

Negotiating Pakistani Culture and Globalization in Mohsin Hamid's "How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia": Scapes-Based Critique

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.63163/jpehss.v3i2.500>

Abstract

This article explores the intricate relationship between Pakistani society and globalization as they occur in the novel *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* 2013 by Mohsin Hamid. This research is analysed with the help of Arjun Appadurai's theory of globalization, based on the juncture of scapes: Ethnoscape, Technoscape, Financescape, Mediascape and Ideoscape. Hamid's novel is the story of a nameless hero, who migrates from rural to urban for the sake of better economic struggle. Furthermore, this paper presents the analysis of the scapes in the narrative as a method of noticing how each scape is present and how it is portraying a sense of an ever changing cultural identity in the setting of a South Asian context and neo liberal order. The experimental nature of the novel, second person's point of view, and satirical tone give plenty of space to utilize the theoretical model proposed by Appadurai. Arjun Appadurai develops a framework that is useful in the analysis of literary text *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* 2013. Thus, the article comes to an academic conclusion by analyzing the effectiveness of the framework and proposing new ways of looking at globalization in Pakistani literature.

Key Words: Globalization, Pakistani Culture, City Space, Five Scapes, Neo liberalism

Introduction

This research article applies theory of globalization by Arjun Appadurai (1996) to describe transitions that the author identifies as five scapes (Gilligan p.231). The global cultural flows manifest themselves as: ethnoscape (migration and movement of people), technoscape (exchange of technology), financing (movement of global capital), mediascape (flow of media and images), and ideoscape (ideological clash). Mohsin Hamid's *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* 2013 is a novel written in the second person narrative and in the form of a self-help book. It breaks the

convention of narrative traditions. It explores in depth the socio-political, economical and cultural changes of modern day Pakistan. Its scale is not limited to personal experience, and it shows a critique of the ambition of capitalism, structural inequality, and globalization of culture.

In order to contextualize such transitions, this paper makes use of Arjun Appadurai (1996) theory of globalization that intricates five scapes in the context of the network of international cultural flows functions:

ethnoscape (population movement and migration)

technoscape (exchange of technology)

financescape (movement of global capital)

mediascape (streams of media and image)

ideoscape (ideological movements and values)

These scapes are highly dynamic interdependent and creating glocalized influences.

However, Hamid's novel becomes a lens through which these global flows can be observed within the specific cultural and geographical context of Pakistan. The protagonist's rise mirrors the narrative of neoliberal success. It also reveals the costs of such transformations estrangement from cultural roots, perpetuation of inequality, and a loss of communal identity. This article argues that *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* 2013 illustrates the intersection of these scapes in depicting the transformation of Pakistani culture under the pressures of globalization.

Literature Review

Globalization and literature have a complex interaction in postcolonial literature especially where the institution of memoirs is concerned in the area of south Asian fiction. Critics like Gikandi (2011) and Huggan (2001) have observed how the postcolonial literature addresses the imbalance in economical and cultural balance created by the world wide neo liberal capitalism. Hamid is one of the leading writers of Pakistani literature at the frontline of this interface with the collision of tradition and modernity, locality and the global imprint (Gopal, 2014; Shamsie, 2015). Besides, Having gained ample critical interest due to narrative experimentation and socio-political commentary, Hamid is typically described as discussing issues of the socio-economic status quo by offering a satire that provides a guide on *How to Get Filthy Rich in a Rising Asia* 2013. Although theorists have addressed their approach to class mobility (Ranasinha, 2016), urbanization (Ali, 2019) and structure (Ahmad, 2020) yet many have not consistently used a globalization as theoretical framework especially scapes as proposed by Appadurai in examining the cultural aspects of the novel.

Modernity at Large (1996) put forward by Appadurai resulted in a more fluid, decentralized way of thinking about globalization, abandoning the core-periphery models, and concentrating instead on disjunctive overlapping cultural flows. These five scapes by him provide a very formidable set of tools to study the transnational relations of contemporary fiction. The five scapes have been used in cinema and film studies (Chakravarty, 2006), diasporic literature (Mishra, 2002) and in media culture (Karim, 2003), but are not more commonly employed in South Asian literary

analysis. Thus, this article aims at filling that gap by referring to Appadurai model to examine cultural shifts in the novel by Hamid to show how globalization affects and is negotiated in the Pakistani context.

Methodology

The research is based on a qualitative thematic design with the textual analysis approach. *How to Get Filthy Rich in the Rising Asia* 2013 written by Hamid is the primary text with the use of secondary literature on globalization theory and the South Asian cultural studies. The five scapes offered by Appadurai can be described as thematic lenses used to single out and analyze certain aspects of the story. Evidence of each scape is searched in the text, including the development of a character, plot construction, setting, and storytelling style. The findings are used with the purpose of placing the findings in context of the bigger argument on the Pakistani literature and culture on globalization. The key aspect of the framework provided by Appadurai is specifically applicable in the context of the current study that focuses on multidirectional flows and hybridization of cultures. Instead of positioning globalization as homogenization, it makes possible to explore the changing nature of Pakistani identity under the influence of the global world in neo liberal order.

Analysis

Ethnoscape, Migration, Mobility, and the Urban-Rural Divide

In Hamid's novel, the ethnoscape is represented by the fact that the protagonist leaves the rural countryside and goes to metro politan cities as it is logically impossible to define which city it represents. The reason is that this migration can also symbolize the overall demographic change in South Asia to which rural citizens are being enticed to leave their land in search of a better and livelier environment in the cities. "You are a poor boy. Your family is poor. You are not the poorest of the poor but this is of small consolation when you look at what you do not have." (Hamid, 2013, p. 3). This introduction summarizes the ideological striving as well as the socio-economic desperation in the internal migration. The archetypal nature of the character is very much rooted in a Pakistani context whereby the rural world remains largely forgotten in national developmental processes. Migration does not only entail physical space but also carries with itself a certain symbolic nature that being a change of one type of cultural identity into another. His growing alienation along with family and communal elements represents his larger cultural alienation that is influenced by urbanization and individualism. "You separate yourself with your past, with your family, with your people and this is how progress is realized" (Hamid, 2013, p. 87). Thus, such dislocation demonstrates the influence of globalization to social cohesion, which is reminiscent of the theory of deterritorialization of identities by Appadurai.

Technoscape, Infrastructure, Surveillance, and the Digital Divide

Technology in the novel is something facilitating progress and something of control. The protagonist resorts to pirated disks and cell phones to reach the markets and develop his business empire to show the ubiquitous impact of global technology flows in the daily lives of Pakistani. "You do have pirated DVDs, but you are not a thief. You are a businessman" (Hamid, 2013, p.

49). This is ironic of the ethical grayness brought in by global capitalist structures. Technology equalizes the field of opportunity yet extends and deepens power relations. These security and digital management tools are used to work as an instrument of the state and non-state organizations. A telling aspect of technology in the story is the uneven spread of technology, which is one characteristic of technoscape. Urban elites have such fast connectivity and on the other hand semi-urban and rural subjects are technology poor in that context they are sustaining inequality.

Financescape, Capitalism, Corruption, and Economic Aspiration

The popular theme in the novel written by Hamid is that of financescape since the main character wants to be rich. The main character is driven by capital flights and the illicit. “Money should not be the devil of everything. It has become the source of all pragmatism” (Hamid, 2013, p. 102). This is rephrasing of neoliberal logic where the money which comes first rather than morality. The main character prospers under a system of corporate corruption and thrives through bribery and back room deals in building his bottled water business. His case is an embodiment of the local shrinking under the weight of capitalist ideals of globalism. Satirical tone presents the myth of meritocracy and demonstrates that globalization can only increase the socio-economic gap. The scape of finance, authorizes a space of hope and exploitation.

Mediascape: Narrative Form, Advertising and Image Production

The media cluttered atmosphere of modern Pakistan is echoed by the overall experimental narrative approach of Hamid that startling the reader with a self-help book. The novel is the parody of the motivational literature and consumer advertising, showing how much a media can influence personal desires. In order to “be filthy rich in the rising Asia, you will have to initially want to be filthy rich” (Hamid, 2013, p. 1). It is a welcome and critique in this opening line. Mediascape works on the model of spreading aspirations, which are frequently improved in the centers of capitalism in the world. The second-person narration of the novel makes the reader literally a subjected participant of the narrative as of advertising its techniques. It is portrayed that television, print media, and online sources shape the opinion of the masses that are influenced by every aspect including political affiliations and aspirations. The image of the main character is well-selected being representative of the constructed identities spread by global flows of media.

Ideoscape: Neoliberalism, Identity, and Cultural Change

The ideoscape of the novel by Hamid concerns the embrace of neoliberal beliefs, self reliance, individualism and competitiveness. The main hero does not only have an economic adventure, but an ideological one. His metamorphosis repeats Afghanistan and Pakistan itself adopted the attitudes toward market liberalization and deregulation. You are a man “and you need to earn your own place in the world which does not give you anything (Hamid, 2013, p. 41). The importance of this ideology of making-self is further enforced all through the novel as there is marginalization of the values of the communities and traditional order. The concept of ideoscape in this case portrays a change of cultural ethos in which neoliberal global discourses are superimposed on indigenous moral and social constructs.

Discussion

Hamid's novel is a case study in the complex interweaving of Appadurai's five scapes. The ethnoscape and financescape are closely linked as internal migration is driven by economic aspiration. Technoscape and mediascape coalesce in shaping the protagonist's worldview, while ideoscape underscores the entire narrative structure. Pakistani culture is both preserved and transformed through these interactions. Traditional familial bonds weaken, but cultural resilience persists in the form of language, relational intimacy, and local entrepreneurial practices. The novel captures globalization not as a unidirectional force, but as a multi-layered process involving negotiation, resistance, and adaptation. Appadurai's theory proves effective in capturing these nuances though its abstract nature occasionally limits its application to specific literary forms.

Conclusion

How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia is an effective reflection in the domestic consequences of global affairs. Using Appadurai's five scapes, this paper has demonstrated how by locating the topography of globalization in a Pakistani setting the novel by Hamid has depicted not only the radical potentiality of the process but also an agent of destabilization. The study provides a contribution to the developing area of the globalization and the study of South Asian literature as it shows the applicability of the concept of scapes theory in literary studies. Subsequent studies could apply this model to other postcolonial literature or contrast Hamid with any other South Asian author in the depiction of globalization.

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