

# SATIRE, LANGUAGE, AND MEMORY: A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF MOHAMMAD HANIF'S *RED BIRDS* THROUGH SIMPSON'S MODE

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## Abstract

This study analyses satirical writing in Muhammad Hanif's *Red Birds* through the lens of Simpson's Stylistic Model of Satirical Humour with particular attention to connection of language and memory in the construction of satire. As a sharp critique of the absurdity and irrationality of war and its consequences for human lives, *Red Birds* offers a rich ground for examining how satire is linguistically and stylistically constructed. Simpson's Model which covers both the production of satire by the satirist and its reception by the reader, provides a comprehensive framework for this analysis. Therefore, this study explores stylistic features through the Metonymic Satirical Method (saturation, attenuated focalisation, and negation) and Metaphoric Satirical Methods (combination and merging), and Stylistic Hooks (lexico-grammatical devices) in Simpson's model. The findings reveal that Hanif satirizes American's obsession with war, the unquestioning obedience of military personnel, the normalization of violence and apathy of those who exploit war for personal gain along with embedding the critique in language that functions as a repository of cultural memory.

**KEYWORDS:** *Red Birds*, Hanif, Satire, Humour, Simpson's model, war.

## INTRODUCTION

In the past years, satire enjoyed the status of a literary genre, without any critical outlook from the literary critics but from the recent literary works and research satire came on the spotlight for being complex and not well explained, in fact for them the term satire is "a curious and rather elusive one" (Simpson, 2003, p. 4), and similarly, (Opitz, 2007, p. 74) called satire a "slippery term to define". Since the inception of satire, there is no consensus on a single definition of satire, and one reason lies in the very nature of the satire because it takes notes from every literary genre from poetry to prose, from short stories to news, so, satire is not a genre in itself nor has a distinctive form but it needs to adopt other forms to express its ideas (Ball, 1995; Feinberg, 1972; Gul, 2025, Harris, 2004; Knight, 2004; Opitz, 2007)

And the other reason is different approaches with which scholars looked at satire. Some just focused on one aspect of the satire such as in the case of Randall (1974, p.13), focus was on the purpose of satire which according to him was the reformation through criticism, while others approached satire differently, as Ashworth (1967, p. 101) looked at the relation of satire with humour, that satire is a criticism activated simultaneously with humour but within a moral framework (Ahmad & Gul, 2021; Ahmad, Gul, & Zeb, 2022; Ahmad, Gul, & Kashif, 2024). Gring-Pemble & Watson, 2003) treated satire as a technique for deflating egos and a tool for "social criticism". This kind of variation, in treating satire by the literary circles, is further elaborated by Simpson (2003), mentioned a division in the literature about satire, where some studies explore the textual interpretation through critical theoretical models, while other studies are more text-centred and author-based (Salameh, Akhtar, Gul, Omar, & Hanif, 2022; Tufail, Gul, & Ali, 2024; Zakir, Ansari, Khan, Butt, & Bareach, 2025). There are studies in which different critical theories are applied on satire to understand it, i.e. Nussbaum (1984) worked on satire by building argumentation from critical-theoretical apparatus which was drawn on ideas and feminism as principal theoretical stimuli.

It can be said that there is a bulk of research work that studies satire from critical theoretical perspective but when it comes to linguistic and pragmatic analysis of satire, literature is devoid of such comprehensive model, which explains the linguistic/stylistic features of a literary satire but also explains how readers would recognize the satire. Simpson came forward to fill this gap and presented his "Stylistic Model of Satirical Humour" which claims to analyse satire both linguistically for the stylistic analysis and pragmatically for explaining satirical uptake (Gul, Ahmad, & Tufail, 2022; Gul, Ahmad, Tahir, & Ishfaq, 2022; Gul, Ayub, Mazhar, Uddin, & Khanum, 2021).

Following are few works that applied Simpson's model and found it quite effective; Skalicky & Crossley (2014) in their study analysed specific lexical, grammatical, and semantic features to identify differences between satirical and non-satirical Amazon's product reviews. They claimed that Simpson provided an apt method for identifying and analysing different instances of satire (Ali, Gul, Khan, & Karim, 2021: Ali, Gul, Khan, & Karim, 2021: Ayub, Gul, Ali, & Rauf, 2021). Another study by Muhammad J. H. Abdullatief (2014), tests the applicability of Simpson's Model of Satirical humour to literary satirical works and especially those written in Arabic, as to him Simpson's model appears to be applicable to literary satirical works. He concluded that Simpson's model is currently able to analyse literary satirical techniques used in Arabic language texts with few exceptions and suggested few modifications.

This study endeavours to investigate the satirical techniques in *Red Birds* through Simpson's Stylistic Model of Satirical Humour, to get the keen understanding of how the style and language of the *Red Birds* turn it into a political and social critique.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As mentioned earlier, this study will utilize the framework given by Paul Simpson, to analyse the whole satirical process from production of satire to the recognition of satire, in his Stylistic Model of Satirical Humor. Before proceeding with the discussion on the model, a conceptual description of Simpson's model is necessary here.

As the name of the model suggests that it takes its conceptual idea from Humour studies, which Simpson mentions in his book *On the Discourse of Satire* by declaring satire a "preeminent form of humour" but according to him, satire has been hugely ignored in the linguistic research, both, on the broader level of humorology and on the narrower level of verbal humour. Satire of various eras has received immense focus but in comparison with specifically focussed humorological studies of jokes, witticisms, puns, humorous anecdotes and narratives, satire has been clearly marginalized.

Therefore, Simpson attempted to "build a generalised model of satire through a textual base" by drawing on various scholarly approaches such as Draitser's approach, which links satire with broader humour theories i.e. Incongruity theory and identifies two kinds of satirical characterisation: metaphoric and non-metaphoric (Bukhari, Gul, Bashir, Zakir, & Javed, 2021: Bukhari, Said, Gul, & Seraj, 2021: Gul, Ilyas, Gul, Riaz, & Khan, 2025: Draitser, 1994).

Irony plays a major role in the satirical makeup and this concept is taken from the Sperber & Wilson's Relevance Theory (1981) which give the idea of "Echoic Mention" that irony echoes or repeats someone else's idea/concepts or beliefs, though Simpson disagrees with explaining all kinds of irony with "Echoic Mention" and calls it 'oversimplification'. But he does take this concept for his own model, Simpson adds the concept of "Oppositional Irony" which is the contradiction from what is expected or true, to explain irony used in the production of satire. Simpson (2003) argued that satire is a form of humour that uses ironic means to achieve its goals of postulating a framework that operates on the production and reception of satire. Therefore, Simpson's (2003) model of satirical humour is used in this paper for analysing the satirical texts under study.

Simpson's model has its foundations in the idea that satire operates at a higher level than a genre or register (Gul & Khilji, 2021: Gul, Tahir, & Batoool, 2021; Zhou, Gul, & Tufail, 2022). Satire is structured as a threefold set encapsulating three discursive subject positions: the satirist, (the producer of the text), the satiree (an addressee, whether reader, viewer or listener) and the satirized (the target attacked or critiqued in the satirical discourse). Satire in Simpson's model embodied manifold forms of irony: three principal ironic phases operate during the production of a satirical content. The creation of satirical text entails the combination of and opposition between two elements: a prime and a dialectic, which operate as mutually dependent structural positions in discourse. Those elements represent themselves through the satirical method comprising techniques that can be classified into two categories: Metonymic Satirical Method and Metaphoric Satirical Method. While the prime element is a stage which is characterised by irony in its echoic mode, the dialectic element is a stage which is characterised by irony in its oppositional mode.

The current study explores the satirical techniques used in *Red Birds*. *Red Birds* is Hanif's third novel. He took eight years to complete this novel. This novel is a political satire which explicates America's role in the Middle East, in waging wars. The novel reveals the story of a war victimized family. That grieving family is the family of one of the three protagonists of the novel, that protagonist is Momo. Momo is living in a refugee camp with his family and pet dog Mutt. That family has a missing son Bro Ali who is older than Momo. Momo and his Mother Dear desperately want to bring his brother back home from Hangar, an American military base. Father Dear is accused of selling his elder son to Americans by Momo and Mother Dear. Another character of a female researcher Lady Flowerbody represents the duality of American policies as this character is there to help and pretend to sympathize with the victims of American wrath. Colonel Slatter is another character who is obsessed with wars and hence represents the irrational approach of Americans toward wars. And the plot progresses when Momo plans to invade Hangar by using American pilot Ellie, who is lost in the desert and rescued by Momo. But the story absurdly ends with a gothic touch as ghosts of all the dead soldiers and civilians come back to Hangar.

### Prime Phase

The prime functions as the first ironic stage in satirical discourse, the echoic irony. It is suggested that irony functions as an echoic interpretation of a prior utterance, belief, or expectation. In this sense, the satirist repeats or mirrors a thought, such as a belief, intention, or norm-based expectation, or an utterance resembling a previously held idea attributed to an individual, a group, or society at large, in order to convey a critical or mocking stance toward it (Wilson, 2006, 2012). Simpson (2003) argues that satire relies on some prior discourse, utterance, or speaker as a reference point for commentary. This echoic quality of irony connects to what Kreuz and Glucksberg (1989, p. 375) term the echoic reminder theory, which emphasizes how ironic utterances function as reminders of antecedent events. However, they also note that not every reminder is necessarily echoic, since the antecedent event may not always be an actual or implied utterance.

Satire, therefore, goes beyond merely recalling earlier utterances, norms, or expectations; it recontextualizes them by embedding them in a new discursive frame. In satirical novels, such as the one examined here, satire does not operate through a single prime domain but rather through a series of smaller, interconnected satirical units. The prime domain shifts from one satirical episode to another and may draw on political, religious, family, or humanitarian aid contexts, depending on the target of critique. Since the prime and dialectic elements are mutually dependent, Simpson (2003, p. 103) suggests that recognizing the dialectic element is often essential for identifying the prime. Therefore, to explore what prime elements are used by Hanif in his satire, its satirical methods need to be clarified.

### Dialectic Phase

In contrast to the prime phase, which relies on the echoic nature of satire and draws from the satirisee's background knowledge, the dialectic phase is grounded in text-internal discourse strategies as well as the satirisee's familiarity with conventional discourses. Within this framework, the satirical method refers to the linguistic techniques employed by the writer to construct both the prime and dialectic elements of satirical discourse. The novel under study is examined through the model's dual categorization of satirical methods: the metonymic satirical method and the metaphoric satirical method.

## DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

### Metonymic Satirical Method:

Metonymic satirical methods are exercised through the techniques of saturation, attenuated focalization and negation.

#### Saturation

Satirical technique of Saturation formulated the satirical text of the *Red Birds* by inflating the Satirized (satirical target) using various stylistic devices. Following are the few excerpts from the novel's text where saturation is seemed to act as the compositional technique of satire:

You'd think one-sided wars would have become boring by now. But they still keep at it. There are no dogfights now, none of that go after your enemy's tail and chew it up; mostly you are chasing your own tail as nobody seems to own fighter aircraft anymore (Hanif, 2018, p. 93).

Satirist (Hanif) through the character of American fighter pilot named Ellie establish the prime which echoes one of the part of war that happens above the ground, in the sky, in which fighter planes of combatant forces encounter each other's plane. In Air force, this fight is called as "dogfight". Prime here is established through the echo of the notion that dogfights and war, here, aerial warfare, which is undoubtedly soul-wrenching and disturbing. As the prime needs to be supplemented with another key element that operates within the satirical text, which is text-internal "Dialectic". This Dialectic will induce a collision of ideas which is expounded in the text through various text-features, under "same domain". Opposition or collision is first established through lexical item "boring" which is associated with the grave matter of war, ironically, hinting that wars are somehow interesting and entertaining and then further saturating (inflating) it, by giving the reason that why aerial wars are 'boring' as no more dogfights are there in aerial warfare. Followed by metonymic intervention where a part, "fighter jet tail" is taking the place of a whole, "plane" and using it with action of "chewing" instead of "destroying". So, chasing of "enemy's tail" and "chewing it up" is referring to the destruction of a plane by enemy's plane in a dogfight, but now, there are no more such fights which is making everything "boring" for pilot Ellie. This incongruity results in a touch of humour along with indicating that the enemy has lost the power as they don't possess Aircrafts anymore. But this occurs to pilot Ellie after seeing the plight of the enemy's camp. "One-sided war" in inception is also mocking the unflinching desire of the USA to indulge in war without considering whether the enemy is compatible to fighting against the USA or not. It has been emphasized in the beginning with the words "they still keep at it" which is indicating that America would not stop the war even after seeing the inability of his enemy to fight back. So this above mentioned excerpt is satirizing the USA's war madness through "Saturation as metonymic satirical method" because it is enclosed in a same domain of dogfights and aerial warfare. This opposition of idea of warfare through prime and dialectic's opposition formed the second phase of satirical composition, in the extract.

There's a ninety-nine per cent chance he'll slaughter you. The remaining one percent chance is that he'll want to invite his friends over, have a little party and the last one to bugger you gets to decide if they should slaughter you now or gift you to some other fellow goatherds. (p. 36-37).

These lines uttered by the character Colonel Slatter in Ellie's narration when he remembers him in the desert. The flashback was about one of many modules offered by the US military to train army for the wars they are fighting around the whole world. Where, "goatherd" is clearly reflecting a Western perspective on what people of the Middle East can own (just goats and camels) along with them being out of the race of technological advancements in the modern world. Satirical composition begin with establishing a prime, which is echoing the general perspective of hospitality of Arabs or people of desert, but because of what Slatter said earlier about "goatherds", satire (readers) are not expecting something great or legendary from the desert folks, so when text-internal dialectic is established through highly exaggerated statements about how inhospitable desert people are, then it would 'collide' with the mildly expected inhospitality with the extreme inhospitality (mentioned by Slatter). "Ninety-nine" per cent chance of a savage act of "slaughtering" of strangers, by people of desert is reflecting what Western people think about Muslims specifically about Arabs. In this particular passage, "serving of food" or "typical hospitality of Arabs" is replaced with such extremely negative and brutal act of "slaughtering". Muslims have been presented as 'Cannibals' and 'butchers of human beings' (especially white people) and hence, rejected common perception about them.

They bombed us and then sent us well-educated people to look into our mental health needs. There were work-shops called 'Living With Trauma' for parents, there was a survey about "Traditional Cures in a Time of Distress and Disorder". Our Camp was the tourist destination for foreign people with good intentions" (p.44).

In these lines, Momo the teenaged entrepreneur of the novel is speaking about something that comes along with war, which is 'Relief Operations'. These operations are organized by the same people who wage the war. First phase of satirical composition in this discourse gets completed when it echoed the notion of process of so called 'rehabilitation'. Collision between prime and dialectic occurs in the text-internal structure under metonymic satiric method of 'saturation'. The saturation here is achieved through many researches, workshops and surveys mentioned throughout the novel along with the "irony" underlying these endeavours. "They bombed us and then sent us well-educated people to look into our mental health needs" is clearly reflecting that America is all aware of the consequences of wars and bombs on the innocent people of that area. They know people can have Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSDs) but they are 'kind enough' to send researchers to organized workshops for those people. An example of such workshops is given here; 'Living with Trauma; this workshop is for parents. This induces such a sharp irony that first give them this 'trauma' with your own hands and then your sent people will make them learn to live with that 'trauma'; Traditional Cures in a Time of Distress and Disorder" is another rehabilitative move by America which is also ironic. American bombs will first destroy their home and kill their family and put them under stress or make them depressed and give them mental disorders, then carry out some surveys to know which 'traditional ways' they are using to treat mental illnesses and to cope with depression. To further saturate all this, satirist has mentioned in chapter 8 of the novel, other such studies 'Growing Pains in Conflict Zones', 'Tribal Cultures Get IT'. Even 'Reiki for War Survivors'. (p. 67). Books have also been written on these trauma-stricken people by the researchers and authors, which are mentioned in chapter 24 of the novel; The Way of the Nomad (p. 179) and the Sands Wept (p. 179). Saturation is also in action when Momo calls camp a 'tourist attraction' as many people visits tourist spots same is the case with camp because many people (researchers) used to visit that place. Those people have 'good intentions' because they are not in the camp to kill people. In short, through the 'prime' of rehabilitation and 'dialectic' through saturation of various relief endeavours satirist is targeting the duplicity of the American government and American policies, therefore the Satirized (satirical target) is duality of American policies.

#### **Attenuation Focalization**

Attenuated focalization is "less of the same" means the satirical target is under emphasized in this technique. It is the technique of "defamiliarization" which is achieved through "under lexicalization", which functions as a deflating strategy within a particular order of discourse. After analysing the technique of 'saturation' as metonymic satirical method, in text of the novel Red Birds, another metonymic satirical method will be analysed, which is termed as "Attenuation".

They give you a 65-million-dollar machine to fly, with the smartest bomb that some beam rider in Salt Lake City took years to design, you burn fuel at the rate of fifteen gallons per second and if you get screwed they expect you to survive on four energy biscuits and an organic smoothie. And look, a mini pack of After Eight. Somebody's really spent a lot of time trying to provide the comforts of a three star hotel (p. 3-4).

These lines are from first chapter of the novel when Ellie was ranting about failure of American Air force in finding him in the desert. He is lost in the desert after his plane crashed. No "roving angles" come to rescue him, and this makes his tongue really sarcastic. As far as the matter of making this passage, satirical is concerned, 'underlexicalisation; as the device of attenuation, can be seen in action here. The first phase of establishing a prime is instantiated through taking into consideration those measures which are taken by manufacturers of fighter planes to save the life of the pilot after his plane crashed or met an ill-fate. The text-internal structure developed first through withholding the usual term of something and that something in case of this excerpt is 'Strike Eagle'.



Hanif has used the cost of the plane to mention it, which is a huge amount of ‘65-million dollars’ and then used a lexical superordinate term ‘machine’ to refer to plane or fighter aircraft. This underlexicalisation, achieved through ‘65-million dollars’ and ‘machine’, is serving the purpose of highlighting the materialistic value of a plane used in wars. But what makes this passage unique is the co-occurrence of two metonymic satirical techniques, one is ‘saturation’ and the other is, ‘attenuation’. Aircraft has been saturated by using superlative ‘smartest’ for the ‘bomb’ that this aircraft carries and then mentioning a longer period of time, ‘years’, in designing that bomb by a genius, who is expert in Line-Of-Sight Beam Riding (LOSBR) or beam guidance (a technique of directing a missile to its target by means of radar or a laser beam), in city; ‘salt lake city, Utah, U.S’, which is a big name in aircraft industry and aviation globally. A very high combustion rate ‘fifteen gallons per second’ is also mentioned to further saturate the value of the fighter plane. And when it comes to the safety of the pilot, a pilot who is not ordinary but flying that ‘65-million dollars’ machine, in Ellie’s words; Then, food items in the survival kit that will keep the pilot alive contains only “four energy biscuits and an organic smoothie”. All of this is indicating the ‘attenuation’ of the survival measures taken by the military. ‘A mini pack of After Eight’ is ironic because After Eight is a mint chocolate, which was intended to be an after-dinner mint, but is there anything poor Ellie got for the dinner? Ellie ends this discussion by sarcastically declaring these things “comforts of a three-star hotel”. So, through the attenuation of the safety measures and through taking an aircraft’s value to the front by ‘under lexicalisation’, Hanif has intended to satirize that how much the US military is spending on making such mighty fighter jets, in other words, on the weapons used in wars.

There are no exceptions now, everyone from the Jesus-is-knocking-on-your front-door nuts to the earth-is-hotting-up-and-we-are-all going-to-get-roasted freaks agrees - things must quicken, interventions must take place. (p. 33)

This passage is from chapter 4 of the *Red Birds*, where Ellie is narrating about modern wars and conveying an absurd logic of war. The prime here is established through the rationale behind waging war on poor, under-developed countries, which is to help “goatherds” to “arrive in the new millennium” (p. 33). The prime collides with the text-internal dialectic through metonymic method of ‘attenuation’ where a lengthy combination of words with hyphens are used instead of directly mentioning flag-bearers of different field of life. “Jesus-is-knocking-on-your-front-door”, this long string of words with religious figure ‘Jesus’ from Christianity is giving a hint of someone from the domain of religion and ‘knocking’ is a kind of ‘alarm or note to alert’, can also be a kind of invitation or call from Jesus. All this lengthy combination is preceding a ‘plural noun’ that is ‘nuts’ which is informal way of calling someone crazy or insane, which is indicating with little sarcasm that it must be someone who keep on telling that ‘Jesus is calling you’. Someone who is practicing and preaching religion all the time, who are none other than ‘priests’ or ‘clerics’. Other string of hyphenated words is also representing something which is not directly stated such as ‘earth-is-hotting-up’ is clear indication to ‘global warming’ and ‘climate change’, where as we-are-all-going-to-get-roasted’ is representing what would be the outcome or consequence of this increasing global warming. This long string of hyphenated words is also preceding a ‘plural noun’ i.e. freaks, which shows that it is a kind of ‘adjective’ acting as a modifier for ‘freaks’, so who could be those freaks? Someone who is obsessed with the consequences of Global Warming and keep warning the people around them, and those people are none other than ‘environmentalists’, who are worried about the protection of the environment all the time. Therefore, by ‘withholding’ a usual term for someone who has specific ‘nouns’ (clerics and environmentalists, here) to refer to them, Hanif has employed a sort of attenuation, which is conveying a sarcastic tone as well. But the purpose behind using such attenuation is to criticize the fact that Everyone, including people who feel for religion and people who feel for the environment are in favour of ‘intervention’. They find it right for a powerful country to bomb another country having little resources and poor economic conditions, in short, no one is against war. War is legal now.

### **Negation in *Red Birds***

With the help of bell-jar analogy Simpson has given three ways or operations to be performed on “balloon” in turn on “satirical target”. Two of them, ‘Saturation’ (to inflate the balloon) and ‘Attenuation’ (to deflate a pre-inflated balloon) have been discussed so far. The third way is to ‘negate’ it “by trying to pretend in effect that the balloon is not there at all” (p. 134). Technique of negation in satirical text is based on Halliday’s concept of polarity and negation. Therefore, by exploring an example from the novel *Red Birds*, it can be analysed how “negation” plays a role in making the text of the novel satirical.

“Or maybe they just like shooting people down and have no interest in capturing and torturing them, they see no point in getting information from them or making their videos” (p. 32).

This excerpt from chapter 4 of the novel, where Ellie is ranting and raving about not being rescued by American Air Force and not even the goat-fuckers (terrorists who, in Ellie’s opinion, shot him down) come to get him. He is distressed as he “hasn’t seen one sign of life”. Deserted Ellie is speculating what will happen, if he gets captured by the terrorists. Satirist Hanif has instantiated prime, for this particular excerpt, as an echoic frame which draws on from various “hostage videos” filmed by terrorists that can be seen very often on international media. This echoic prime phase gets its thematic basis from these anterior discourses, is then split via a text-internal manipulation which constitutes the ‘dialectic phase’ in satirical development. The dialectic component is embodied by oppositional irony, the principal impetus for which is the inclusion of the ‘negative particle’ in the sequence “and have no interest in capturing and torturing them”. The usage of negative particle “no” is serving

the purpose of opposition or collision, which is a clear example of the notion of “antithesis” in satire. It exhibits a whole conceptual inversion which is continued for the remaining text, “they see no point in getting information from them or making their videos”. The negative particle ‘no’ here, is of prime significance as it is presenting yet again a complete “inversion” or “negation” of the typical brutal practices by terrorists around the world. It is worth noticing that Hanif has used a different technique to satirize the target, which is neither saturation nor attenuation, but inserted a “negative particle” for the sake of making the text satirical. Ellie starts with speculating that his plane has been targeted by those goat- fuckers and then he “negates” different practices, broadly associated with terrorists, such as capturing, torturing, getting information and filming their hostages, to give a satirical touch to the text.

As it is quite obvious what happens when an army personnel, journalist or volunteer is captured by terrorists and all the troubles those hostages must have gone through, but here, in this extract, ‘opposition’ is created by satirist and that oppositional phase is developed through the “negation” of all the brutality shown by terrorists. So, it can be seen that through Ellie’s desperation of getting rescued (even captured) and through mentioning various possibilities and then ironically negating the usual expected treatment by the terrorists, Hanif targeted the inhumane practices on the part of terrorists.

### **Metaphoric Satirical Methods**

Paul Simpson’s Model of Satire is manipulating the term ‘Metaphoric satirical techniques’ as an umbrella term for all those ways which involve cross-domain mapping in any way. Metaphoric method includes techniques that establish satirical relations between different conceptual domains, i.e., the prime and dialectic elements belong to two or more different conceptual domains. These techniques include combination or merging and interdiscursivity.

#### ***Combination or Merging***

When elements of two or more different conceptual domains are combined together to compose a final satirical image, this technique is called combination or merging.

“Roving Angels would be on their way to rescue me, but sometimes Angels can take their time and in order for this rescue to be successful I need to stay alive” (p. 3)

These lines are from exposition of ‘Red Birds’ when Ellie’s character is introduced as an American Air Force pilot, who lost his fighter jet and now wandering in the desert in search of something to eat so that he can survive. So, prime is established by creating a scenario through a fictional character of pilot Ellie, where he got lost in the desert. The character is fictional here but it represents real circumstances of people who get lost in deserts. By mentioning troubles, a deserted person bound to encounter in a desert Hanif developed Dialectic which involves the text-internal structure. Established dialectic here is spread over another domain of supernatural beings which are ‘angels’. This shift in domain is serving the purpose of referring the ‘pilots of American Air Force’. ‘Roving Angels’ is the term used here for Ellie’s comrades is ironic as the job of these angels is to bomb that place where they are ‘roving’ and this creates an opposition or collision of idea as Angels are those heavenly beings who are supposed to protect humans and known as ‘servants of God’. This opposition is carried out further when Ellie associates something to ‘angels’ which cannot be related to them such as ‘sometimes Angels can take their time’ which is reflecting that Angels can show carelessness in performing their duties which is not ‘typical’ of Angels. So Satirical target or Satirized here is American Air Force as Satirist doesn’t like the fact about American Air Force that they don’t swiftly execute the missions to save their fellow soldiers in wars. “There is a war on and what is a war if not an opportunity, an opportunity to make up those extra points” (p. 6). These lines are uttered by one of the most satirical character of the novel, who is none other than Colonel Slatter, in first chapter of the novel. This character “had never resisted a good war, or for that matter any war which had an aerial component to it” (p. 7) and had “shaved, shiny head, his eyes were icy blue pools of certainty, the kind that eighteen years of implementing distant wars brings. (p. 6). So, it can be said that Colonel Slatter is representing and in turn satirizing the apathetic attitude of war mongers, which has been reflected through these lines where Colonel Slatter is declaring war as an ‘opportunity’ to get higher rank in military forces by scoring ‘extra points’. The prime for this extract echoes the words of John Yossarian, the bombardier protagonist of Joseph Heller’s *Catch-22*, “When I look up, I see people cashing in. I don’t see heaven or saints or angels. I see people cashing in on every decent impulse and every human tragedy.” As Hanif has mentioned once that; “In an interview with BBC journalist Razia Iqbal in 2014, Hanif said he loved Heller’s novel and read it “at least 22 times”. He said he found the book funny, but their lives were not unfunny. Hanif adds that Heller certainly changed Hanif’s outlook on the world he was living in”. (Rose, 2018).

As the establishment of prime gets cleared through above discussion and the text-internal dialectic is developed by the cross-domain or concept of materialistic gains but the process of collision of idea or opposition in dialectic phase can be understood when a reader( satiree) goes beyond this text of this novel and ponders over the general real life outcomes or consequences of the wars which are unspeakable atrocities and sufferings of civilian population including psychological and emotional stress. Mass destruction of the area where war is happening and a long-term effects on the economy of a country. So, the satirist Hanif is satirizing the indifference and apathy of those people who are directly involved in vicious wars and see war as a mean for personal gains.

#### ***Interdiscursivity***

When two different discourses of two different conceptual domains are related together, this technique is named interdiscursivity. This relation is established when one discourse imports some elements from another discourse.

Interdiscursivity refers to the mixing of diverse genres, discourses, or styles associated with institutional and social meanings in a single text. Now, the “interdiscursivity” or in other words ‘intertextuality’ in *Red Birds* will be discussed as follows to explore how this technique contributes to satirical tone of the novel. “Our capacity-building sessions turned into screaming matches. To bomb or not to bomb, or as Central Command started to put it, ‘To B or not to B’”.

Ellie in chapter 13 of the novel, discusses different preparations made by Americans to fight the war. These preparations involve different courses and workshops and brainstorming sessions and according to him these sessions are chaotic, and no one agreed to other regarding when to hit a target.

So, Hanif through mentioning different courses and mission briefs established the thematic base of the above excerpt. Second phase of satirical composition involves the development of dialectic which is achieved through ‘interdiscursivity’ and ‘stylistic hooks’. Interdiscursivity can be found as the above excerpt has the phrase ‘To bomb or not to bomb’ which is a clear parody of famous soliloquy ‘to be or not to be’ of Shakespeare’s famous play “Hamlet”. In these training sessions, pilots are trained to hit the target and with the basic rule “if it moves, hit it” (p. 105) but sometimes what happens is “as you are about to hit it, it stopped moving”. This raises the question of whether to bomb or not. Trainees have no consensus on it and that’s why these sessions turned into ‘screaming matches’. This confusion leads the central command to change the parodic instance of ‘to be or not to be’ into a homophonic pun by changing ‘be’ into capital ‘B’ such as ‘To B or not to B’. But here this ‘Capital B’ is related more to ‘Bomb’ of parodic instance than ‘be’ of the original soliloquy, as here the central point is ‘to bomb’. So here, in the excerpt preparations of war, by the Americans have been satirized. This has been done by using first, ‘parody’ as a tool for interdiscursivity’ and then ‘Homophonic pun’ as a stylistic hook to form a bridge between the two genres; play ‘Hamlet’ from which elements are imported and the Novel *Red Birds* which utilizes those elements in the form of ‘pun’.

I wish someone would take a picture: ‘Lost American officer helping a lost Mutt give birth’. I have seen one on the homepage of Stars and Stripes where a marine was putting a bandage on a baby donkey...Lost American officer helping a puppy with broken leg’; not like helping a lost bitch give birth but still a compelling headline (p. 60).

These two excerpts are from chapter 7 which the interesting encounter of lost pilot Ellie and Mutt. This excerpt is unique, as it includes the prime that instantiated it. This prime has roots practice of print or electronic media in which they show different army personnel doing something positive most commonly their pictures while helping others, whether animals, birds or humans. One such example is there when Ellie refers to the picture of marine helping a baby donkey putting bandage in the famous American military newspaper Stars and Stripes. Dialectic is established through metaphoric interdiscursivity where elements from newspaper genre of discourse, are taken to satirize the usual practice of propagating a positive image of military forces. Dialectic is developed by taking the most prominent component of newspaper genre which is ‘newspaper headlines’. So, when Mutt was lost in the desert and Ellie mistakenly took it as a Mutt going through labour and wanted to help her, he wanted to publicize that moment in a newspaper with a photograph and headline ‘Lost American officer helping a lost mutt give birth’ so, the characteristics of a newspaper headline is rightly followed as it is brief, eye-catching, easy to read and in active voice. When Ellie gets to know that it’s not a female dog but male dog with a broken leg still he wanted the world to see him helping an injured dog. But now he needs to change the headline with a bit of amendment ‘helping a puppy with a broken leg’. For Ellie it would not “like helping a lost bitch give birth but still a compelling headline”. Therefore, this interdiscursivity is presenting a critique over the practice of showing Army personnel as someone so helpful and kind-hearted. It can also be a criticism over the general practice of showing off good deeds by the people on different media platforms. Education, they said:

Education gonna solve all your problems. There was art education. Art teacher said draw a pitcher, with a crow drinking water from it. There was science education. Newton, science teacher said, sat under an apple tree. I drew pitchers, I thought about Newton. (p. 16).

Momo in chapter two of *Red Birds* is talking about education and its quality. For discussing in fact criticising education, that he is receiving in his ‘alma mater’, the camp’s school, which is built near an open sewer, has taken different elements from another genre of discourse. That is the literary genre of ‘Fable’. Fable is a kind of story often defined as “an animal tale with a moral” (Funk and Wagnalls, s.v. “Fable”; (Thompson, 1977, p. 10). “The Crow and the Pitcher” is the fable that has been taken here for the cross-genre mapping.

Before analysing this mapping, the beginning of excerpt should be considered The general concept of Education is that it is a magic wand which can give you money or wealth. Education is the eradicator of the problems that are caused by poverty. But the tone with which business-minded Momo said that shows that he is not pleased with the kind of education he is getting because it will not make him earn enough money but can only give him a waiter’s job. Prime for this is established from the general view of the Educational system in third- world countries, which is absolutely not positive. Here, in the fictional world of novel, that country is poor and war-stricken so who can expect excellent quality of education. So, this sort of prime has established the Dialectic here. Dialectic is developed through the elements from another genre that is literary genre of Fable. The ideas for drawing or art class are taken from “The crow and the pitcher” fable. Therefore, the classroom’s discourse domain is taking element of another literary genre. The selection of crow drinking water from pitcher for the art class can be significant as it can suggest the lesson to ‘follow’ what crow did. The crow didn’t seek help from others and helped himself. But the people of the camp have tied their hopes with ‘international aid’ and that crow’s story is

giving the inhabitants of the camp a lesson to must not wait for 'aid' and try to help themselves by using brain just like crow. In other words, people of that camp must try to come out of their miseries and start a proud life of their own. Then another class of sciences is mentioned by Momo, in which teacher is telling students about Newton, a famous scientist of all the times. This shift from literary to non-literary genre is giving another insight to the educational standards of the war affected areas specifically and overall in Muslim countries. The Newton although a great scientist and physicist but he belongs to 17th century. This indicates that the educational quality or the content of study is not up to the contemporary standards. So, Hanif satirizes the educational standards here, by using elements of literary and non-literary genres of literature.

#### **Stylistic Hooks:**

These are the bivalent lexico-grammatical devices, that help bind together the two (colliding) elements of textual patterning, are referred to as stylistic hooks. In *Red Birds*, Stylistic hooks can be seen in action through different wordplays manifested in the names of some characters of the novel.

The character of "Father Dear" is one of those characters, whose name and actions are satirical in one way or another. The mentioned character is father of, one of the three protagonists, Momo. This character has not been given a proper name throughout the novel and family title "Father" underlines that, the story revolves around Momo's character. This name exhibits a striking wordplay which induces an ironic touch and also instantiates the prime which is based on love that a family shares but text internal structure manifests something contrary, which results in the collision of prime and dialectic elements. Throughout the novel this character has been mocked and presents a contrast with what the name contains "Dear" which is used as a noun here, (but mostly used as an adjective) for expressing affection and respect. These continuous sardonic and disrespectful remarks have been mentioned by many characters on many places in *Red Birds*; "he thinks he is best. Nobody laughs on his jokes" (p. 41). "He has spent a lifetime clearing that throat only to realize that he has nothing to say" (p. 42). "He also coughs gently, as if coughing gently makes him the voice of reason" (p. 42). On another place, through a hyperbolic statement gives a mocking remark; "he has no work but he claims to have co-workers. Nobody ever answers his petitions, but he carries his files around as if they contain all the answers to all the mysteries of our universe" (p. 41).

These remarks represent a son's dissatisfaction with the attitude of his father and this very attitude of Father Dear makes him a satirical character as well. Hanif has used this character to satirize those people who are not faithful to their country and longs only for money. Prime for this character's part in the novel echoes the notion of despise and disgust for the enemy, as his son is missing from the first day of his job in Americans Hangar, so all believe that Americans are responsible in the disappearance of Bro Ali but Father Dear "is going through a phase of unrequited love for his American employers" (p. 21). This establishes a collision of prime and dialect where dialectic manifests Father Dear as boot licker of Americans and Mutt mentioned this as; "They are always accusing him of licking white men's boots – but maybe he likes the taste" (p.97). Momo also mentions his love for Americans "And his employment and his love for his employers is the source of all our troubles" (p. 19). Even when Americans bombs his only abode he takes Americans side "Sometimes there are mistakes ... Even the best of us can make mistakes" (p. 98). So, the name and character of father dear is establishing a connection between the prime of broader domain of war and the dialectic elements (with its subsequent effects on family life and greed) and because it aids the connection or collision so it can be claimed as a "stylistic hook" of satirical text.

Lady Flower body is another character that can be viewed as a satirical character. Like Father Dear's character actual name is not mentioned throughout the novel. This name is interesting because the setting of the novel is barren desert where flowers can only be seen in mirages, so "flower" in the name presents a sharp contrast with the dry and a dusty desert. This name is given by the Momo's mother due to her physical appearance; "look at that hair, look at that make-up, what is she doing here anyway?" (p. 41). And Mother Dear by doubting her character presented the stereotypical mistrust of wives of their husbands and their female co-workers. "Shouldn't she be taking care of her own family rather than trying to wreck other people's families" (p. 42) but what makes this character satirical is her job as a researcher in the conflict areas. Basically, it establishes the prime on the notion of those people who do researches on PTSDs in those areas where their country (America) is responsible for giving traumas as civilians cannot be protected from the demolition of wars. All of this exhibits an irony. Dialectic in this case, has not shown the "collision" which is proposed by Simpson (p. 2003), but "repetition or tautology" has played the role of being a "stylistic hook". Therefore, she can be seen time and again asking about the "feelings" of others but in reality her sympathies are fake and only her only concern is her PhD thesis. Another, stylistic hook can be seen in the novel, during the session between Lady Flowerbody and Momo are discussing about the missing people including Bro Ali, and she tells him that:

"they have categories for the disappeared, there are those who are jet black, there are those who are greys and there are white. Whites always come back; some even get compensation" (p. 73).

Her point is that in wars, in mass destructions it is obvious that people go missing. But this categorization based on race shows that she knows about the so called whites supremacy that is why she says that whites come back. But the teenage mind of Momo is unaware of such racial discriminations and says that his brother has not come back although "he is whiter than white" (p. 71) which indicates the presence of "pun" as the "stylistic hook" here, because he mistakes "white" for the skin complexion instead of the racial white. This pun shows the innocence of Momo's mind who claims to be a great entrepreneur.



## CONCLUSION

At the end of the whole discussion, it can be concluded that Simpson's model provides a proficient framework to analyse the construction of satire in *Red Birds*. It offers an insight into how style and language transform the novel both the political critique and a memorialization of war's absurdities. Hanif's satire contains both metaphoric and metonymic satirical techniques along with the lexico-grammatical stylistic hooks. Metonymic satirical techniques involve saturation, attenuated focalization and negation. Saturation has been used to satirize Americans' lunacy for wars, War and its subsequent poverty in the war-torn country has also been the satirical targets of Hanif's satire manifested through the saturation of the description of the camp. Americans also got mocked for their frenzy over preparations for war. Second metonymic satirical technique is attenuated focalization which has been used to satirize that America spends so much on the weapon of war or mass destruction and the submissive attitude of the army personnel who just obey order without considering whether they are killing innocent people or the evil ones. Through the attenuation focalization of people from various fields of life, Hanif satirized those people and delivered the point that nobody speaks against the wars and now wars are considered as "legal". Negation has also been used by Hanif through ironically negating the usually expected treatment by the terrorists to their captives, who are most personnel of foreign forces, Hanif targeted the inhumane practices on the part of terrorists. Hanif also satirized the indifference and apathy of those people who are directly involved in vicious wars and see war as a means for personal gains. Miserable and deplorable living conditions of camp's inhabitants are also mentioned through metaphoric technique of combination or merging. Stylistic hooks were used by the name of the character of Father Dear and Lady Flowerbody, to show the greed of humans and truth of humanitarian aid. Thus, Hanif's satire operates as linguistic play as well as a means transmitting the memory of conflict.

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