

Irony in Benedict's *Sand Queen*

Abstract

This research is an attempt to show irony in Helen Benedict's Sand Queen. Benedict uses irony in order to challenge war-mongering American ideology and raises question on brutality of American soldiers by attacking elevated rules and regulations in army and imparts the message that strict military norms and value should be go through the process of reformation. Moreover, through Kate and Naema, this research paper confronts on Orientalistic prospective of America and takes the departure from the main stream feminism as well in order to glorify Islamic feminism. To accomplish the task, the researcher takes theoretical insight of irony given by Claire Colebrook. According to her, irony is a rhetorical device that is used in order to attack grand claim and meta-narrative, questioning elite values, disrupting norms and constructing higher ideas and giving place to marginalize value and point of view beyond ordinary speech. By using this rhetorical tool, the researcher comes with the finding of ironical reversal as the protagonist who from the beginning glorifies the war and describes her act as noble and heroic one ultimately suffers from trauma. This sudden transformation in Kate shows the disparity between appearance and reality that functions as irony. Hence, by using irony this research paper attacks war-mongering American ideology, eminent norms in military force, Orientalistic American prospective, radical feminist and comes in to the conclusion that the horror of war victimizes all.

Keywords: Irony, Feminism, Orientalism, Mocking, Attack, Confront,

This research is an analytical inquiry into Helen Benedict's *Sand Queen*. Primary task of the researcher in this research project is to explore the irony used by the author in order to attack up on war-mongering American ideology, brutality of

American soldiers, feministic perspective of the west who aggrandize themselves as rational, superior, intellectual and gaze on the non-west especially Muslims as barbaric, primitive, blood thirsty terrorist. Moreover, satiric and mocking language ironies elevated norms and values exist in the army. By representing Kate and Naema ironically, the author imparts the message that due to self-centeredness of American politician not only the natives but the Americans themselves are compelled to face the horror of war. Therefore, instead of glorifying American values that is set by politicians; American people use their rationality and identify the politics behind it.

Being generalist, Benedict's this fiction is the outcome of researchable work of Iraq war. She has interviewed forty veterans of Iraq war, workers of Bucca camp, lots of survivors of the combat and mortal attacks and finally accomplished the fiction based on the setting of 2003 Iraq war. During that time America had assaulted upon Iraq with the slogan of liberating people from the tyranny of the dictator Saddam and establishing peace and security in Iraq. But irony instead of liberating people and giving them freedom, Americans start bombing, killing, raping and torturing the innocent people like Naema and obligate them to leave their motherland in order to save their life. It gives the clear view of irony because as the American claims, they are there for the security but in reality they vandalize things insignificantly. With the help of power they dismantle the regime of Saddam and construct their own.

Like Saddam and his cruel soldiers, American soldiers engage themselves in the criminal activities. They lock up innocent people and force them to endure pain, suffering and distress. Therefore, for Iraqi people there is no difference between Saddam and the Americans. Both soldiers are equal for them. That's why, when there comes reference of cruelty of Saddam; there occurs the example of viciousness of Americans as well. Thus, in order to unmask the real face of newly rising Empire the

author uses irony and reveals that American invasion on Iraq neither to release nor to establish peace but they attack to achieve their certain political interest. It is ironic for us to see that the Americans forget the impact of the war and celebrate it in the name of nationality. Hence, by using rhetorical tool of irony, the author advises that it is worthless to take part in war because the horror of war victimizes all. Therefore, instead of blindly following the order given by politicians, we should use our rationality and identify the pros and cons. If it is beneficial for the entire humanity, we should accept it otherwise we should resist.

In this fiction, Benedict attempts to expose horrendous circumstances of the war and suggests that horror of war makes everyone victim. This fiction is told from the perspective of Kate, and Naema. As the fiction begins, we see that Kate is glorifying American values. She describes her decision of being a soldier is noble and heroic one. Her parents equally delight when they know their daughter has become an army and going to serve the nation. They insist that working for the nation as a soldier is religious act. This all shows the American attitude of celebration of war. From the beginning, we assume that this work of art is about magnification of American values but sudden twist stuns us. When we see Yvette and Third Eye (two best friends of Kate) are no more alive, Kate goes in the trauma and denies joining army, we come to acknowledge that this fiction is not about valorization of American values rather it has some deep underlying meaning. Hence, there is disparity between appearance and reality that functions as irony.

In February 2003 Kate is deployed in Iraq to demolish the tyranny of Saddam and liberate the innocent from cruelty of a dictator. But it is ironic for us to see that Kate is an active participant in criminality occurring during that time. She confesses that they are committing a crime by torturing the common people who have nothing to

do with ongoing circumstances. But it is quite ironic to see that even though she knows that she is doing wrong, she gives continuity to it. It indicates that soldiers are nothing but like a robot, a man killing machine. No matter whether they belong to Saddam or the America, they bring nothing except devastation. They are just puppets and do nothing except to follow the order given by politicians. That is the reason why Kate eventually condemns American politicians and their policy that is responsible for destruction of entire Iraq and its legacy. In this way, the real intention of the writer comes forward that somehow challenges war-mongering American ideology.

Moreover, Kate is biased towards Islamic female. Her biasness occurs due to the society in which she lives. Her act is like that of mainstream feminist but in the course of time she has developed friendly relationship with Naema whose act is like that of Islamic feminists. Slowly and gradually, her misconception becomes clear and she accepts that there is vast gap between their supposition and reality about Muslim female. Thus, the author uses irony in order to attack the mainstream feminists who try to universalize their concept of feminism that is impractical and idealist. Therefore, through this fiction she recommends that the mainstream feminist should become liberal and gladly accept positivity of the Third World Feminism.

This research focuses on exploring the irony functions in Benedict's *Sand Queen*. It seems as if the fiction is reflecting the horror of war and suggests that evil of war victimizes all, so it is worthless to take part in war. But while going through the text the researcher is struck by various questions like: Why does Kate glorify war? Why does she blindly follow military order despite knowing as wrong one? Being soldier of superpower nation how does she become victim of war? Why does she deny going in army in the end? Why does she scold her parents who encourage her to perform heroic act? Why do Kate and Naema contradict in their point of view? These

questions inspire the researcher to think that it is not only terror of the war that the author wants to reflect in this fiction rather it is surface meaning that is what is said in the text. It may have some deep underlying meaning as well. Thus, this research project focuses on unearthing the hidden meaning that is ironical one.

This research paper's main motto is to investigate irony embedded in Benedict's *Sand Queen*. It seems as if the author has used irony to confront the war-mongering American ideology and raises the question upon the brutality of American soldiers by challenging eminent rules and regulations of military force. High class military values obligate soldiers to follow the order given by their seniors without any question. Therefore, soldiers become mere robots whose remote is in the hands of politicians and operate the soldiers according to their needs. Hence, by using irony the author suggests that elite military values should go through the process of reformation so that soldiers get the chance to think whether the decision taken by the politicians is beneficial for the humanity or not. If not, they should protest it by which soldiers can survive from fatal consequences of war. Furthermore, through Kate and Naema the author seems to be glorifying Islamic feminism by taking departure from the mainstream feminism.

This fiction is written from the perspective of a female soldier. There are hardly any texts that reflect the experience of female soldier during the time of war. Benedict herself in her interview insists "[w]hat does it really feel like deep down in the secret most part of our soul, to be a soldier? We have had almost no stories from the point of view of women soldier about war ever in the history. It's always been a male purview; we've had stories from female civilians, but not women soldiers." In these sentences, she asserts that various texts have been written from the perspective of male soldiers. They either glorify their heroism or harshly condemn the war-

mongering nature. Thus, in this text the author tries to do something new by bringing the experiences of a female soldier. Therefore, she portrays the character of Kate and presents the pathetic condition of female soldiers. But the researcher finds that representation of war is not only the case in this fiction. She has presented Kate as a brave and heroic character. Initially, she has a pride to be an American soldier but at last when she recognizes hypocrisy lying in it, she laments upon her decision of being a soldier. From the beginning we think that Kate is valorizing American values but ironic twist surprises us as she defies it. Thus, this fiction is not only about representation of female soldiers and their experiences rather it is surface meaning. Therefore, the researcher is interested to discover the hidden meaning that is ironic one.

Benedict presents an intricate relationship between invader and natives. Naema is a native girl. She has developed friendship with an American soldier Kate. Carol Gladstein claims “[b]oth women are facing uncertain future. For Naema the war has threatened home and family and starvation is looming. For Kate, who joined military to prove her toughness, to find her father service has brought the violence of roadside bombings and literacy of abuse from male colleagues” (304). He tries to reflect the miserable condition of both protagonists. He finds that both of them have same miserable fate. But he failed to distinguish difference and reasons behind their conditions. By showing similarity among the characters, he claims that both of them have same fate. If we go at a deeper level the meaning might be different. Therefore, the researcher is going to compare and contrast Kate and Naema in order to dig out the message that the writer tries to deliver. The researcher feels that the writer wants to glorify Islamic Feminism that is why she does so.

Helen Benedict deliberately represents the tumultuous condition of war. She

wants to show the complexities of war. She affirms that evils of war harmful to all. In the author's note Benedicts presents "[t]he United Nations reports that hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians have been killed, two million have fled the country and two million more have internally displaced" (144). This clearly shows her intention behind writing this fiction. By revealing terror of the war, she criticizes the war-mongering nature of political leaders. This is underlying meaning of this fiction that we can only discover if we approach the fiction ironically. This is the reason; the researcher is highly fascinated to investigate the text from the theoretical perspective of irony. This research work is highly beneficial for the readers who want to identify real intention behind Iraq war. Thus, researcher is approaching the fiction by applying rhetorical tool of irony given by Claire Colebrook.

Irony is contrast between what is said and what is actually meant. In between said and unsaid, explicit and implicit there lies irony. The author or speaker explicitly seems to say something but his/her intended meaning might be something different. So, irony occurs in the disparity between appearance and reality. He/she takes the help of irony in order to rebut universal truth or meta-narrative that exists in our society. With the help of irony, ironists are able to raise question whether our existing norms are beneficial to us or not; if not, we should reconstruct them according to our needs. Hence, irony is a special rhetorical technique that is used by the author or speaker in order to attack single monolithic universal grand truth, upper class values and ready-made generalizations that lie in our society and give place to multiple truths, lower class values that are undermined by the authority.

Irony is a literary art that has been used for many years in speech, art and everyday life. The irony which occurs in our day to day life does not possess any challenge. It is simpler and easy to identify. The ironist D. C. Muecke in his book

Irony and the Ironic claims that “irony plays a part in everyday living . . . offers no great challenge . . . But more attention will be paid to irony in literature than to the simpler ironies practiced or observed in life at large” (1). Therefore, our primary job is to identify ironies that take part in literature. But the problem is that the irony that comes in literature becomes very much complex. It is very much complicated to understand this kind of irony. We have to give our keen interest and deep understanding in order to figure out the irony that lies in the text. Once we identify, it gives special pleasure. Its pleasure is diverse from the pleasure we get from our everyday life. Hence, in this postmodern era irony becomes a prominent rhetorical tool in order to present aesthetic part of human life.

Irony can be glanced through two perspectives. First one is readers or interpreter’s perspective and second one is ironist or author’s perspective. From the interpreter’s perspective irony is an interpretive and intentional move. Based on his contextual knowledge interpreter draws multiple meanings different from what is said in the text. He/She minutely studies the text and tries to identify the hidden or underlying meaning. On the other hand, ironist always has a choice to be radical. They wonderfully play with words and present the thing in such a way that they confront the authority. They explicitly utter one thing but their intention may be something else. In this way, by following a rhetorical tool of irony, the ironists achieve success in their mission to bring about radical transformation in the society. That is why, Booth alludes that “for this reason, irony is an extraordinary good road into the whole art of interpretation” (43).

Giving exact and universally acceptable definition of irony is not an easy task. Ironist like Claire Colebrook is well known about this complexity of defining irony. She alleges:

Despite its unwieldy complexity irony has a frequent and common definition: saying what is contrary to what is meant . . . But this definition is so simple that it covers everything from simple figures of speech to entire historical epochs. . . . It can also refer to huge problems of post modernity; our very historical context is ironic because today nothing really means what it says. (1)

Therefore, giving universally acceptable definition of irony is very complex. It is because irony has been defined differently by various ironists. However, they agree in a point that the common definition of irony is saying contrary to what it meant.

Though, it is quite difficult to define irony, based on his long historical research, Colebrook avers:

Irony . . . has been regarded as politically ambivalent. Irony is both questioning and elitist, both disruptive of norms and constructive of higher ideals . . . irony challenges any ready-made consensus or community, allowing the social whole and everyday language to be questioned . . . and . . . claiming a point of view beyond the social whole and above ordinary speech and assumption. (153)

Thus, as she suggests, we assert that irony is a literary technique or rhetorical device used by the author or speaker in order to attack grand claim or universal truth. It is the weapon to question elitist values and gives place to marginalized one. It is a way of disrupting norms and constructing higher idea. It challenges readymade general idea and gives place to point of view beyond ordinary life.

Irony contains long history. Both ironist Colebrook and Muecke minutely study irony from ancient Greek era to postmodern time. They discover that though the word irony has been invented in the eighteenth century, it comes to exist in ancient Greek age. During that time it was recognized as 'eironeia.' "In the plays of

Aristophanes (257-180 BC) *eironeia* referred to lying rather than complex dissimulation” (Colebrook 1). They used *eironeia* as a means of artful ‘double meaning.’ In Socratic dialogue of Plato the word ‘*eironeia*’ is used “as pejorative-in the sense of lying-and affirmatively to refer to Socrates capacity to conceal what he really means” (Colebrook 2). Plato, the true disciple of Socrates gives life to this rhetorical technique of Socrates in his book *Republic*. Hence, in Socratic time irony is seen as artful double meaning that means saying opposite to what is said. Muecke finds that Aristotle’s irony is rhetorical. He states that Aristotle works more on ‘*eironeia*’ because he keeps Socrates in mind and his technique of self deprecative dissimulation. “The word irony appears in some translations of the *Poetics* as a . . . ‘*peripeteia*’ that is sudden reversal of circumstance” (Muecke 15).

Cicero has contributed a lot for the expansion of irony. He is the one who gives new name to irony as ‘*ironia*.’ For Cicero *ironia* does not have abusive meaning. It is wholly admirable ‘urban pretence’ of Socrates. Most interesting meaning of irony comes through Cicero and Quintilian. They argue that “[t]he word was defined as saying contrary to what it means, as saying one thing but meaning is other as praising in order to blame and blaming in order to blame” (Muecke 17). In this way, they also give continuity to Socratic irony. With the passing of time this type of Socratic philosophy is divorced from rhetoric and politics. Hence, it becomes narrow theory in Middle age and Renaissance. Aelius Donatus (AD 4) and Isidore of Seville (c. 570-636) were highly influenced by Cicero and Quintilian. They widely used Socratic irony in the Middle age.

The word irony does not appear in English until 1502. Dryden used it in general literature but it became popular in the eighteenth century. Though, Shakespeare, Chaucer, Dryden, Milton frequently used irony in their text, they did not

recognize the effect of this kind of irony. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, new concept of irony emerged. This new concept of irony is regarded as Romantic irony. Romantic irony is associated with the Jean Romantics. Main source of Romantic irony is *Athenaeum*. With the flow of time concept of irony is extended. Due to the inspiration from romantic ironist, modern ironists come to know that paradox is the soul of irony. They believe that it is the source and principle too. I. A. Richard and Cannon Thrilwall contributed a lot for the expansion of irony during early twentieth century.

After this, finally there comes postmodern sense of irony in the late twentieth century which is highly popular in contemporary time too. Colebrook avers that Richard Rorty, Linda Hutcheon, and Angela Carter are most popular postmodern ironists. These Postmodern ironists start paying their attention to discourse that is constructed with the help of language. They believe that an image of the person is constructed with the help of discourse. The ironic subject does not take part in norms and value that are presented rather he/she raises questions whether they are true or not. In this way, postmodern irony affirms the equal validity and groundless nature of all discourse. It claims to free itself from all the hierarchy, grand claim and metaphysical posturing. It is supposed to be radical and anti-humanist because it rejects any single norms or image of man. Therefore, in this postmodern era, irony is the view of life. Irony opens the door of questioning what may be life meaning.

As a whole, we demonstrate that irony is a rhetorical tool that is used by the author in order to attack upper class norms and values and establish marginalized norms. It is a sharp knife that challenges readymade general ideas and gives place to point of views that lie beyond ordinary speech and assumption. It is the gap between 'said' and 'unsaid.' It is saying contrary what it meant. It gives us freedom to go

outside the text and discover the possible meaning; the author might want to suggest us. Hence, irony is a special rhetorical device that is used in order to question whether the speaking subject is really saying what he says or not and motivates us to penchant underlying meaning he/she wants to give us.

Benedict uses irony in order to attack upon the war mongering American ideology. Being a leader of super power countries, American politicians created meta-narratives about Iraq. They aver that Iraq contains perilous mass killing weapons. Moreover, dictatorial regime of Saddam creates fertile ground for universalizing such meta-narratives. Thus, America attacks with the slogan of liberating people from the tyranny of Saddam by destroying his regime and mass-killing nuclear weapons. But irony lies in the fact that they do not find such weapons after getting victory over Iraq. Therefore, by using irony Benedict challenges such meta-narratives and implies that American invasion on Iraq neither to liberate native Iraqi people nor for the security of entire humanity but they assault in order to fulfill their selfish desire of getting control over Iraq's oil resources.

The ironist Colebrook insists that “[w]e . . . want to embrace a postmodern society without meta-narrative, privileged view-points or ideals of legitimation” (154). Colebrook advises that we should challenge meta-narratives, privileged view-points or ideals. They are created in order to fulfill a certain goal. There lies a certain politics behind such grand ideas and universalizing definite truth. Therefore, in this post modern era we should use our consciousness and try our best to identify politics behind such grand narratives. It is possible to unmask goal behind privileged ideas only when we start questioning them. So, she encourages us to put forward question upon meta-narratives, privileged view-points that exist in our time.

As Colebrook recommends, Benedict challenges upon meta-narrative created

by American politician when they are going to invasion on Iraq. Right from the beginning we can see that innocent Iraqi people are captured by American soldiers and imprison them in their camps without any offense. Naema confronts Third Eye and raised question upon her behavior. She states “[y]ou have no right to talk to me like that . . . You come here, invade my country for no reason, lock up our children. What kind of people you are?” (58) From this, we acknowledge that the American soldiers imprison most of the people without any crime. The Americans come in order to liberate people, giving them freedom and saving entire human civilization from the terror of the tyrant. But it seems ironic. There is a gap between their saying and doing. Instead of securing rights of people, they just capture them, lock them into their cells, boom upon houses of natives, destroy their infrastructure and put Iraq hundred years back. In order to fulfill their ill-intention they destroy the regime of Saddam and create their own. Therefore, the author equates American and Saddam. Whenever, she talks about the brutality of Saddam, there comes reference of cruelty of American soldiers as well. For her, both of them (Saddam and American politicians) are dictator and murderer. Naema affirms:

GRANNY MARYAM is not well. She shocks of the soldiers storming into her house and taking Papa and Zaki has affected her mind . . . she wanders from past to present and doesn’t seem to understand that it was not Saddam’s soldiers who seized her beloved grandson and son-in-law, but Americans. All soldiers are same to her, whatever their uniforms, whatever their justifications. All are murders. (35)

This is really ironic. At this point, readers recognize real intention of the author behind bringing the reference of Saddam while talking about the brutality of the American soldiers. In the beginning, when the author highlights viciousness of

Saddam we readers assume that due to the terrible consequence in Iraq, Americans reinforce to invasion for the of security Iraqi people. But sudden recognition stuns us and we realize that the author is ironically representing the circumstances in order to attack war-mongering American ideology. As Naema claims, the author charges them as murderers who imprison people without any reason and shoot them in trivial reason. She is fed up with this blood thirsty nature of Americans and wishes that instead of glorifying war, American people should advocate for peace and security that will be beneficial for entire humanity.

Likewise, Benedict uses irony in order to challenge American nature of celebration of war. The Americans believe that fighting in the battlefield for the nation is very noble act. They assume that war is a platform for showing one's bravery, heroism and valor. Hence, they glorify war and show their eagerness to fight for the nation with the hope of getting national pride. They have no idea about the terrible effects of war because they are hypnotized by the politicians. Politicians develop the convention that soldiers are the real heroes of the nations. It is because of their heroism America becomes the leader of super power nation and encourages them to fight for the betterment of the nation. Therefore, people work hard in order to be soldier. They are failed to identify the real intention lying behind such convention. Thus, by ironically representing the text the author attacks upon such American convention and inspires us to identify the politics behind such convention. By showing horror of war, the author attacks upon the foolishness of people for glorifying the war.

Colebrook motivates us to challenge our existing convention. She utters that universalizing convention gives advantage to certain group of people. Convention occurs in order to fulfill certain goals. Therefore, we should question upon our

existing convention and identify the politics lies in it. If we get success in questioning upon our existing convention then only we can recognize whether the conventions are beneficial for us or not. She further asserts “greater stress has been placed on irony that is undecidable and one modes of irony that challenge just how we shared, common and stable our conventions and assumptions are” (18). Colebrook finds irony as a tool by which we challenge our shared convention and assumption. We no longer share common values and assumptions nor do we believe there is truth or reason behind our values. Thus, there is no reason to follow such convention as it is. We should widen ourselves and pose the question whether these values are beneficial for us or not. If they are not, we should change them. Irony is really helpful in order to know about politics lies in our convention and assumption. That is the reason Benedict takes the help of irony to challenge common assumption of American people as war is the ground of showing your gallantry and heroism.

Benedict has ironically represented Kate in this fiction. She is advocating the convention shared by the American people. Like others she believes that being a soldier and fighting for the nation is noble and heroic act. She finds herself as brave, courageous and gallant. She assumes that only through the weapon, power can be achieved and one becomes strong. Therefore, she becomes a soldier. She says “I liked feeling strong and capable. I liked provoking myself” (23). This seems to be ironical. We readers are well aware, it is not through the arsenal that power can be achieved and one becomes strong. If weapons give power then why do not insurgents become powerful? They also possess arms in large amount. Hence, it is not the weapon that makes people strong but as Naema’s father suggests “[t]he truly strong are gentle and merciful, they don’t exploit the weak” (59). From this we know that there is a contrast between American assumptions and reality. Thus, it is ironic and by using it the

author is challenging American convention of being powerful and strong.

In America, not only youth are affected by this kind of convention but the parents equally become active participants. Parents see their pride and upgrading their social status, if their child becomes the part of military force and go in the battlefield in order to fight for their nation. They are hypnotized by the politicians and cannot think beyond. That is the reason Kate's parents heartily welcome her decision of being a soldier and pleased to be the parents of such brave and enthusiastic girl. Her mother finds her act as religious one and tells "I'm so proud of you wanting to serve your country, sweetie . . . it shows you have a good Christian heart" (23). This reflects the real American nature of celebration of war. So, to attack on this kind of American conventions the writer uses irony and suggests that the horror of war affects both native and invader.

From the beginning, we presume that Kate is glorifying American values. We may think that Benedict is affected by American values but we become surprised with the unexpected twist. We recognize that she is not advocating for American ideology; rather she is condemning it. We may get some kind of hints when Kate feels difficulty in Army camp but it becomes crystal clear when she challenges American convention and denies joining the Army once again. When her father alleges as "oh Katie . . . You know what I mean. You don't want that smear on your record all your life, do you? It's not right after what you have done for the country" (65). Her reply was unimagined. She angrily states as "I don't give shit. The last thing I ever fucking want to do is go back in the Army. They can smear me all they friggin' want" (65). In this way, due to horrible circumstances faced on the war she finally challenges American convention. She darn cares about the records and social prestige of her parents. She denies becoming the scapegoat by following those hypocritic values. Therefore, she

scolds her parents and insults them badly for insisting her to join the Army. Hence, by using irony the writer is challenging American convention and imparts the message that war is vicious for all. No one remains untouched from its devastating consequences. So, instead of valorizing war we should try our best to establish peace and security.

By using rhetorical device of irony Benedict insists that horror of war victimizes everyone. She has presented horrible picture of war in order to make us realize that fatal consequences of war hurt both native and invader. It destroys everyone/everything that comes near it. Her primary objective behind this is unmasking the real nature of politicians who are ready to compromise with the blood of their own citizens. Thus, we should recognize that it is worthless to take part in the battlefield and should raise our voice against it. Once war occurs bombing, raping, killing and torturing are common phenomena. People are displaced. Children become orphans. Crying of the wounded people can be heard everywhere. This further makes our life problematic. It gives nothing except pain, suffering and distress and leads people to trauma. Hence, we should recognize this and unite ourselves to defy the war-mongering nature of selfish politician.

Due to the terror of war people are forced to leave their motherland and loved one. People have sense of belongingness towards the place where they are born. They have a great sense of memory. This is nothing more than curse to leave our birthplace. But both native and invader induce to leave their homeland, once war exists. That's why they have nostalgia. They remember their loved ones and beautiful scenario to get some kind of solace. Like Naema's family Kate is also internally displaced for a time. Naema and her family are enforced to leave Baghdad for their survival. This is the reason why Naema announces "[a]t dawn the next morning, we climbed into our

old red car to set off, Mama openly crying . . . Don't look back, Zaynab, Papa said to our mother. It will only hurt more. And when this is over, Allah willing, we will come home" (20). This is really panicing situation for Naema and her family. They don't want to leave Baghdad but they do not have any option.

Moreover, Kate also goes through same sense of belongingness. She misses her home, friends, and family members a lot. She often remembers the beautiful moment with Tyler. Kate states "[m]e and Tyler love camping so much that we go all year round, even in snow. But our favorite season for it is the fall . . ." (31).

This clearly suggests that how she misses her friend Tyler. This all happens due to the war. If war had not occurred she would not have to leave her country and friends. It is only because of the selfishness of politicians war occurs and people are forced to bear the problem Therefore, it is necessary to challenge such valorization of war if we want to live peacefully.

Furthermore, war destroys deepest and earnest love and promises. It creates huge gap among people. Kate used to love Tyler a lot whereas Naema did Khalil but it is the war that makes them separate. They have nothing to do to come out of this complexity created by war. Similarly, children are heavily affected by war. Their houses are destroyed by the continuous bombing, parents are no more alive. Therefore, they become bagger and bagging the things from the Americans in order to survive. But irony lies in the fact that Americans suspect over such innocent children. Instead of giving something to eat they give them threat and warn them not to follow them. Hence, our mother earth is enforced to bear such terrible situations only because of the self-centeredness of politician.

Likewise, war is the origin of trauma. People have seen a lot of death, annihilation and miserable condition of the people in front of their eyes. Hence, they

go in trauma. Whenever, they see terrible circumstances, trauma triggers them and gives them unbearable pain, suffering and distress. Kate is in trauma. She affirms “I try taking a couple of bites of T-Rats for energy but each time I bring the food in my lips I think of Yvette and my mouth fills again with the test of her blood” (133). She tries her best to come out of this but she is traumatized when she thinks about Yvette. This gives her a lot of pain. On the other hand, old Granny Maryam also suffers from trauma. Her eyes see a lot of devastation, massacre and so many other unfortunate things. She tries her best to come out of this but once she sees a helicopter roaring around her, lightening up in white clashes, she is triggered by the trauma and starts shrieking from the nightmare. In this way, the horror of war victimizes everyone. Therefore, it is worthless to take part in war. So, through the ironical representation Benedict criticizes American nature of celebration of war and recommends that we should be united and protests the war-mongering nature of politician for the betterment of entire human civilization.

Similarly, Benedict uses irony in order to attack upon the brutality of American soldiers. Americans set the propaganda that they invaded on Iraq to establish peace and security by dismantling the tyranny of Saddam. Therefore, Iraqi people have lots of expectation from them. But irony lies in the fact that instead of establishing peace and rescuing the people from the tumultuous circumstances, they started killing and bombing upon their infrastructure, did nothing for the betterment of the people. They just witnessed looting, raping and other criminal activities. Naema is agitated by seeing this kind of American activity. She alludes:

At the end of May, though, when the streets were swarming with thieves and thugs . . . In the beginning we thought that the Americans would stop it. After all they have tanks and guns, their soldiers, and we had nothing since they had

dismantled our army and police. But no. They lounged on their trucks in the sun, smoking and taking photographs while looters stripped our shops, our home our museums. (19)

We presuppose that the Americans will stop the felony and punish the criminals but irony takes place when the American soldiers witness the crime and punish the innocent like ul- Judur and Zaki. When Mr. ul Judur hears that his son is killed, he tries to commit suicide but the American soldiers grab him and start beating him like an animal. Kate confesses “I grab the jerk-off’s shredded hands, cuff them behind his back and pull the cuffs tight, just like I was taught in MP training. Then I kick the back of his knees so he falls, put my foot on his shoulders and shove his private face right into the sand” (89-90). Thus, from this incident we assume that American soldiers are as brutal as Saddam’s army. They are performing the same deed that was done by Saddam. Hence, in order to attack on this brutal nature of American soldiers, the author takes the help of irony. Explicitly, it seems that the writer is highlighting the criminality of American soldiers but when we analyze this we acknowledge that there may be underlying meaning too that is waiting to be identified. We know that by showing the criminality of American soldiers, the writer wants to unearth the real intention behind the invasion. She wants to put forward message that America has assaulted on Iraq in order to take revenge of 9/11 attack. Though, Americans come with the slogan of establishing of peace and security in Iraq but their real intention is taking revenge against Muslims. They believe that entire Muslims are responsible for 9/11 attack and claim that they should be killed. So, to criticize this kind of American nature the writer uses irony. She is directly not able to say this. That’s why she takes the help of irony.

Colebrook asserts “irony is elitist: to say one thing and mean other, or to say

something contrary to what is understood, relies on the possibility that those who are not enlightened or privy to the context will be excluded” (18-19). She avows that irony is a tool to say one thing but its meaning would be other. Author may explicitly say one thing but his/her intention might be other. Due to this, author is able to challenge the authority. Being American journalist to criticize the American policy after 9/11 is not an easy task that is why she takes the help of irony and tells that real intention of the assault is to take revenge against Muslim. Kate declares “I started at Saint Catherine’s College, up by Albany in September 2001; the very same week those lunatic fuckers attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. If I got called to do something about those bastards, I was ready!” (24) From this, we get the glimpse of authorial intention. She suggests that the Americans are burning in the feeling of revenge. Thus, once they get chance to take revenge they start killing Muslim like an animal. So, by using irony author attacks on the brutality of American soldier and suggests that they come in Iraq to take revenge against Muslims who according to them are responsible for 9/11 attack on World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

Moreover, Benedict uses irony in order to unmask hypocrisy in military force. Army has their own rule and regulation where every soldier should be strong and capable to defend themselves. There is no difference between male and female in army. They should have to protect themselves by hook or crook. If they are failed and ask for the help to their companion; they should be punished. It is quite ironic to see that weak are punished without doing any crime. We are reinforced to imagine that there is no law for strong. They do whatever they like. Therefore, Benedict acknowledges that it is complex for the female soldier to be in the army. Hence, she uses irony in order to peruse readers in her argument that elevated norms in the army

should be changed so that immoral will be punished and innocent get the justice.

Colebrook finds “Irony, as a trope, is a means of effective persuasion in speeches and therefore already relies on the established speaking position force of the orator. As a figure or extended mode of thought irony allows the speaker to remain above what he says . . .” (20). Colebrook insists that in order to peruse his/her readers, the author may create the characters in such way that the readers realize ongoing norms and values are wrong. They come in an agreement that such elevated norms which create threat to the certain group of people may goes under reformation.

To challenge eminent norms exist in army, Benedict takes irony as a trope. Kate is continuously facing harassment and humiliation from her male companion. They even try to rape her. But due to so called high class norms Kate obligates to remain quite. This is quite ironic. As a soldier, we expect that she should raise her voice against those sexually assaulted soldiers. But we amaze when she decides to remain quiet and endure the pain. She does so because of the fear of getting punished. Consequently, the criminal thinking upgrade and they rape Third Eye. When Kate asks “[i]s it Kormick? Did he do something to you?” (68) Third Eye replies as “[h]e raped me. Him and Boner together” (68). When she listens this, then only Kate shares her feeling with Third Eye as, “[o]h God! They tried to do that to me, too!” (68) From this, we know that it is only due to high class military values innocent soldier is being raped. If Kate has raised her voice against them, Third Eye may be saved. But due to fear she remains quite and Third Eye pays for her stupidity. At this moment, readers identify that the author uses Kate ironically. At last, when she along with Yvette raised their voice against injustice and go to EOO for justice both the female soldiers are punished. When they reach to Henley he states:

Specialist Brady and Private First Class Sanchez, you both are ordered to

move out at oh six hundred hours tomorrow on a convoy up to Baquba . . . you have been selected for the honor of being assigned to shooter mission. We stare at him. A shooter mission? That's what they do to soldiers to punish.

(107)

In this way, the innocent soldiers are punished for raising their voice against injustice. It is only explicit meaning but implicitly author is raising her voice against such injustice military norms where criminals are protected and innocent are punished so that million of the female soldier saved from facing humiliation, harassment, pain and suffering.

Another prominent reason behind the use of irony is to challenge Orientalistic American prospective. Americans view Muslims as barbaric, primitive, uncivilized, blood thirsty and terrorist. This is the Orientalistic image set by the American people. With the help of power they universalize this. But this is only the propaganda set by the American in order to dominate the orient. Therefore, Benedict challenges this and by ironically representing Kate and Naema she asserts that it is our foolishness to see entire Muslims as a terrorist. They are not barbaric rather they are civilized, rational and intellectual like the Americans.

In *Islam and News*, Edward Said presents that American media are responsible factor behind universalizing Orientalistic prospective. He claims “[t]he Orient was perceived to be both inferior yet paradoxically also a serve threat to the political and religious stability of the west” (186). For Said, west considers Islam as inferior. For them, Muslims are irrational, ancient and superstitious. They are rigid in their thought and religion. Therefore, they possess great threat for political stability of the west. Thus, it is necessary to protest the Muslim and their ideology. Said clarify that its due to their selfish nature they try to universalize such Orentalistic prospect. He further

insists “Islam was, firmly attached to, or became synonymous with that of Terrorist” (187). He protests this idea and suggests that by giving reference to some of the terrorists, it is wrong to level entire Muslims as blood thirsty. Most of the Muslims are advocating for the peace. In order to take control over oil resources east contains west charges entire Muslims as terrorist and invaded them to capture their resources. Therefore, only for their political benefit they misrepresent Muslims and relying on the propaganda set by the west people charges Muslims as the fundamentalist.

In “Islam and West” H.R.H. the Prince of Wales has expressed similar opinion. According to him, “Islam is seen in terms of tragic civil war in Lebanon, the killing and bombings perpetrated by extremist groups in the Middle East, and by what is commonly referred to as Islamic fundamentalism” (137). In this way, by taking the reference of tragic civil war organized in Lebanon; killing and bombing organized by some extremist group in Middle East Americans set the picture of entire Islam and charge Muslims as Fundamentalist. Therefore, it is our misconception to consider entire Muslim as malicious, atrocious, primitive, blood thirsty and Terrorist. Muslims are as liberal and advocator of peace as the west find themselves. Thus, to attack on this narrow concept of American people Benedict uses irony where she presents Muslims as civilized and advocating for peaceful universe where as American are vice versa.

Kate frequently charges Muslims as an ancient, barbaric, uncivilized, blood thirsty and terrorist. But irony lies in the fact that they are performing the act that is done by the terrorist and killing and imprisoning innocent people, bombing upon their houses, destroy their infrastructure. Kate says:

When we drove through Basra on the way here from Kuwait in March, right after the shock and Awe started the war . . . Corpses lying in the streets,

smashed and glory, like those run-down deer on the highways at home, only with human faces . . . we've just pulverized their town, locked up their man and killed their kids and one GI Jane with sand up her ass in supposed to make it okay? (9)

Just like the terrorists attack on others nation and killed the civilian without any crime, same thing has been done by the American soldier too. They have envisioned on Iraq and killed Iraqi people. Moreover, they charge Iraqi as a blood thirsty and terrorist. They begin their journey through Basra from Kuwait and kill thousands of innocent people. Readers acknowledge that this is the sharp slap upon the face of west who declares themselves as advocator of peace and Muslims as terrorist but ironically Americans are just like the terrorists who organize war, assault on others nation and kill millions of people.

Likewise, Kate sees "Muslim as ancient and with red" (10) and charges them as uncivilized. She puts forward question as "[w]hy do those guys act like that, anyhow? Is it just because they hate Americas? Or is it because their culture doesn't give a damn about toilets and cleanliness and behaving like human beings instead of filthy monkey? I have no idea" (84). She is continuously raising a question over Arab culture. She believes that Arabic culture does not allow people to go to restroom and gives them knowledge about cleanliness and behaving like human being. But irony takes place when we pay attention language used by American soldiers and Iraqi people. Due to Orientalistic prospective we assume that the Americans should be polite, gentle, be etiquette and respect their elder and love smaller one. But we are surprised by seeing the language used by the Americans, is offensive. When Kate's father insisting her to join the army, she tells "[j]ust go! . . . Get the fuck away from me!" (66) At this point, we are compelled to raise question, can this type of language

is used by the so called civilized people while talking to their parents? None of the American soldiers use polite language and behave like gentle man while talking to their companion rather they rely upon offensive language. Therefore, it is worthless to charge Muslims as uncivilized, barbaric and ancient creature. In fact, they are as civilized, gentle and intellectual as American. Naema affirms “I come from Baghdad. My father is a professor of engineering and poet, my mother is an ophthalmologist . . . What do you think, that we are all goatherds?” (38) In this way, huge gap occurs in the Americans supposition and the reality. With the help of irony, Benedict imparts the message that we should dismantle Orientalistic prospective. Muslims are as civilized, rational, intellectual and creative as American. Therefore, it is worthless to suspect every Muslim as a terrorist. Due to certain Muslim terrorists it is worthless to generalize that entire Muslims are blood thirsty. Most of the Muslim like ul-Judur is advocating for peace too.

Furthermore, Benedict uses irony in order to take departure from mainstream feminism and glorify liberal and humanistic approach of Islamic Feminism. Mainstream feminism is too much individualistic, impractical and idealist. It creates the boundary between male and female. Mainstream feminists celebrate their feminity by othering the existence of nonwestern female as well as gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender. They try to valorize their concept of feminism which is not possible. Therefore, by ironically presenting Kate Benedict criticizes western concept of Feminism and glorify Islamic feminism through Naema.

Extreme feminists like Helene Cixous, Julia kristiva, Luce Irigaray and Elaine Showalter created the boundary between male and female. Cixous comes with the concept of white ink. She avers:

We have been turned away from our bodies, shamefully taught to ignore them,

to strike them with their stupid sexual modesty; we've been made victims of the old fool's game: each one will love the other sex. I'll give you your body and you you'll give me mine. But who are the men . . . Women must write through their bodies . . . (543)

In this way, she encourages entire female to protest against men. She takes men as their foe and inspires to protest against them. Thus, by dismantling boundary created by tradition gender role western feminists create new boundary between male and female. Therefore, Benedict does not like such hyperbolic ideology. So, she takes departure from mainstream feminism and glorifies Islamic Feminism. Islamic Feminism encourages women to develop friendly relationship with men and impart the message of unity in order to come out of problem.

Like Kate, most of the western feminists charge that Muslims are unkind, wicked and nasty. Condition of female in such society is very pathetic. They are treated as the child bearing machine. They marry early and remain within the boundary of their house throughout their life. Thus, there arise huge gap in their assumption and reality. Islamic Feminist like Haideh Moghissi challenges this kind of narrow concept of western feminist. She asserts "Islamic fundamentalist, by embracing the female body as the symbols representation of communal dignity, and by drawing only on the Qur'an and orthodox text to explain, as divine the historically developed subjugation of women in Islamic societies . . ." (30) Here, she gladly accepts that Islamic society is lead by the fundamentalist in the past. As a result, women are seen as symbol of beauty and communal dignity. But with the passing of the time, Islamic women are enlightened with their rights and break down the fundamentalist regime.

In this fiction, Kate seems as a representative of mainstream feminist and

Naema as Islamic Feminist. Kate reflects western women's point of view about Islamic women. She is amazed when she knows that Naema is a medical student. She does not believe in it and ask second time to be conformed as "did you say you are in medical school?" (38) Naema become angry by seeing her astonishment and replies as "I am. In fourth year" (38). After this great amazement Kate presents western feminists thinking as "[w]ow, I didn't know you could do that here. It's true. I thought Iraqi girls weren't allowed to anything except get married" (38). It is really ironic. There is the disparity between expectation and reality. Naema denies marrying Khalil though she loves him a lot. She has certain dream that is to be a doctor and serve her people. Thus, through this the writer suggests that western feminists must leave their pride of being ingenious, rational and modern. Iraqi women are as innovative, academic and modern like them. They also want to do something productive that will be beneficial for entire humanity.

The westerners have their own narrative about Muslims and they try to universalize this. Therefore, big gap occurs in their interpretation. Western feminists think that Qur'an is the main cause of subjugation of women in Islamic community. Therefore, they believe that until and unless Islamic women defy Qur'an, they cannot improve their condition in the society. Anitta Kynsilehto challenges such narrow western prospective. She argues "[t]he Qur'an contains principles of gender equality and wider issues of social justice, thus laying grounds for challenging patriarchal tradition . . . as Islamic feminism explicitly focuses on the process of unmasking these principles from the confines of patriarchal traditions; as an extension of the faith position instead of a rejection of this position" (10). In this way, Kynsilehto does not find Qur'an as a responsible factor behind the secondary position of women. She insists that Qur'an is misrepresented by the people and constructed it in such way that

it glorifies traditional gender role. So, instead of rejecting Qur'an, they should focus on unmasking principle that encourage traditional gender role. For her, Qur'an contains the principle of gender equality and wider issues of social justice. Hence, there is no question on rejecting Qur'an.

Naema alludes that she gets primary position in the family. She and her brother are equally treated by her parents. Her family encourages her to become doctor that is why she is studying in medical college. But due to Americans she is obligated to remain within the boundary of her house. Thus, it is ironic to blame Qur'an as a reason behind their secondary position. She tells "women are no longer allowed to leave the village unaccompanied by men. Furthermore, we not only have to cover our heads every time we go out, but our legs and arms, too, lest we tempt unclean thoughts or rape" (81). From her statement, it becomes clear that Qur'an is not responsible factor behind her secondary position rather the war. Before war, she goes to college, wears dresses as she desires and enjoys her life without any fear. But once Americans come, her life is drastically changed. She avows "I could not go to my classes at Baghdad Medical College for fear of the same or of being raped. Many girls and women were being raped" (19). So, she stops going to college remain within the home. Hence, westerners are responsible for their domination and subjugation. They are forced to cover their body not because of Qur'an but in order to protect themselves for being raped. Therefore, there is no question in rejecting Qur'an. Thus, Benedict uses irony in order to condemn western feminists who see Qur'an as responsible factor behind the secondary status of women in the society and reveals that Qur'an secures the right of women.

Similarly, the author uses irony in order to mock upon individualist, selfish and opportunistic attitude of western female and finds Islamic feminists as more

sociable, communal, co-operative and practical. Unlike Kate, Naema develops friendly relationship with man and becomes unite to face the problem. She loves Khalil even in complex situation and misses him a lot. But Kate is opportunist. Once she finds Jimmy is better than Tyler and believes that he will secure her life, she breaks her relationship with Tyler and engages in romantic affair with Jimmy.

Unlike Islamic feminists, western feminists are self-centered and individualistic. They only think about themselves. When Kate tells Third Eye that Kormick and Boner tries to rape her too. Third Eye becomes agitated and utters “I’m not talking about your fucking problems, Sand Queen. I’m talking about mine” (68). This presents selfish nature of western femisists. But Naema whose granny is counting her hours she left her with mother and works for eighteen hours without drinking water. This projects communal, caring nature of Islamic feminist. Therefore, in order to glorify more liberal humanistic approach of Islamic feminism, Benedict uses irony and imparts the message that western feminist may change their monolithic prospective of gazing other and reform their ways of thinking.

As a whole, core finding of this research is that the author uses irony in order to challenge war-mongering American ideology. Due to the self-centeredness of politicians, innocent people are reinforced to bear fatal consequences of war. They indebt the life of their own citizen for getting power and rule over other nations. Only because of the politicians Kate and other soldiers are compelled to see death, obliteration and devastation in front of their eye. This makes their life problematic and finally they become traumatic. Hence, the writer criticizes American values and imparts the message that it is worthless to take part in the battlefield. War makes our life hell. Therefore, we must protest the politician and their war mongering ideology.

Likewise, American attitude of glorification of war is condemned by the

author by using irony and affirms that war is trivial. There is no heroism and nobility lies in taking part in war. It is only the propaganda sets by the politicians by which people used to believe that fighting for the nation and sacrificing their life is matter of pride and their soul goes to heaven because they are following the order of God. But it is quite ironic to believe upon this because God is always being in the side of peace. Killing, butchering, torturing the innocent people is a crime and God never forgive us for our criminality. At last, Kate gets success to realize this. Consequently, she protests her parents who insisted her to be a soldier and take part in the war. She harshly criticizes the hypocrisy lying in the bravery and nobility. Thus, through ironical representation of Kate the author challenges American nature of celebration of war and suggests us to work for making peaceful universe.

Similarly, brutality of the American soldier is confronted by the author and insists that American does not go to Iraq in order to establish peace and security rather their inner motive is to take revenge of 9/11 attack that is conducted by some of the Muslims and control over the oil resources they have. First of all, they set the image of entire Muslims as terrorist and aver that they should be killed. So, revenge is the primary motive behind their invasion. Moreover, they set their vulture eyes upon the oil resource. Thus, they assault Iraq and killed thousands of people. Once Kate recognizes this, she becomes sympathetic towards native and tries to do something for them. But Americans punish Kate for her act. Hence, Benedict suggests that it is worthless to give trouble to the people for the crime which they never conduct.

Moreover, high class norms and values in army are also challenged by the writer with the help of irony and suggests that army should reconstruct their values by which female soldiers get some kind of relief within military force. Kate and other female soldiers' life become problematic due to the harassment, disgrace and

domination faced from their own comrade. They are supposed to raise their voice against it and they do but it is ironic to see that instead of getting justice, the soldiers are punishing for their brave act. Hence, with the help of irony Benedict raises the voice from the prospective of millions of female soldiers and demanding for the reformation of the rules and regulations lies in the military force.

Furthermore, the author is attacking the Orientalistic prospective of America and imparts the message that Muslims are as scholar, rational, civilized and modern as Americans. It is only due to their Orientalistic gaze, the Americans take Muslims as crazy, uncivilized, ancient, blood thirsty and terrorist. Being a Muslim girl Naema is studying in Medical College and her brother Zaki wants to be rock star. Though, initially Kate charges the Muslims as cruel, brutal and primitive but later she realizes that it is only because of the frustration of being imprisoned without any crime prisoner performs criminal activity. Thus, Benedict alludes that universalization of the Orientalistic prospective must be changed and advices that every Muslims are not terrorist. Most of the Muslim are advocating for the peace too.

Lastly, Benedict takes the departure from the Mainstream feminism and glorifying Islamic feminism. By the use of irony she finds Islamic feminists as sociable, co-operative and communal. They do not create the boundary between male and female. They respect the otherness of other. Naema leaves her granny with her mother and works for the long time for the betterment of the people. She is well aware of the fact that her grandmother is lying on her death bed but during that critical moment she thinks about other. Thus, the author is highly fascinated by the Islamic feminism and glorifies it by taking departure from the mainstream feminism.

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