

ALIENATION AND SPIRITUAL VACUUM: A GLIMPSE INTO “*THE ROAD TO MECCA*” FROM MODERNISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This study has been taken up to bring out alienation and spiritual bankruptcy of our modernized society in general and westerners in particular by applying modern critical theory on literary text that has been written particular in this context. Muhammad Assad's "*The road to Mecca*" has been selected as a source of data for this purpose. The peculiarity of this book is that it is a memoir written by the one who himself was of western origin, Muhammad Assad. It is an elaborate discussion on western people's spiritual emptiness that has spread alienation in their lives. The present study applies a critical literary theory, *Modernism*, on this book in order to identify that modern man is entrapped in alienation that has four layers; alienation from God; from Nature; from society and from his own true self. Spiritual emptiness has become part of their being, and alienation haunts them and drags them into a constant state of emotional insecurity and restlessness. For this quantitative research, secondary resources like different journals, newspapers, books and articles are utilized to collect the data. This study will help the readers to get the deep understanding of this remarkable book. It will also provide them an example of application of critical literary theory of Modernism on a literary text. It invites other researchers to come up with new perspectives and explore the hidden layers of meanings intended or unintended by the author in this book.

Keywords: Modernism, Alienation, Spiritual Vacuum, Western People, Road to Mecca.

INTRODUCTION

"*The Road to Mecca*"

"The Road to Mecca" is a very gripping and appealing book written by Muhammad Assad who is a young writer, a traveler and master of many languages. Apparently, this book brings the events of his life containing particular span. However, this book is pregnant with sound and profound message. In first chapter of this book, he claims that this book is written neither as his autobiography nor as an adventurous story. But he just describes his journey from west to East in order to bridge up gap between them. This reveals an account of European's discovery of Islam. Asad's openness of mind and expansiveness of heart allowed him to let Islam come in. Finally, he was forced by his keen interest and inquisitive nature to travel eastward to *Mecca*. He left Europe as a Leopold Weiss but after 25 years, he returned to Europe as Muhammad Asad. He converted to Islam in the age of 26. In Muslim world, he minutely analyzed Islam and its diverse culture and then adopted Islam as his own religion. This book is a journey of transformation from Judaism to Islam.

It is surprisingly remarkable that an excellent book "*The Road to Mecca*" is a very little known and mentioned in the list of 20th century masterpieces. However, it is loaded with influential contents to understand nature, causes and remedy of spiritual alienation of modern man. Muhammad Asad was an eyewitness of both the cultures; East and West. He came up

with the comparison and contrast of both cultures and presents the solutions to the existing crisis between them.

In this book, the account of his journey is not only confined to Arabia but also his journey all over the Muslim world. He goes to Arabia, Palestine, Egypt, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Denmark and Afghanistan etc. He mentions about his writings which he wrote, at the age of 20, with epigrammatic brevity. In fact, he is a gifted young writer and traveler who was converted Islam after traveling in Muslim world.

Muhammad Asad clarifies the purpose of his writing by saying that this book is neither an autobiographical note of a man's life nor a narrative of adventures nor it is even the story of deliberate search for faith. He further says that this book is the story of a European's discovery of Islam and his integration with Muslim community. It is his desire to lift the heavy veil which is hanging between Islamic and western culture separating Islam and its culture from occidental mind. He wants to highlight the fundamental differences between Islamic and Western civilization. Through this book, he compares both civilizations; civilization of Islam and civilization of western. He wants to present Islamic realities to Western fellows and answers to their allegations towards religion. He elucidates all concepts of Islam such as destiny, fatalism, reasons worshipping physically and freedom of second marriage at a time only for men not for women etc. He keenly observes Islam, its cultures and concepts and then logically proves all of its concepts to Westerns.

This book carries inconsiderate criticism on western civilization and presents spiritual bankruptcy, vagueness, inner dissatisfaction, incoherence and individualism in western world which are the found in abundance in the modern world. Asad criticizes harshly the distinction which westerners make between body and spirit resulting in alienation from nature, God, and even from their own self. He traces out causes of spiritual bankruptcy of westerners and makes them aware of it; and suggests them solution for it. He offers solution of western's problems in this book by creating harmony between their physical and spiritual desires. There should be unity and balance between both desires. "*The Road to Mecca*" can be regarded as a master piece of Muhammad Asad's writings and of English literature because it covers many aspects of life and appeals both Muslims and Westerns.

Modernism as a critical theory

The present study applies Modern critical theory on "*The Road to Mecca*" written by Muhammad Asad. The Road to Mecca is included in modern literature. It comprises features of modern literature. Modernism in political and literary movement began in the first half of twentieth century. It is a radical break of traditions in arts and culture. It brought changes in literary form and expression. Modernist authors started to publish their writing in the era of 1880s and into the mid of 1940s. It reached at its climax in 1920s to 1950s. In this era, changes came not only in arts, culture and literature but whole society was bearing new changes. War destructed the whole world and gave new picture of world.¹ World started to move towards industrialization which devalued the individual. Global communication connected the whole world with each other and world seemed to man very smaller place. All these changes which took place in society were affecting human mind and psyche. He started to perceive world differently and think about everything from very different perspective. Modernist writers presented all these changes and its impact on human beings in their

¹ Pericles Lewis, *Modernism, Nationalism, and the Novel* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp 38–39.

writing. For example, Charles Dickens in his novel, “*Hard Times*” portrays the industrial conditions of British people. T.S Eliot in his work, “*The Waste Land*” and “*Love Song of Alfred Prufrock*”, problematizes the worse condition of modern society and how modern man is entangled in the complication of modern world.

Modern literature has its own specific characteristics. Individualism and experimentalism are its prominent features. Individualism means that individual is more important than any other thing in this world. Changing in new world affected individuals a lot. Modernist writers were interested to represent in their writings how these changes affected human beings. How individual could survive in this world and triumph this world. In this age, scientific progress was going on. Man was busy in making technologies. Because of this scientific progress man started to think that they could even control their own fate. Everyone was busy in making progress. No one was concerned about another person. Every individual started to think himself as a center of this universe. Nothing remained important for him except his own life. Modernist represented that person in their writing as Muhammad Asad highlighted individualism in Western states in his book, “*The Road to Mecca*”.

Modernist writers’ deviated dramatically from old traditions, forms and techniques of writing.² They adopted their own writing style. Modernist poets did not follow rhyme scheme in their poetry. They preferred to write in free verse. It is a habit of modern writers to mix images and genres. For example, two genres of literature have been mixed up in Muhammad Assad’s “*The Road to Mecca*.” His book is considered as a memoir as well as a travelogue. It is a criticism on Western as well as is a moral religious book. Muhammad Asad combines images of West with the images of Muslim world.

To highlight inner working of consciousness is a most prominent feature of modernist writing. This technique is called stream of consciousness. Modernist writer tries to highlight the inner condition of characters. James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, T.S Eliot and Ezra Pound are writers of stream of consciousness. For example, Muhammad Assad in, “*The Road to Mecca*”, highlights the inner condition of people living in Western areas. He details the inner fear, alienation, mental sufferings, vacant stares and “lonely crowds” of westerners apparently looking happy, calm and satisfied. Muhammad Asad finds hidden tensions and worries behind their smiles. He presents the culture, apparently progressing, flourishing, prospering, flowering and advancing but actually dying, failing, falling and deteriorating.

Massacre of two World Wars deeply affected writers of the period. Many great writers were killed in these two World Wars. Others were badly wounded in wars. On the other side, Capitalism and Industrialization were exploiting rejected, dejected, deprived, oppressed, poor, destitute and homeless class of society. Industrialization filled society with ugliness. People were prospering immensely at the cost of spiritual, moral and religious values. So these things made world a more absurd place for living. Writers of this age were greatly influenced by these circumstances. They depicted these circumstances in their writings.

Mammon worship robbed its victim from true happiness and contentment of life. Inhuman and devilish designs replaced human and ethical norms. Humanitarian approaches disappeared from the face of earth. Personal interests replaced common human interests. Greed for wealth and lust for power destructed the whole civilization. This whole scenario affected writers along with common people. Franz Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis* is an

² Childs, Peter (2008). *Modernism*. Routledge. p. 4

extraordinary example of absurdum. Loss of religion and over commercialization deprived them from the true meanings of life. Mammon worship became common everywhere. Self-centered approaches destroyed the essence and harmony among the people. Profit making and manipulative strategies harmed, damaged and corrupted the spirit of human beings.

Modernist writers applied symbolism in their works. According to them, objects, colors, places, people and events have significant meanings. Symbols are replete with underlying meanings. Complexity of modern age has been represented through symbols which were beyond the capacity of conventional meanings of words. Modernist writers incline to reproach the evilness of their society and mock its follies and absurdities. So with the help of symbolism they gave powerful message loaded with multiple layers.

Symbolism has not first been adopted by modernist writers. However, the use of symbolism became recurrent and more significant in modern literature.³ James Joyce's *Ulysses* is a striking example of symbolism.⁴ The Modernist writers infused new meanings in objects, people, places and events. The idea of symbolism 'as a riddle to be cracked' had its early stages in the Modernist period. Symbolism was not a new concept in literature, but the Modernists' particular practice of adding symbols in their works was an innovation. They gave particular focus on symbolism.⁵

Modernist Writers used complex vocabulary, borrowed and invented words in their writing. Writing style of some modernist writers is difficult to understand as T.S Eliot adopted in *The Waste Land*. But some modernist writer's style is very easy to understand as Emily Dickinson, Robert frost and Muhammad Assad.

Modern literature depicted fragmented and alienated societies. Disintegration and disharmony set in the societies. Peace, satisfaction and contentment became rare amongst peoples. In most of the modernist writings, this element is necessarily found. People of modern age started losing their connection with God, Nature, and society and with their own self. T.S Eliot, Ezra Pound and Muhammad Asad depicted inner incompleteness and emptiness of his age. Modernist writers depicted elements of fragmentation in their writings because they see fragmentation in their society, culture and even in their lives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Road to Mecca

The Road to Mecca, a combination of memoir and travelogue, is a masterpiece of Muhammad Assad. It is a criticism on the life of Western people. Different newspaper and magazines like Dox Magazine, Kleine Zeitung and Der Standard, gave positive reviews on this remarkable book. Alissa Simon of Variety (an American weekly magazine) commented:

*"Informative... a well-judged combo of travelogue and biopic... a fine piece of anthropology, worthy of the dedication it copies from Asad's translation of the Koran: 'For people who think.'"*⁶

Catalin Brylla, a documentary filmmaker reviews it and expresses his views:

³ Sherif Ali, Features of Literary Modernism

⁴ Michael J. Bielawa, James Joyce: Symbolism in Ulysses

⁵ Sherif Ali, Features of Literary Modernism

⁶ Icarus Films, *A Road to Mecca: The Journey of Muhammad Assad*, 17 August 2015

*"An inquisitive journey... The spectator is taken on a beautifully uncertain journey (physically and psychologically) with a suitable formal closure and even more thought-provoking discursive openness."*⁷

Many works has been done on it. It is widely analyzed by the researchers. Numbers of articles, journals and term papers have been published on it. It has been reviewed by the many others writers. After reviewing this book, *Kleine Zeitung* called it *"a tactful and astute portrait."*⁸ Many film makers have made a film on *Road to Mecca*. As George Misch (2012), made a film on this novel, named *"A Road to Mecca"*. He represents Muhammad Assad in his film as a hero who sets out on a journey from West to East and tries to blur the boundaries between their cultures, countries and religions. Ismail Ibrahim Nawwab (2002) in his journal *"Berlin to Makkah: Muhammad Assad's journey into Islam."*, named Muhammad Assad as gifted young write, traveler and linguist who journeyed towards to Makkah by analyzing his master piece of work *The Road to Mecca*. Martin Kramer (1999) in the *"The Road from Mecca: Muhammad Assad (born Leopold Weiss),"* speaks that *Road to Mecca* is a remarkable book in history which is written by author Muhammad Asad. It is an American book written in 1954. Martin calls this book a combination of two genres: memoir and travelogue which tells the story of conversion into Islam crossing the deserts of Europe and Arabia as well. Martin observes that travel of Muhammad Asad brought him to its true destination. Martin Kramer (1999) explains in his articles the Drift from Judaism, Eastern Exposure, The Conversion, Asad of Arabia, and his Passage to India; and his translation of *Quran*.

This book won a lot of appreciation when it appeared. A reviewer of this book writes a comment about it while writing in *"The New York Herald Tribune Book Review"*. He comments that it is *"intensely interesting and a moving book."* Commentator places this book in the pantheon of Arabian travel literature: *"Not since Freya Stark,"* by saying,

*"Has anyone written so happily about Arabia as the Galician now known as Muhammad Assad?"*⁹

Abdul Aziz Sibaii, after going through this book and critically studying it, wrote a complete article on it by this name, *"Road to Mecca: Mohammad Asad"*. He comments in his article that this book is not just description of his adventures but it is historical, political, intellectual and novel book and Muhammad Asad is a hero of this novel book. He calls it a novel book because, he says, *"it is about Asad's feelings about Islam and Muslim world, his sufferings and inner conditions"*.¹⁰ After reading his book, he calls Muhammad Asad as a journalist, traveler, thinker, philosopher, historian, diplomat, scholar and great believer of Islam. He differentiates Muhammad Asad from other others western writers by making point that he is like other writers who writes about Islam without fully comprehend it. Assad observes, understands, and discusses Islam with Islamic scholars and lives within Muslim community to observe them deeply and closely. Afterwards, he writes book about Islam.

John Devera (2008) reviews *Road to Mecca* and suggests that it is such a book that must be included in university syllabus. He offers three reasons of peculiarity of this book. First of all he says that this book is about his conversion into Islam but this thing does not make it peculiar. Thing which makes it different from other books is that this book is about such man who was born Jewish and lived with rabbinical scholars. In spite of such strong influence, his mind did not appeal Jewish culture. He learnt eastern languages and became scholar of *Quran*

⁷ ibid

⁸ ibid

⁹ Robert Payne, Review of *The Road to Mecca* in *New York Times*, 15 August 1954.

¹⁰ Abdul Aziz Sibaii, *Road to Mecca: Mohammad Asad*

rather scholar of Talmud. Secondly, John says that Muhammad Assad was first to perceive Islam as a real descendant of Hebrews which he mentions in his book, “*Road to Mecca*”. Finally, he points out that Muhammad Asad not only throws light on westerns’ flaws and their problems but also examines ethical issues which Muslims are facing nowadays.¹¹

Modernism

Irving Howe (2015) says in his article “*The Culture of Modernism*” that modernist literature is difficult to read and understand because of its modernity. Modern writers select such subjects for the discussion in their writings which disturb audiences and readers. Writers use unfamiliar forms in their writing. Irving claims that modernist literature will never come to an end as modern society cannot come to an end. Gabriel Josipovici (2012) writes in “*Modernism still matters*” that modernism is neither a movement like feminism as people use to think nor is it any name of period as Classicism, Romanticism and Restoration. Modernism is a revolution in the literary field that is ambiguous. Irving claims that we cannot say that modernism starts in the 1880s and ends in the 1930s. There is no beginning and no end for it. It was a revolution which will remain always with us. It brought change in literature which can never be removed.

Graham Ley (2003) writes a paper on “*Theatrical Modernism: A Problematic*”. He takes the attention of his readers towards a very serious point. He says that we should give attention to theatrical modernism because it plays a significant role in modernism. Peter Barry (2002) gives details on ‘modernism’ with the comparison of ‘post-modernism’ in his book “*Beginning theory: an introduction to literary theory and culture*”. He says cubism, Dandyisms and futurism is part of modernism. For him, there is no difference between modernism and postmodernism but just the difference of attitude and mood.

Terry Barrett (1997) focuses in his paper “*Modernism and Postmodernism: An overview with arts examples*” on modernity and post modernity. According to him, modernism and postmodernism can be best understood with the help of modernity and post modernity. He asserts that modernism abounded all past rules and brings innovations in art and literature.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To highlight alienation and spiritual bankruptcy in westernization through modernist theory.
2. To discover most prominent modernist features in literary text.
3. To examine how writer elaborates his point of view and justifies it.

METHODOLOGY

This study applies a critical literary theory, Modernism, on a literary text. It examines most prominent characteristics of modern society like spiritual bankruptcy and alienation from the chosen literary text. For this purpose, Muhammad Assad’s novel “*The Road to Mecca*” is selected which is included in modern literature. This book is a fine illustration of modern Western people’s spiritual bankruptcy and alienation. The chosen book is an elaborate discussion on western people’s spiritual emptiness that has spread alienation in their lives.

¹¹ John Devera (2008), *Review of Assad’s Road to Mecca*

For this quantitative research, secondary resources like different journals, newspapers, books and articles are utilized to collect the data. This study will help the readers to get the deep understanding of this remarkable book. It will also provide them an example of application of critical literary theory of Modernism on a literary text.

RESULTS

Alienation and spiritual bankruptcy are the most important features of modernism which resulted from over commercialization and materialism. In the modern age, as Eliot says, each man fixed his eyes before his feet.¹² Every man is striving after worldly pursuits and discarded spiritual aspect of his life which has pushed man into the valley of alienation; from God, from nature from society from his own true self. Religion has been taken away from man's life and has been pushed into the background of the man's life which gave rise to spiritual bankruptcy.

These two elements are prevalent in the *Road to Mecca* by Muhammad Assad. His main argument in this book is that as modern man sowed the seeds of commercialization, so he will reap, as a result, alienation and spiritual bankruptcy. Modern society has allowed itself to be blown by the winds of materialism as Assad says

“The general atmosphere of social and moral insecurity has given rise to desperate hopelessness which expressed itself in daring experiment in music painting, and the theatre as well in groping, often revolutionary inquires the morphology of culture; but hand in hand with his forced optimism went a spiritual emptiness a vague, cynical relativism born out of increasing hopelessness with regard to future of mankind”.

It seems the term ‘forced optimism’ has been chosen by Assad intentionally. This hints that modern man has consciously trying to decorate their hollowness. However, they are actually wandering in the valley of despair. They believe that they have lost their internal peace and security. Confusion and restlessness is residing within themselves. They believe in worship of only one god, “the worship of material progress”. As Assad says

“[...] the temples of that faith were gigantic factories, cinemas, chemical laboratories, dance halls, hydroelectric works; and its priests were bankers, engineers, politicians, film stars, statisticians, captains of industry, record airmen, and commissars”

This unnecessary engrossment in gaining more and more money, wealth, power and prestige estranges a modern man even from his own true self and deprives him from spiritual satisfaction. Everybody is determined to destroy every obstacle which hinders their way to become materially prosperous as Asad says,

“[...] morality appeared to be confined to the practical utility alone”.

Material and worldly luxuries have become only criterion of being right or wrong. Ethical and spiritual frustration is pervasive in modern man. Modern men are just taught intellectual realization which can obviously not bring any change is spiritual aspect of human life.

¹² T.S Eliot, *The Waste Land*, Burial of the Dead, line no 65

Material advancement only cannot provide solution for emotional insecurity, ethical frustration, spiritual emptiness, psychological disorder, and mental frustration. As Assad says,

“None of us are really happy, only a few seemed to be consciously happy.”

The term consciously happy gives reflection of their internal hollowness. They have just decorated their faces with forced smiles which carry hidden sadness.

Modern man focused only on the demands of bodily needs and measured in material terms. They are absorbed in mundane and trivial things and left pursuing higher goals. As Eliot says, *“I have measured everything in coffee spoons”*. This preference only toward material progression has blemished the restfulness of man. They took body as alien from spirit but as Assad says,

“Men were indeed the integral unity of body and soul”

Their spiritual bankruptcy caused restlessness in their lives. And pushed them into the solitary walk of life where they are living into the “lonely crowd”. Modern man’s life, as Assad says, has become polyphonies,

“[...] polyphony is an aspect not only of music but of man’s feelings and desires”

Assad emphasized,

“that fustian nature which causes western man to dream much, to desire much, to strive after much with a will to conquer- but perhaps also to miss much, and miss it painfully [...] it lacks the restfulness of staying still.”

Only material aspect of human life is working in their society. It has deprived man from eternal bliss and emotional security. Even the wisdom has been confined to only worldly affairs. He brings to light their running after ‘vested interests’ and says,

“Who have only power, and guns, and money, and only knows how to lose friends whom they could so easily keep as friends.”

Assad delineates the illusionary world of modern man where he is consciously happy and (forced optimism) uneven. He has become internally hollow as Eliot says. Assad’s delineation of Sunday is the real description of western life. As Eliot calls London unreal city Assad describes it in the following words:

“I thought of our Sundays in Europe of silent city streets and closed shops; I remembered all those empty days and the oppression which the emptiness brought forth [...] Sunday is no longer a day of rest but has become an escape into unreal, a deceptive, forgetfulness behind which, doubly heavy and threatening, the ‘week day’ lurks”.

Exploring the causes of their remoteness from peacefulness, he says,

“Europe lack of integration and chaotic state of its ethics might be an outcome of its loss of contact with religious faith that had shaped western civilization”

The supporters of religion had said farewell to it by saying that religion has nothing to do with their practical affairs. They have made it a matter of attitude not of behavior. They don’t

categorically deny the existence of god but they don't have any longer space for god in their artificial life. This current adoration of vested interest no more than a mean, a shadowy substitute for an earlier faith in spiritual and religious values based on humanistic rights. They have lost their past glory and try to decorate this hollowness with artificial means; the deceptive one. They have lost their inner strength. They have surrounded by insoluble problem which they have caused by outward layers of material progress and artificial decoration.

“Man’s spiritual growth is inextricably bound up with other aspects of nature”

Assad accentuated their perception about religion as,

“It is a rather unholy mixture of fanaticism, gross, sensuality, superstition and dumb fatalism that prevents its adherent from participating in mankind’s advancement toward higher social form”.

Modern man is devoid of all spiritual drives and urges. He believes in practical endeavors. He thinks that life can be only prosperous by furthering the means by which physical comfort might be gained. Spiritual advancement has become distasteful and disagreeable to them. Their spirit has become barren and sterile. As Assad says,

“[...] to them, religion was a personal matter-a question of attitude rather than of behavior”

They thought about spirituality as something which is divorced from all, and opposed to physical aspects of human life. Assad draws very beautifully analogy between *dajjal* and scientific and technical advancement. He says the, the at modern world has become,

“[...] the world of the dajjal, the glittering, the deceptive one”.

He further says, *“Description of dajjal is befitting for scientific progress and modern illusionary and deceptive world”*. He relates the blindness of *dajjal* with one to the modern man’s spiritual eye that is lost. He only possesses commercial eye as T.S Eliot talks about “one eyed merchant” in his *Waste Land*.

Secondly, he compares *dajjal’s* ability to listen what is uttered in the last corner of world to the man’s ability to listen far behind his natural capacity. Thirdly, he compares *dajjal’s* ability to see with his one eye the things which are happening all around to the world to the modern men ability with the help of its mechanical marvels. Fourthly, with the help of mechanical wonders, modern man is able to cover limitless distance at an unperceivable velocity like *dajjal* will fly and cover indefinite distances. *Dajjal* will give and take lives from people and he will cause rain to fall and plant as scientific progress in different field is done. So, people have started worshiping scientific progress instead of taking it as means to achieve higher spiritual goals as it was predicted that people will worship *dajjal*.

He took *dajjal* prophecy in the light of scientific and mechanical progress which is so powerful and glittering that those whose faith is weak inclined to believe that it is godhead in its own right. They think it is itself befits to be worshipped.

“Religion is no more than soothing background music-allowed to company but not to influence real life. They have begun to spread instead the materialistic gospel of the ‘western way of life’; the belief that all human progress can be solved

in factories, laboratories and on desk of statisticians”

“[...] else and I found ourselves travelling in Berlin someday. It was an upper class compartment. My eye fell casually on a well-dressed man opposite me, apparently a well-to-do businessman, with a beautiful briefcase on his knees and a large diamond ring on his hand. I thought idly how well the portly figure of this man fitted into the picture of prosperity which one encountered everywhere in central Europe in those days: a prosperity the prominent as it had come after years of inflation, when all economic life had been topsy-turvy and shabbiness of appearance the rule. Most of the people were now well dressed and well fed, and the man opposite me was no exception. But when I looked at his face, I did not seem to be looking at happy face. He appeared to be worried: and not merely worried but acutely unhappy, with eyes staring vacantly ahead and the corners of his mouth, drawn in as if in pain- but not in bodily pain.”

Asad gave incredible (wonderful) description of the image of man, women and then collective view of sophisticated, complicated, mechanized, spiritual bankrupt and phantom ridden age of ours. He presents a person “who is well dressed, well to do businessman. Well fed”, having beautiful brief case on his knees wearing diamond ring on his hand. In spite of apparent glances of happy and luxurious life in him, “he was not just worried rather acutely unhappy”.

It seemed he was being haunted by some unknown fears and hollowness of their life. As Asad says:

“[...]behind their shining faces lurks the fear of unknown.”

Their shining and glimpsing faces have some hidden emptiness which deprived them from internal restfulness. Then, he diverts our attention to a lady who was also bearing strange and unhappy expressions on her face as if something pinching her and pursing her into the valley of alienation. Her smile was habitual. Their smiles were artificial and devoid of their true essence called happiness.

Asad further highlights that every face which is visible in compartment, belongs to well-dressed people without any exclusion. And an “expression of hidden suffering” could be travel easily in their bareness. It was a smile “which carries traces of torture and torment as if they were suffering torments of hell.”

CONCLUSIONS

As a result of applying modernism on *The Road to Mecca*, it can be safely said that modern man is suffering from alienation from God, nature, society and his own true self. As a result

of his excessive involvement in materialistic world and Mammon worship, he has become spiritually bankrupt. The only way to restore the peace in life is to bring balance between man's bodily and spiritually desires. Muhammad Assad emphasizes throughout his book that bodily desires should be fulfilled but in a limited, controlled, and disciplined way under the guidance of spiritual desires.

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