani War of 1965, Indo-Pakistani War of 1971 and Soviet Afghan War. Hanif has unjustifiably blamed General Zia-ul-Haq as he was a four star Army official and received many praised as a brave officer in his life. Hanif fictionalizes and blurs the limits between truth and fiction by mingling the history with fiction. A historical metafiction also includes and blurs the boundaries between the history and the fiction and sometimes there is a simultaneous crossing of boundaries in a highly self-conscious way (113). It seems that Hanif is biased while explaining the personality of General Zia-ul-Haq just like Roland Barthes said that “sources are mute” and it is historians who speak as many historians use the same sources but come up with different readings (46). So, every historian has their own understanding about the past and sometimes historians are biased while explaining their interests.

6.3. Hanif’s representation of Qadi and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak:

By introducing the character of Qadi in General Zia’s life, he threw light on influence of a third person whose orders were being implemented in Pakistan in the name of Islam that was beyond objection and question. Qadi, never allowed General Zia-ul-Haq to question his teachings and assured him that path of the just was always tough, As General Zia-ul-Haq said

to Qadi that with his blessings he has introduced the new laws in Pakistan and by the grace of Allah hundreds of sinners have already been convicted (75).

Hanif mocks at General Zia-ul-Haq's laws and rules but even the superpower countries are under controlled by their deep state for instance: According to Aristotle "the man is a social animal" and laws are significant in any of the country. To him, the laws should be supreme over all. Aristotle believed that these laws must support principles. Aristotle had similar views like Plato about the dangers of democracy. They accepted that democratic governments took many forms but the worst were those without the rule of law. In democracies without law, manipulators rule over. In democracies many parties come with different agendas and have their own interest and in such anarchy the interests of the public are neglected.

General Zia-ul-Haq's any question based on reasoning and logic was immediately dismissed by Qadi who made him believe that it was unislamic and he should avoid such disobedience. For example, while seeking guidance in blind Zainab's rape case. Qadi replies that, the law doesn't differentiate between those who can see and those who can't.

Hanif called General Zia-ul-Haq as fooled just because he was inquiring about punishments in Islam. Hanif took the fictional character of Safia Bibi's life to show the women's position in novel he illustrates Zainab's character as a victim of society and fundamentalists. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in her essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak" elaborates the position of oppressed who cannot speak for themselves. According to Spivak the Westerners' perceptive is superior to that of the subaltern those with the power to speak for those who cannot (Eleanor Ross). Spivak blamed Westerners for labeling them as they want to label them.

According to Hanif, General Zia was defending the rapists and there were protests on roads while on the other hand reports showed that Safia Bibi was a thirteen year old blind girl

who was raped by her owner and also by his son. The crime was not reported by the victim. Because she showed clear marks of pregnancy and was unmarried, it was expected she had premarital sex. She was failed to prove that she was raped prompted the judge to sentence her (under the *Hudood* ordinance) to three years of imprisonment and 15 strokes. The chief cast her as the culprit instead of the victim. The rapists of Safia Bibi were never impeached and did not spend any time in jail. Hanif shows that the historically infamous case of blind Zainab public's strong reaction in the form of protests at very large scales that never made way to the media due to his monopolistic rule. Hanif portrayed Zainab as a victim and blamed General Zia for his tyrant rule and also he himself accepted that the case was never projected in media.

6.4. Edward Said's Concept about the Western Mind:

Said explains the relationship between the Western minds' perceptions of Islamic states within the context of a Cold-War compartmentalization of the world: "What there is of value in Islam is principally its anticommunism, with the additional irony that almost invariably anticommunism in the Islamic world has been synonymous with repressive pro-American regimes. Pakistan's Zia ul-Haq is a perfect case in point." (9) After all, as Youssef Yahmad reminds us in "Edward Said, Eqbal Ahmad, and Salman Rushdie: Resisting the Ambivalence of Postcolonial Theory," "Past and present forms of colonialism have always masked their true objectives behind statements or gestures of benevolence and respect for the other" (10). The East-West opposition constructed by Columbus has thus shifted subtly from a territorial imperialism to an economic and cultural imperialism. With an understanding of the strikingly imperialist stakes raised by globalization in tandem with the hegemonic center's descriptions of the peripheries in general—and Pakistan in particular—we can begin interrogating the novels of Mohammed Hanif, Mohsin Hamid, and Salman Rushdie.

6.5. The Involvement of the CIA:

Hanif also highlighted and reassessed the involvement of CIA in all the state affairs of Pakistan during General Zia-ul-Haq's era that had historically been neglected in the academics. Hanif has fearlessly described how the officials of CIA had complete access at the Army House and in General Zia's private life such as, the Chief of CIA's tour of Islamabad to meet General Zia along with important Army officials reveals the hypocrisy of General Zia's regime.

Moreover, General Zia's invitation to the US Ambassador to Pakistan, Arnold Reagan and his wife to his home to meet his family at a dinner with the CIA chief to discuss important state affairs. Hanif has selected an important period of Pakistani history such as, this was the time when Pakistan was an allied of USA in Afghan war and was in return enjoying US funding, Hanif here points out another hypocrisy of General Zia's regime who used to instigate hatred for non-Muslims while at the same time was enjoying their money. Hanif writes, "Americans in Pakistan, Soviets in Afghanistan, dollars in every hand." (1). General Zia's close friend, an American prime-time journalist, Miss Joanne Herring had been raising funds in Lufkin, USA on behalf of Pakistan for the cause Afghan war, Hanif gives the account as follows to make it clear that how Pakistan was thrown into other's war and it was all presented to win general public's support in both countries i.e. Pakistan and the USA Joanne the journalist herself had used Pakistan's flag as the background for her show (52). It shows American hypocrisy US was fighting war in Afghanistan and on the other US journalist was collecting funds. It shows that how they were defaming Pakistan's image at international platforms.

The creme de la creme of the East Texan community was sent invitation cards carrying a picture of a dead Afghan child with caption: Better dead than red. The Afghan mujahid with a rocket launcher on his shoulder was shown with caption: Your ten dollars can

help him bring down a Russian helicopter (52). The whole argument by Hanif has exposed American hypocrisy more than General Zia-ul-Haq's hypocrisy. Hanif's argument in the preceding section about the CIA seems to point more to the American hypocrisy in sponsoring the Jihadist mindset in Pakistan for its Anti-Soviet American's hypocrisy designs that to show Zia's hypocrisy as a Muslim. Hanif wisely avoids putting the spotlight on American Hypocrisy because he is a novelist produced and sustained by the western post 9-11.

Through Ali Shigri, Hanif exposes the moral and financial corruption in the military circles, the notorious role of military in putting the fate of our country to stake, the infamous decisions taken by the military government that landed Pakistan into wars with neighbors. This also had devastating and long-lasting effects on social, economic and political areas of the country. Thus, Hanif challenges the historical basis of the rule in Pakistan during the military regime of General Zia.

6.6. The Deep State in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*:

Tanvir in "Praetorianism in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*: A Critical Analysis" argues that "*A Case of Exploding Mangoes*" in which he has narrated various instances of General Zia's praetorianism. During the course of narration, Hanif, as an adept critic and seasoned analyst of global political scenario has employed the devices of black humour, irony and political satire in an allegorical way by making use of real and fictitious characters, well known to the Pakistani masses and International Community for their significant role in Pakistani armed forces and political government. Hanif's novel is a very valuable document, which very aptly describes the reality of Pakistani politics, army's role and its interference in public and civil politics. This novel also throws light on General Zia's personality as the Chief of Army Staff and afterwards as the elected president, who remained a perfect example of a praetor throughout his reign of a third world country, named Pakistan.

6.7. Media's Confirmation about the death of General Zia-ul-Haq:

Hours after the incident of the 1988 plane crash, PTV did not confirm General Zia-ul-Haq's demise hours while the Pakistan flag covered the screen and the recitation of Holy Quran began to play for hours. The First Lady who was watching the TV unknowingly remained busy in her household chores waiting for the breaking news. The whole nation was kept from knowing this news for hours. The investigation team reached the accident spot and took hours to confirm the incident even after witnessing the debris. The wreckage of the plane was not the human dead bodies in their normal form nor were there any serene looking martyrs as claimed by the army. Hanif has indicated towards a hidden mystery after the death of General Zia as an example of international conspiracy. Jenkins in his book *Rethinking history* says that "originals" or sources of the past are nothing "genuine" (67). According to him "sources are mute" and it is historians who speak as many historians use the same sources but come up with different readings (46).

History is what is chosen to be popularized in people. Historians and writers of fiction have much in common as Jenkins says that past is temporary fiction, it is as notional a concept as 'the real world' to which novelists allude in realist fiction – only ever existing in the present discourses that articulate it – all these things destabilize the past and fracture it, so that, in the cracks opened up, new histories can be made (79). In the novel's Chapter 36, Hanif has described the mysterious circumstances moments ahead the disastrous plane crash, he comically describes how a thirsty crow was carrying the blind Zainab's curse got stuck in search of the mangoes stored in the Pak One plane. It blurs the border between historiographic truth and falsehood by claiming there can be more than a single "truth" (6). There are so many predictions about General Zia's plane crash incident but Hanif focused more on blind Zainab's curse for General Zia but in reality there were was nothing like such

case to which General Zia had to be punished. Hanif has revised that incident to link the blind Zainab's case with Hanif's death.

Jordan Nelson in "Re-Imagining Identity and Nation in South Asian Diaspora Fiction" writes that Mohammed Hanif's *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* raises the issue of a Pakistan that is not only fragmented along lines of military and civilian, but also of the media, both domestic and foreign. Jenkins, in his book *Rethinking history* explains that the past is gone and it is historian who comments history on slender evidence (49). As Tucker in *Past in the Making* argues that in revisionist historiographies, the conspiracy theorists would have to explain the absence of such evidence by the same old conspiracy, while alternative explanations would usually be able to come up with evidence for the unintended processes that lead to correlations between events and interests (7). So the historians make perspectives of public and they shape up the minds of general public.

Chapter 7:

Conclusion

7.1. Hanif's Subjectivity and Historiography:

The present study aimed at analyzing Mohammed Hanif's satirical rewriting of President General Zia-ul-Haq's regime in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*. It has been seen how the president's personality is open to ambivalent interpretations depending on how one chooses to regard the available facts concerning the role of deep state, the exploitation of religion, and suppression of dissent for the consolidation of his rule over the country.

Although, a traditional historian would in most cases dismiss Hanif's satire as, at best, a literary diversion or, at worst, a perverse attempt at humour, a postmodernist would argue that facts in any historical narrative are always what a historian's viewpoint make them appear to be and so there is hardly any technical difference between the nature of fictional and non-fictional discourses.

Hanif's subjectivity is obvious but it should, by implication, make us see through the more curtailed subjectivity of professional historians. Hanif's first motive may be to make the reader laugh at the self-importance with which a military dictator regards himself, but in doing so, he also brings to attention the ambivalence of Zia-ul-Haq's irrevocable impact on the social, political, economic and, most importantly, religious identities of Pakistan. Hanif has shown how powerful a tool comedy and satire can be for disrupting our faith in metanarratives surrounding powerful leaders of nations in history.

7.2. Deconstructing Mohammed Hanif's Humour:

The most significant lesson to be drawn from this study is that one should be wary of a final word about any facet of history.

According to Mohammed Hanif's version of events, Pakistan became the victim of a number of socio-political and religious challenges after getting involved in the US sponsored

Afghan war, religious extremism and intolerance as a result of General Zia's Islamization program and blasphemy laws, imposition of Hudood Ordinance 1979 and suppression of dissent in the country.

But an observant reader cannot neglect the fact that treating all these themes and issues as if they are nothing more than a farce enacted by extremely stupid leaders and their equally stupid subjects, makes a telling comment on the ideological identities of Mohammed Hanif himself. The Wikipedia article on him introduces him as "a British Pakistani writer and journalist who writes a monthly opinion piece in *The New York Times*" ("Arts and culture"). The facts that 'British' should precede 'Pakistani' in defining his identity even though he was born in Pakistan, and the first intended consumers of his 'opinions' (written in English) are progressive westerners (based in "New York"), should make it obvious that poking fun at the Third World's Islamic values and traditions provided an easy way for him of getting critical acclaim. And, true to the formula, the novel did secure several "prestigious" awards and nominations and earned Hanif a notable name. This makes a grim comment on the hidden agendas and ideological preferences of the contemporary knowledge industries and invites a reader to reevaluate the apparent playfulness of Hanif's tone.

7.3. Limitations of the Study:

The study did not have any aim of passing a judgment on either the character of General Zia-ul-Haq or the comparative feasibility of military and democratic regimes in Pakistan. Its aim was simply to critically evaluate Hanif's corrosive satire on a so-called Islamist regime in the light of views presented by postmodern historiographers, particularly Keith Jenkins. In flouting belief in a view especially privileged among "official" historians, a postmodernist's aim is almost never to set up an alternative viewpoint in its place. It is important for a reader of this thesis not to succumb to the temptation of imagining that Hanif's views are in some intrinsic manner more truthful than the more traditional portrait of

Zia-ul-Haq. Rather, the point made here is that Hanif's comic rewriting of Islamic politics in Pakistan can be, for an interested historian, corroborated by one version of "facts" (given the idea that facts are fluid and changeable).

Secondly, whereas post-colonialism and feminism are invoked as side-issues in this study, it should be noted that they are not its primary concerns. Rather, the critical canon has made them, to a certain extent, into a part of discussions of postmodernism, and it is rather in that capacity that they figure here.

7.4. Guidelines for Future Researchers:

The present study explores how Mohammed Hanif has chosen hilarious humour as his narratorial mode for writing a revisionist history while reevaluating General Zia's personality by challenging his heroic qualities, role of deep state, suppression of dissent and the events leading to the mysterious plane crash of 1988 that killed him. However, the future researchers may extend the scope of this study by studying this novel in the light of feminist, psychoanalytic or postcolonial theories (the latter is briefly made use of here in the invocation of some views of Edward Said) because, as is evident from this study, its themes readily lend themselves to all these theoretical paradigms.

Further, a very interesting study that can draw on the present one can be a comparison and contrast of the working of the military and the so-called democratic government apparatuses in Pakistan. The extent to which the fun poked on General Zia-ul-Haq's tactics complement or invert those of Pakistani democratic governments can make deep comments on the general political environments of the country in different phases of its history.

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