NEGOTIATING CULTURES: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AND PASHTUN VALUES IN TARIQ RAHMAN'S *TEARS IN A MAN'S EYES*

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Abstract

This paper explored the processes of construction and comparison of the cultural values of both the English and the Pashtun culture in the text, "Tears in a Man Eyes" by Tariq Rahman through the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) based upon the Three-Dimensional Model given by Norman Fairclough. Focusing on family arrangement, expression of emotions and social behavior, the research looks at fifteen extracts of texts to expose how language provides and reproduces the socio-cultural ideologies. Results have demonstrated that the Pashtun culture is being deprived as the culture that values emotional control, communal esteem and patriarchal, but the English culture is depicted as emotional, individualistic and morally loose. In this comparative study, the paper has identified the ideological bargaining between cultures and the use of literary language as an instrument of strengthening and subverting social norms. Such results can be applied to the understanding of the interaction of culture, identity and discourse in the South Asian literature and how such a method as CDA can be applied in the analysis of the text.
Keywords: *Critical Discourse Analysis, Cultural Representation, Pashtun Culture, English Culture, Tariq Rahman, Masculinity, Family Structure, Emotional Expression, Social Behavior, South Asian Literature*

Introduction

Language is not only a neutral means of communication; it is a potent means of creating, sustaining and opposing social and cultural identities. The use of language in literary works can be taken as a reaction to the ideologies and standards of the background and at the same time forming an impression in the minds of the readers about cultural, familial and gendered realities. The book by Tariq Rahman, Tears in a Man Eyes is a great place to study such dynamics because it presents two contrasting cultural values of Pashtun and English culture in comparison to each other, comparing the family structure, expression of emotion, and social conduct. This paper explore these constructs as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and provides an insight into the process through which culture, identity, and ideology are mediated linguistically.

The research is based on two questions. It, first, looks at how Rahman builds and compares the cultural values of the English and Pashtun cultures with a given emphasis on the social values, moral codes, and standards of conduct that indicate the bases of the two societies. Second, it talks about the way the family structure, emotional expression and social conduct of both the English and Pashtun families that were described in the text differ. These questions of particular interest in the context of cultural identities negotiation in the literary texts where the language is the reflection of the social reality, and the means of ideological criticism.

The paper is based on Three-Dimensional Model of CDA created by Norman Fairclough (1995), the

model examines the language at three levels, which are connected to each other: the textual, discursive, and social practice. At the textual level, the analysis addresses the use of lexical, syntax as well as metaphor to establish ideological meanings in the text. At the discursive practice level it examines the ways in which such meanings are circulated, produced and interpreted at in terms of interactions and narrative structure. Lastly, it places the text in a wider socio-cultural and historical context at the social practice level and underlines the importance of literature in reproducing, challenging, and negotiating power relations. This framework allows the study to get beyond what is on the surface of the reading to reveal how language also creates cultural and gendered identities in ways that are less obvious.

The study is meaningful in many ways. First, it adds to the area of literary linguistics because it uses CDA to examine a literary work in South Asia, filling the gap between the linguistic analysis and the interpretation of culture. Second, it gives a subtle insight into the Pashtun and English cultural ideologies especially as far as masculinity, family roles and emotional norms are concerned. Lastly, the research has provided methodological details to future studies in the cross-cultural representation, gender and identity in literature showing the relevance of CDA as a means of discovering the interplay between language and ideology.

Overall, this study postions *"Tears in a Man's Eyes"* as a site where one can discuss cultural negotiation, ideological contest, and identity formation. Through analyzing linguistic strategies used by Rahman, it not only sheds light on how literature can serve simultaneously a reflection of the social norms and a challenge to them, but it also gives a better insight into the culture, identity, and discourse in South Asian conditions.

Research questions

1.   How does Tariq Rahman construct and contrast English and Pashtun cultural values in "Tears in Man's Eyes"?
2.   What differences in family structure, emotional expression, and social behavior are depicted between the English family and the Pashtun family?

Literature Review

The cultural representation of fiction is a topic of extensive scholarly interest, as literature can be seen to represent and discuss cultural values, identity and social norms. Much of this literature has highlighted the fact that literature is a platform of reflection and shaping of collective cultural awareness. For example, the socio-critical analysis of the Pakistani Urdu short stories by Asad Mahmood Khan reflects the concept of fiction as the means of expression of cultural and civilizational consciousness in the context of narrative features, like dialect, symbolism, and thematic richness. And presents short fiction as a critical tool of cultural identity in the context of the changing socio-cultural environment in Pakistan (Khan, 2025). Likewise, the linguistic expression of a cultural conflict in the short stories of Tahira Iqbal shows how language becomes a site of cultural conflict and identity negotiation especially in situations where the global forces come into play with the local traditions. In this work, the act of storytelling is presented as a means of expressing intercultural struggle and resisting cultural homogenization, foregrounding indigenous identity against the global forces (Yaqub & Amjad, 2025). All these studies highlight the importance of culture in the literary discourse and confirm that short fiction is a powerful cultural artifact to talk about the ways in which varying world views are entrenched in narrative

constructions.

Although a literature of culture has been established as a key aspect of literary work, a gap in the literature is evident with regard to the cross-cultural comparison in individual narratives, especially in the setting of Pakistani short stories that compare Western and indigenous cultures. The wider literary critique encompasses reviews of postcolonial identity and cultural displacement in Pakistani literature including the discussion of hybridity and cultural identity in novels such as Ice-Candy Man and The Reluctant Fundamentalist, in which the postcolonial theory and cultural hybridity can be used to explain the enduring effects of colonial rule on identity (Abid, Najam, and Haroon, 2025). However, these works mainly look at more extended fictional works and diasporic situations as opposed to direct comparisons between specific cultural families in one short story. Studies of Pakistani fiction in English, genre and thematic summary, refer to economic inequality or class disparity as a determinant of narrative theme (Reflection of Culture in Pakistani English Literature, 2021), but typically do not address the particular interaction of cultural norms realized in the family system or emotional expression. This gap becomes more pronounced when considering cultural research that engages narrative voice, identity, or linguistic strategies, such as cognitive stylistics applied to Tariq Rahman's *The Anthropologist* which involves the discussion of a conceptual metaphor and cultural identity, but not the kind of explicit cultural contrast as found in the context of the *"Tears in Man's Eyes"*.

Such a gap in the literature, that is the lack of an in-depth consideration of cultural comparison of English and Pashtun family representations in one story, leaves a research niche in the current study. By foregrounding not only the general representation of local culture in fiction but by specifically interrogating the contrasts between Western (English) and Pashtun cultural frameworks as depicted by Rahman this research responds to a need in the field for text-based, culture-specific discourse analysis in Pakistani short stories. This focus is based on the current literature on cultural identity and expand on its possibilities to explore the juxtaposition of different cultural systems of values in the narrative and language. This extension is also consistent with the broader discourse analytical strategies that perceive literature not only as artistic expression but also a place of ideological struggle and cultural meaning-making.

In order to fill this niche, the study combines the results of the research on culture-driven narrative analysis with theoretical approaches that focus on the representation, identity, and social norms. The theoretical framework of cultural studies on the basis of the conceptualization of the meaning and identity as proposed by Hall (1997) gives the theoretical basis of analyzing the construction of cultural differences on a linguistic and narrative level. At the same time, the critical discourse analysis complements it by providing methodological means of unpacking the way narratives encode and reproduce cultural ideologies. Even though the literature also comprises the issue of cultural stylistics and postcolonial analyses in the context of the related issues, the particular questioning of the cultural comparison, specifically, the opposition of Western and indigenous families in the Pakistani short fiction is undeveloped, which supports the significance of this research.

Methodology

This study adopts qualitative research design, as the main objective is to examine the construction and comparison of cultural meanings, values, and social behaviors through language in a literary work. The qualitative research method is suitable in investigating socially situated phenomena,

including culture, identity, and expression of emotions, that cannot be well-represented by quantitative research techniques (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative approach enables in-depth and interpretive understanding of the story by paying attention to the way discourse is used to produce, maintained or even challenge cultural representations.

The data used in this study is in the form of selected textual extracts taken from the short story by Tariq Rahman's "*Tears in Man's Eyes*". The text has been selected purposively as it gives an explicit and prolonged comparison of an English family and a Pashtun family that is why it is a good site to explore the concept of cross-cultural representation. The extracts were chosen according to their relevance to the research questions, especially those passages, which describe family structure, emotional expression, social interaction, and culture specific values. In qualitative literature research, purposive sampling is suitable because it allows the researcher to focus on data that are rich in meaning and directly related to the research objectives (Paltridge, 2012).

Theoretically, the research is based on the Cultural Studies, relying mostly on the writings by Stuart Hall (1997), Raymond Williams (1983) and Clifford Geertz (1973). Culture is understood as a "whole way of life" that determines the social behavior, emotional regulations and systems of meaning (Williams, 1983). From this perspective, literary texts are seen as cultural objects that mirror that create social realities. The framework will help the study to explore the representation of English and Pashtun cultural values in everyday practices, family relationships, and emotional standards in the story.

In order to systematically analyze the processes of constructing cultural meanings in terms of language, the study uses the Three-Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Norman Fairclough (1995) as the main tool of analysis. CDA is relevant because it focuses on the relationship between language, ideology, and social practice. At the textual level, the analysis is done in terms of lexical options, descriptive patterns, dialogue, and evaluative language employed to describe the two families. The attention at the discursive practice level is given to the production and contrast of cultural identities in the narrative structure. At the social practice level, these representations are placed in wider socio-cultural ideology of masculinity, emotional restraint, family hierarchy and cultural difference.

Moreover, the postcolonial views also help to inform the study in the context of the English-Pashtun comparison in terms of the overall historical and ideological relations. The postcolonial theory gives an understanding of how the western and the indigenous cultures are frequently put into hierarchical or opposing directions especially in the postcolonial societies (Said, 1978; Bhabha, 1994). Almost no postcolonial theory is used as the main analysis model; however, it aids the understanding of the cultural opposition and elaborates the othering, comparison, and ideological conflict in the story.

The analytical process involved close readings of the selected extracts again and again to be able to point at the recurring themes in the culture, discursive forms, and differences between the two families. Coding of the data is done on a thematic basis with respect to the research questions, with categories like family structure, emotional expression, social behavior and cultural values being among the categories. Such themes are then discussed with the help of the Fairclough CDA framework in order to reveal the implicit ideologies and relations of power in the text. This is a theory-based and systematic methodology which guarantees analytical rigor and makes the results more credible (Fairclough, 1995; Wodak and Meyer, 2009).

DATA ANALYSIS
Extract 1
 "He hated all sentimental scenes and thought them unbecoming for a brave fighter."
The words *"hated," "sentimental,"* and *"unbecoming"* are very strong in evaluative terms, positioning the expression of emotion as culturally unacceptable to masculinity, but the adjective "*brave*" is associated with bravery and restraint of emotion. This sentence relies on culturally common discourses of Pashtun masculinity, in which honor and strength are linked to stoicism, making emotion a deviation of what male behavior should be. At the socio-cultural level, it is a part of Pashtunwali where the male honor *(nang)* requires emotional control, creating a contrast to the Western culture that allows the expression of emotions, thus emphasizing the implicit cultural resistance.

Extract 2
"It is a sport for men, son, big men, strong men."
The repetition of the word "*men*", the intensifiers "*big*" and "*strong*", foreground a culturally specific way of constructing masculinity, in which the physical strength is naturalized as a necessary condition of being a man. The utterance socializes the boy into Pashtun manhood, serving as intergenerational transmission of the cultural values, and reflects a tribal culture where manhood is acquired through perseverance and physical prowess, unlike the English domestic masculinity, which later, becomes emotionally expressive and verbally affectionate.

Extract 3
"Never say that about guests. It is against the code of Mizh Mahsid… We practice mel mastiya."
The modal *"Never"* is used to express absolute prohibition, *"code"* is used to render hospitality a moral imperative, and the use of Pashto terms is used to make the culture authentic. This discussion justifies Pashtun culture as organized and ethical instead of primitive to challenge colonial representations of tribal savagery and foreground hospitality as a fundamental value to confound English representations of moral superiority.

Extract 4
 "The Englishman wiped his wet eyes as he said this."
Verb such as *"wiped"* and the phrase "*wet eyes"* foreground emotional expression and vulnerability, which is normalized in English masculinity as opposed to suppressing emotions in Pashtun culture. Such distinction creates English culture as emotionally expressive and Pashtun culture as emotionally restricted, which reinforce binary cultural categories and depicts gender differences in the ways of expressing emotions.

Extract 5
"Nadir felt disgusted, this man who cried like a woman." The simile "*like a woman"* demonstrates internalized gender ideology and *"disgusted*" is an emotional rejection. The perspective of the boy reproduces the discourse of patriarchy among the Pashtun where femininity and expression of

emotion are devalued. On a broader social scale, this is an indication of strict gender norms in the Pashtun culture and a contrast with the English acceptance of emotional expression between genders.

Extract 6
"Tears are not for the fighter."
This declarative statement presents ideology as fact, linking the noun "*fighter"* eith emotional denial. It acts as cultural training, reinforcing the masculine norms with speech of authority and on a socio-cultural level, the role of emotion is discursively displaced in the male identity in the Pashtun culture, strengthening hegemonic masculinity and demonstrating the culturally approved emotional suppression.

Extract 7
"Go like a Pathan."
The performative construction of identity is formed by the imperative "*go"* together with the ethnic name "*Pathan"*. Pathan identity is constructed as an embodied behavior and includes dignity, restraint and silence, cultural identity is constructed as collective rather than individual, and communal values are upheld at the expense of individual emotion.

Extract 8
"He wrapped himself in aloofness like a blanket.".
The metaphor *"aloofness like a blanket"* implies emotional withdrawal as protection. The boy adjusts Pashtun emotional values in an English family and creates a cultural conflict, demonstrating the dissonance of people who have to operate in two different cultural systems and negotiate their identity and emotionality.

Extract 9
"Your ways are shameless ways."
The evaluative adjective "*shameless"* acts as a moral condemnation, and the statement turns the colonial discourse by positioning English culture less in morality. On a social level, this challanges imperial ideology and proclaims indigenous moral authority, which is an expression of how language can challenge the hegemonic cultural scripts.

Extract 10
"You are savages... we are noble and brave.
Polarized cultural identities are created in the binary opposition of "*savages"* and "*noble"*. The colonial discourse is resisted and inverted in counter-labeling, revealing the cultural opposition based on the relations of colonial power and depicting the role of language as a site of ideological struggle.

Extract 11
"She never went out of the home without a veil."
The moral absolutism on the behavior of females is imposed by the adverb "*never"*. The gender norms are expressed through the comparison between Pashtun women and English women where

differences in the cultural constructions of modesty and female respectability are described and the relationship between gender and culture in the processes of setting social expectations is stressed.

Extract 12
"You are not with the Mahsuds anymore… they are savage backward people."
The use of lexical choices like *"savage"* or *"backward"* reproduce the colonial ideology that the English culture is superior, and the civilization line is higher. This is an indication of imperial discourses used to justify colonial powers and make language an instrument of ideological control.

Extract 13
"You can escape the British law… but God's law is everywhere."
Moral transcendence is called upon by the modal "can" and the universal word everywhere. Religious language strikes a bargain on power that is outside the colonial law and disrupts the culture of dualism by appealing to values of common spirituality and proposes a system where moral authority overrides imposed colonial systems.

Extract 14
 "I respect only that bravery which helps the oppressed."

The word *"only"* redefines bravery not as a military concept, but as a moral concept, and the discourse of the maternal criticizes tribal ideals of masculine honor. This introduces an ethical framework that complicates hard and fast cultural ideologies and focuses on moral arguments rather than conventional heroism.

Extract 15
"For the first time the boy saw tears in the blue eyes of his Mahsud father."

The temporal marker *"for the the first time"* makes an ideological break. The father's tears violate the norms of masculinity in Pashtun culture, which is the cultural reconciliation and humanization of masculinity beyond the strict codes, thus, demonstrating the process of negotiation and change in gendered and cultural identities.

Discussion
The analysis of Tariq Rahman's *Tears in a Man's Eyes* shows that there is a consistent construction of cultural identity by using oppositional discourses, especially when it comes to English and Pashtun masculinities. The textual data reveals that ideologically, the Pashtun masculinity is connected to emotional restraint, honor, and physical strength as in the extract ,*"He hated all sentimental scenes and thought them unbecoming for a brave fighter"* emotional restraint is naturalized. This aligns with Baig and Ch (2024) who state that South Asian English fiction often depicts masculine honor as contingent upon stoicism, framing emotion as social liability. Similarly, the intergenerational transmission of masculine norms, which places endurance and physical strength as culturally desirable qualities, is emphasized by extracts like*"It is a sport for men, son, big men, strong men"* . These results can be supported by the research of Arooj et al. (2023) who observe that in Pakistan, masculine behavior is directly attributed to the performance in society and

recognition of the actions of a person at the cost of emotional expressivity.

On the other hand, English masculinity in the text allows vulnerability based on the extract, "*The Englishman wiped his wet eyes as he said this*". Emotional expression is normalized and even glorified and creates a cultural binary where English men are emotionally expressive and Pashtun men are emotionally restrained. This opposition echoes the results of Rahman (2002) who states that emotional norms are frequently used in colonial and postcolonial histories as indicators of cultural difference to create moral and psychological orders between people. The reading also shows that gendered emotional standards are overlapped by the colonial authority, as in the passage "*Nadir felt disgusted, this man who cried like a woman*" where feminine-coded emotional expression is disdained in Pashtun society. This finding echoes Lazar (2005) discussion on patriarchal discourse, whereby the behavior of the female gender is not legitimized, but instead supports hegemonic masculine values.

The negotiation of cultural and moral power may be seen in such extracts like "*Never say that about guests. It is against the code* of *Mizh Mahsid... We practice mel mastiya*" and "*You are not with the Mahsuds anaymore... they are savage backward people*". In the former, hospitality is presented as an ethical principle that questions the Western views of tribal primitivism whereas in the latter, colonial discourse is dominating the superiority using language. Such interaction between indigenous and colonial discourses is related to the argument by Fairclough (1995) that language is a site of ideological struggle, which can be used to define social order and cultural representation. Moreover, the idea of moral reasoning as a tool of critic and resistance is also revealed, with a specific example of the maternal guidance in the line "*I respect only that bravery which helps the oppressed*" that redefines courage in non-militaristic paradigms, it is also consistent with the view of the feminist critical discourse rhetoric that focuses on ethical intervention rather than on rigid gendered norms (Lazar, 2005; Baig & Ch, 2024).

Moments of ideological break and reconciliation are also predetermined in the text, especially in such lines as *"For the first time the boy saw tears in the blue eyes of his Mahsud father"*. In this case, the disruption of masculine stoicism implies the possibility of negotiating cultural and gendered identities, a compromise between the emotional standards between the English and Pashtun paradigms. This result resonated with the findings by Arooj et al. (2023), who mention that differences in emotional practices at the level of exposure can induce changes in the masculine self-conception, which points to the dynamic nature of cultural identity construction. Also, the same theme of moral universality, as in "*You can escape the British law... but Gods law is everywhere,*" highlights the text in its search of spiritual and moral authority beyond colonial impositions, which links with the findings of Rahman (2002) in his study of postcolonial ethical modes.

The CDA, in general, shows that the narrative by Rahman does not only recreate but also challenges the cultural and gendered orders. Pashtun masculinity is built on the basis of stoicism, endurance and social honor whereas English masculinity is linked with emotive expressiveness and moral sensitivity. At the same time, there are instances of departure and cross-cultural exposure which imply that there is a potential of change, meaning that the identity is socially constructed and negotiable. The results therefore support the usefulness of the three-dimensional model by Fairclough in the sense that all three elements, language, discourse practices, and socio-cultural structures, contribute to and reflect power, morality, and cultural representation.

Conclusion

The current study apply the Three-Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Norman Fairclough (1995) to Tariq Rahman in his article *"Tears in a Man's Eyes"* to explore the construction and contrast in the values of the culture of both the English and the Pashtun, as well as the differences between the family structure, expression of emotions, and social behavior. The research revealed by studying fifteen selective extracts in detail that language in the novel is not a vehicle of communication but a field of ideological negotiation and cultural meaning-making.

The analysis showed that the Pashtun culture is consistently represented in the discourse of honor, stoicism, and unity. The use of words like *"unbecoming"*, *"disgusted"*, and *"aloofness"* is used to show how t moral and emotional rules that male members are supposed to follow are strict and rigid, and this supports a conservative idea of masculinity as associated with bravery, stamina, and social acceptance. The results presented in this paper are consistent with previous works on Pashtun masculinity and patriarchal societies (Rahman, 1996; Baig and Ch, 2024), and they demonstrate how cultural identity can be reproduced with the help of intergenerational education and speech of authority.

On the other hand, the English characters are portrayed as emotionally expressive, singly independent and morally thoughtful especially in their treatment of grief, vulnerability and social relations. *"Wiped his wet eyes"* and the acceptance of emotional expression are some of the expressions that show the difference in construction of masculinity and emotional norms. Such a deviation creates the definite cultural contrast between the Pashtun and the English situation, enabling the text to challenge and problematize the strict gender norms and cultural expectations (Arooj et al., 2023)

Another point that was raised in the study was the differences in the family structure and social behavior in the two cultural contexts. The Pashtun family is hierarchical and collective in authority, and the moral codes and tribal laws play a significant role in making decisions, rather than the English family, which is egalitarian and dialogic, where personal feelings and moral judgment are highly appreciated. The expression of emotions within the Pashtun system is socially controlled whereas it is normalized within the English system which leads to some moments of tension, adjustment and reconciliation as exemplified the boy's recognition of his father's tears the boy realizes his father cries. These results serve to confirm the argument that literature is a mirror of socio-cultural norms as well as it provides a platform of criticism and change (Fairclough, 1995; Lazar, 2005).

By employing **Fairclough's CDA framework**, this study has shown that language can be used at various levels textual, discursive, and socio-cultural to create, challenge and sometimes transform cultural and gendered ideologies. When used together with discursive and social practices, the textual analysis demonstrated how complex the processes of constructing the oppositional cultural identities by Rahman are, as well as how it offers both instances of ethical and emotional mediation between the two.

In conclusion, *"Tears in a Man's Eyes"* reflects not only the cultural and gender conventions of the Pashtun and English societies but also confronts them and attempts to negotiate them using subtle linguistic techniques. The research is a contribution to the further study of the role of the language in the construction of culture and identity as well as social behaviors within South Asian literature and provides the model to be used later in the investigation of the cross-cultural representation, gender and ideology in literary texts.

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