To Be or Not to Be: A Socio-Psychological Study of Sascha Akhtar's 'Of Necessity and Wanting'

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Abstract

This study investigates the roots of socio-psychological issues how an individual's life is a combination of inner and outer turmoil, what one is capable of, and what one is trying to chase in the restrictions of society, language, culture, and values. This study focuses on the Imposter Syndrome by Suzana Imes and Pauline Rose Clance and Social Identity Theory by Henry Tajfel and John Turner to support the argument with the critique *Of Necessity and Wanting* published in 2020 written by Sascha Akhtar. It shows different stages of a man's life to collect references and brings into the limelight the causes and results of socio-psychological problems, for integration. By applying both theories on the text it becomes quite clear how one moves towards personality transformation. Furthermore, this qualitative research sketches a research schema for future exploration of social vision and argues the influence that social constancy that different people can have in their community. This research is beneficial in the sense of social angle and about the emotional response of a person to the psychological occurrence.

*Keywords***:** Socio-Psychological, Of Necessity and Wanting, To Be or Not to Be

1. Introduction

Identity crisis is one of the most predominant problems of the 21st century, which covers many subjects of contemporary society. Poor cognitive approach, an adaptation upper-class activities and futile effort to chase the elite class are the attempts; which derives a person to identity loss. Imposter feelings are also a coin of the same chain because the pejorative feelings of Imposter encumbrance a person towards the pure imitation which is the root problem of the present society. Class consciousness is prevailing like a disease, which is affecting all the social groups of the community. People having such diseases follow blindly the trendsetters of social norms and enter the other group of society by speaking their language, dressing like them, and adopting their lifestyle. It is the need of the hour to identify the problems which are becoming the reasons for physical as well as spiritual displacement. However, when a group copies the other, it physically falls into displacement and ultimately brings spiritual displacement, which is called an identity crisis. Thus, if a group maintains its identity the other copies the depreciatory feelings and becomes prey to identity loss.

An individual defines their identity themselves in terms of gender, case, religion, class, etc. Identity also aids in self-definition and in forming connections with others based on shared traits and distinctions. Social identity is formed by interpersonal relationships.

Sascha Aurora Akhtar is a Pakistani-British-American poetess and writer, born in Pakistan and fled to the country or an environment where she can feel totally free. She is a great representative writer, poet, journalist, and filmmaker of the present age; the topics of her writing are feminism, society, and the class system in Pakistan.

1.1. Imposter Feelings

A person becomes the victim of socio-psychological confusion, not only in his approach but also in social behavior to indulge in unsuccessful efforts of becoming an imposter and drives himself to strange doing by speaking mixed codes of language and in trying to change his appearance (Porter & Rosner, 2021).

Imposter Syndrome applies to different people at different levels such as gender, class, age, and sector. Its degree is also variable at every level. Ezgi Ekin Şahin has applied it to university students, but their feelings are same as other classes, gender and sector. When they get success in their exams they feel that their success is not equal to their efforts, they can do much more. They think they are imposters at their place and can go higher and higher. Clance and Imes 1978 state that "IP is the feeling of intensity, in which successful individuals cannot internalize their success, and relate the success to the interpersonal abilities such as fate, relations, and management. In terms of success, IP is said to be an intellectual fraud to oneself" (Yeu & Coach, n.d.).

1.2. Individual Identity and Social Identity

Social Identity Theory is a misconception of a person being a misfit in his respective surrounding, their odd attitude, and then futile efforts to make them an alien in their state. This theory is given by social psychologists Henry Tajfel and John Tuner in the 1070s- 1980s. Tennessee Williams said "What's talent but the ability to get away with something".

At the end of the twentieth century, Social Identity Theory (SIT) is like a biblical addition in relation to Imposter Syndrome. Social Identity Theory took birth after World War II, and did strong its feet all over the globe. Globalization is also a root cause of Social Identity Theory (Perry et al., 2021).

The researcher reviewed many articles and journals from the perspective of socio-psychological elements, and understood that socio-psychological ailment is very common today in all societies and nations and races. Keeping

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in view the Islamic Republic State of Pakistan, the scene which is presented from Karachi slums, touches the both theories spontaneously. Apart from the socio-psychological issues are not only founded in Pakistan but also throughout the globe (Saima Majeed & Mujeeba Ashraf, 2020).

1.3. Problem Statement

Every society has its norms and class setup with some restrains and restrictions, in which a Layman has to survive. Not to be focused on reality and useless struggles to be what someone is not, drags people to awkward behavior in their environment. Having the feelings of self-inferiority is because both of psychological and social difference and consciousness about class gender and race which leads an individual to the derogatory feelings (Wu & Srite, 2021).

In Pakistan, the working class people try to adopt the activities of upper class to make them modern and updated such as; hoteling, parlor visiting, having new model of vehicle and ultra-modern look of girls at parties all these things bring hybridity in their identity and fell a prey of socio-psychological ailment (Butt, 2019).

1.4. Research Objectives

This study is aimed to:

- Find the ways how protagonist catches psychological conflict.
- Identify the societal norms which force girl "To be or not to be".
- Figure out Socio-psychological conditions which are affecting young people in Pakistan.

1.5. Delimitations of the Study

To understand and have clear cut idea following research is tightly attached the Sascha Akhtar's book *Of Necessity and Wanting*. The Imposter Syndrome by Suzana Imes and Pauline Rose Clance and Social Identity Theory by John Turner and Henry Tajfel have been chosen to have an idea of real life problems, related to socio-psychological problems such as class consciousness, poor cognitive approach and modernism have been marked in the selected text. These two theories have been mixed to demonstrate the mental condition of a person.

1.6. Research Methodology

In a sequence to conduct an organized analysis, this research will track a qualitative outline to investigate the chosen literary piece of art. This study will take Sascha Akhtar's fine collection of short stories *Of Necessity and Wanting*. This study is reliant on the Imposter Phenomenon presented by Suzana Imes and Clance as well as social identity theory given by Henry Tajfel and John Turner.

1.7. Significance of the Study

This research is ample because the issue of Imposter Phenomenon and crisis of Identity are the communal problems which people face living in a society. Individual identity is largely discussed and identity in a group is minutely ignored. The trend of class system and consciousness about the class launch the standards of any society create frustration and imposter feelings in the lower group of class.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Imposter Syndrome

People who possess traits of imposter syndrome exhibit a detrimental strength of losing their peace and be busy with their follies on their bewilderment. As Dorte Odde, Aarhus, Denmark, Arne Vestergaard and Copenhagen as recent researchers have demonstrated in their paper, that such people are always emotional people try to find peace in their hard struggle which they make to maintain a so-called burger class social circle (Bar-Tal & Halperin, n.d.). The indispensability of both internal and external empowerment reflects the turmoil facing by the person and suffering on the both stages impulsively at the same level. The fight between inside and outside forces indulges a man to feel pejorative and drags him trying to be what he is not. In reality this happens with the hybridity of different cultures. Singer and Kimble presented a remedial situation of complex cultures to link the archetypal and the private realms of the psychological scenario (Odde & Vestergaard, 2021).

Subsequently, going into more details given by M, Nafiul Alam Khan, M. Saef Ullah Miah, M. Shah Jalal, Talha Bin Sarwar and M. Shahariar Rokon in their article about Imposter Syndrome they have mentioned universal review of IS which is published in 2020. According to them the coverage of Imposter Syndrome vary person to person or in area or culture, it is in lay people is 9% to 82%. Another study steered in 2020 demonstrated that this phenomenon varies in doctors according to the percentage of 22% to 60% and 33% t0 40% in trainee doctors. Following the American recent research it becomes quite clear that is happens 15% in medical students and 57% is with pharmacy students. It is prevailing as a disease at international level. Furthermore, it is spreading at different scale in different countries, for example, 30% in American medical students, 45.7 % in Malaysian and 47% in Pakistanis(Khan et al., 2022).

2.2. Social Identity Theory

According to the Hogg and Abraham (1998) social Identity theory is knowledge of a person to a group which he belongs to. The two most important procedures of social identity theory is self-categorization and social comparison which generates odd results. Hogg and Abraham (2000) made it quite clear those social boundaries in which a person survives as part of community and feels pressure of social restrictions and maintains the social structure. Self-categorization becomes the source of self-identity which depends on different groups of the societies (Stets & Burke, 2000).

Filippo Faccini, Francesco Gazzillo, Bernard S. Gorman, Emma De Luca, and Nino Dazzihave pointed out that socio-psychological phenomenon lead people to unconscious travel from original to imitation. Their attitude has been driven by the environment where they are living. Normative behavior of the groups or communities depends on what they are having around them (Faccini et al., 2020).

Maarten Johannes van Bezouw, Jojanneke, van der Toorn, Julia Christina Becker assert (2021) that people drag themselves to the member ship from self-identity, and develop a relation with their group of cast creed and race and shape their behavior and attitude. They also thought by relating to the group they will raise their status (van Bezouw et al., 2021).

According to the Azaadi novel written by Chaman Nahal socio-psychological study is a scientific way to know how the people feel, behave and think in the presence of others. It also means how we try to achieve or avail social facilities which are not suitable for us. Actually, this novel deals with the partition of Indo-Pak and writer himself was a refugee at that time he has penetrated his real feelings and doings by his characters (Wani & Bhat, 2016).

3. Research Methodology
3.1. Methodological Approach
This is a qualitative and textual exploration of the short stories, which will refer to psychological illness caused by the society. The present research is descriptive in nature and very close to be contingent because it is researcher's own understanding, demonstrating the different elements of the short stories on the bases of two theories. The present research is conducted through theoretical framework of socio-psychological perspective in which two theories are being mixed and a hybrid theory is generated to demonstrate the mental situation of the main character in Sascha Akhtar's *Of Necessity and Wanting*.

3.2. Theoretical Framework
Imposter Syndrome (IS) and Social Identity Theory are defined to be applied on this study. The Clance Imposter Phenomenon Scale (CIPS) is a measurement of personal perception fraudulent and cheating through different social activities. It also creates the sense of fear and decreases the confidence. It is such type of feelings where a person feels misfit and consider itself to be an imposter in a society where she is living.

3.3. Imposter Syndrome by Imes and Clance
According to Edwards Imposter Syndrome was firstly coined by Imes and Clance and in their pivotal efforts they are of the view that "Despite outstanding academic and professional accomplishments, women who experience the imposter phenomenon persist in believing that they are really not bright and have fooled anyone who thinks otherwise "(p. 1).

In his argumentation he mentioned about Kimberle Crenshaw, prominent acute race logician and authorized researcher, put her thoughts around inetrsectionality. As she read the proficiencies of the Black Race Women she explicated in her work "My objective there was to illustrate that many of the experiences Black women face are not subsumed within the traditional boundaries of race or gender discrimination as these boundaries are currently understood, and that the intersection of racism and sexism factors into Black women's lives in ways that cannot be captured wholly by looking at the race or gender dimensions of those experiences separately." (p.1244) talking about her childhood recollections she can recall after having good grades in her primary school when she was appreciated by her family members the fit of self-doubt might started and she thought, "That's so sweet of them to say, but I'm not really that smart, I'm just a hard worker". (Imes and Clance)

Dr. Pauline Rose Clance is of the view that people who possess the Imposter Phenomenon never say to themselves, "I feel like an Imposter" but when they come to know about their experiences They ask, "How did you know exactly how I feel?" or "how do they feel?" However when they get success in life they still feel a doubt inside that their success is due to some external force not is the result of their efforts. They also fear that their success is not everlasting next time they may lose if the external standards of help will not be available.

Dr. Clance also maintains a scale for this type of feeling that what is the degree of our feeling of imposter which is known as Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS). Further, he works with different clients to share the feeling of imposter phenomenon, capabilities and accomplishment. (Dr. Pauline Rose Clance) (Mangum & Block, 2018)

3.4. Social Identity Theory by Tajfel and Turner
They have worked so much in arena of social identity and got published unforgettable books and concepts such as Social Judgment Theory, Theory of intergroup Relations and Social Identity Theory. Henry Tajfel is of the view that a man can't live alone to make a group is inevitable for him. A man becomes habitual of the doings which his group allows him to perform. They have common values, language and traditions as well as culture and customs. (Tajfel and Turner 1979)

Maruice Mangum and Ray Block redefine the SIT that it covers multidimensional aspects of culture society and life. This theory involves three different major mechanisms: social categorization, social identification, and social comparison. Social identity theory recommends that people room themselves in groupings or categories. Agreeing to the theory, people inevitably absorb in self-categorization (Turner et al. 1987). (Mangum & Block, 2018)

Tajfel and turner are of the view our social groups give us understanding of our social life and gift us identification. They further divide people into two groups "us" and "them", and the stereotyping of the groups lie on cognitive process (Tajfel and Turner) (Mackey, 1992)

Russell F. Korte has mentioned about Social Identity Theory, in which he explains that Mowday and Sutton (1993) give details about Identity Theory, in previous few decades the behavior of individual with a group in an organization is because of cognitive and actual inspiration and acknowledged dynamics in an organization, because people do work in group sceneries. So the performance of a person in a group matter the institute. (Hodgkinson, 2003; Hogg and Terry, 2000)

Psychology gives definition of identity by a question "who am I", the typical question to this answer according to psychologists that personality traits can be made of an individual with relational and self-referential to a group. Hence the identification of the identity may be made by viewing the personal identity and group relation. (Turner and Onorato, 1999)

4. Data Analysis

In short stories *Of Necessity and Wanting* entrepreneurship, social discrepancies, opportunity and toxic beauty requirements are major themes. Class difference, chasing of desires and losing of social identity to achieve high status are important aspects of each short story. Writer has divided each story into small sub-chapters and the titles which are given to sub-parts also open different perspectives of stories. "If you are facing poverty in Karachi you will not stay at home if you are living in urban area, because home life will not be much comfortable. Rich can live maximum time at home because their houses are luxurious(Ferguson, 2018)."

4.1. Guddi's Social Identity

The very first thing which Guddi does to change her identity is to make over by visiting parlors in routine. She goes and has hair dye and hair style and sometimes straightens her grandmother asks: "what have you done to your hair?" Guddi replies to her grandmother: "what do you mean Ami Jaan? The hair style she had did not render her an absolute identical clone of the other socialites on Karachi scene." (Sascha 17) Second step which she takes to hide identity is to change her name. She does not her full name (Rumina) as it seems conventional or typical to her she likes her nick name Guddi and sometimes doll.

Identity is chained to us like our blood. No one can be fully changed in spite of trying. An individual can change its appearance, its language, its dwelling, and life style and so on. It may be said the change of identity but in fact it is loss of identity. But in some sudden situations when a person speaks or behaves it simply targets his roots of life or identity. When Guddi along with her friends goes to shopping to Saddar, A boy was staring at them continuously. Guddi gets agitated and asked her friend Kiran: "Why does it bother you so much yaar." Kiran is girl who is even allowed to go to USA or UK for studies if she gets scholarship and always remain busy in burger class activities, on gazing of a boy, her responses to Guddi in a very archetypal way and says: "Just ignore them! Or better yet abuse them! Kiran had picked up some gems of swear-words from her very strong-minded, non-sense mother. One was: Apni Mah -behn ko ja ke dekh. Which translated roughly to: why don't you go eye-fuck your mother or sister."

The reason behind the hiding her own identity and to show herself belong to other class is also self-loathed feelings. When she visits Karachi sea side she gets offensive to recall about the beaches which her friend Anila has told he, because the beach in Karachi was do dirty and smelly and Rumina thought the seaside which are enjoyable can only be seen in films and dramas. She also thought that sea sides in New York and England are much better than that in Pakistan because she always idealizes the foreign atmospheric approach. (Sascha 27)

When a person sets boundaries of superiority and inferiority, they give low esteem to them. According to Farsides, "all individuals whether operating in terms of their personal or social identities, have a need for satisfactory (positive) self-esteem". (13)

4.2. Language Crisis in *Of Necessity and wanting*

Guddi's self-image is so minor that she tries to adopt even language of elite class. She, her family and friends speak English in their own style with a long pronunciation and odd accent. Many of times Guddi and her friends use code-switching and move from one language to another and even they mix the different languages. When her friend Kiran gets engaged she says: "What! How exciting! Mubarik to you". (Sascha 66) they do it intentionally because speaking English in the city like Karachi is also considered a fashion.

At parlor when girls giggle each other Rumina's mother says to them: "Buss jaani. We 'll have to see darling." While discussing the family issues Guddi's friend Kiran says "Yaar!" and "Falana dhumkana" Maliha says to her friend in excitement: "Shut up yaar!" Mrs. Rana Khan says to her daughter Guddi to make her ultra- modern and updated: You're a grown woman for God's sake Guddi! What is this bullshit, na?' cognitive approach also is also attached to the identity of a man.

Guddi adopts the things of elite class to change her identity but at her house she speaks like working class people and says to her mom and dad "Ammi Jaan" and "Abba Jaan". At the dinner table while having their supper Rana Khan tells to his wife: "I met your old friend Mrs. Qazim today" Mrs. Rana Khan says, ''Acha?' Oh? Talking about the son of her friend Guddi's mother asks her, 'Mohsin!' she exploded, Guddi jaani do you remember him? Further, about girls' fashion and discussing the marriage ceremony of burger class people when Guddi is asked

about she replies, 'oh my god how lovely she looked so elegant. Haan haan, Sono & Shehnaz bridal wear, darling. What a shame you couldn't be there! Or: What was (X, Y, Z) wearing.'

When suddenly on a party Guddi meets to her best friend Kiran, she asks Guddi about her husband and even says, "Where is Mr. Guddi?" She says it in a funny voice but along with showing that they belong to burger class they do not care for their language or gender. They are in the rank of their society are, where recognition can be made by the name of a woman as both the genders are same.

4.3. Imposter feelings in characters

Guddi considers herself as an imposter, she thinks she belongs to another class where she is like a princess and can drive her life according to her command because she looks the world through the eyes of her father the only man in her life before her marriage. Her father accompanied her as a partner and helps her to fly a kite but she wants to fly alone and insists her father, "Abba! Let me have a go! Let me have a go! Abba is thrilled to have his daughter as a companion. Now not too tight or the string might break and not too loose or the kite won't fly. It's a balance Guddi, he tells her." (Sascha)

Guddi feels her like a stranger and odd in Pakistan and wants to go abroad in the escape of her fast craving. Even after her marriage she tries to convince her husband to be settled in New York. One evening when she was having her tea with her husband, she again starts the same point in front of her husband, "Anjum your father really wants you to go to New York and head up his brother's office there. He has been saying it for years. Why don't we go? Her hubby responds, please babe. Can we not to talk about my father?" (Sascha)

He gets offended because he is contented with his life and loves his country and does not want to go foreign. But Rumina keeps talking about such things and even out of obsession

Not only Guddi other characters in the story also possess imposter feelings. Like Guddi the younger sister of Javed says when she was a child, "It was so nice to just be NORMAL like people on TV! When I grow up I'm going to live in London and drink water from my taps day in and day out!" (Sascha,)

As Sascha Akhtar says in the text of first short story, "There is that moment between waking and sleeping when you feel fully aware of everything and yet are dreaming. The *Hypnagogic* state. She is in a vast sand desert-desolate and bewildering beautiful at the same time. Her feet are not touching the ground. She glides along searching feverishly for something- swooping around large tangle weeds- changing direction for no reason at all." (Sascha 89)

5. Conclusion

The outcomes of this research are not generalized due to the textual and interpretive type of the research, but with the social identity of the Guddi and her imposter feelings in her surroundings and her odd behavior and awkward activities are under discussion as critical appraisal. She feels satisfied in doing those tasks and fulfilling her demands to be an elite class person. Working class should understand the value of their work instead of adopting the activities of elite class. Visits to beauty parlors, hoteling, modern looks, skin and hair treatments and tours to foreign countries have their own drawbacks which can be felt afterwards after being habitual of it. Apparently, it seems that these doings are enjoyable and relaxing but a habitual person may fall a prey of different diseases or problems. Society has made some societal groups and people fit in these groups, turmoils' and dilemmas start when one group try to enter the other group with different type of doings.

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