

**AUTHOR-FUNCTION IN OBJECTIFICATION OF FICTION: A
CRITIQUE OF THE CONTEMPORARY PAKISTANI
ANGLOPHONE NOVEL**



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Jain

Accession No. 7425284

Phd

820.995491

MAA

- Postcolonial literature - History and criticism
- Postcolonial literature - English
- Objectification of fiction - Anglophone
- Thesis.

**Author-Function in Objectification of Fiction: A Critique of the
Contemporary Pakistani Anglophone Novel**



A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy (in English) at the Department of English, Faculty of Languages and
Literature, International Islamic University Islamabad

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2022

Acceptance by the *Viva Voce* Committee

Title of the thesis: “Author-Function in Objectification of Fiction: A Critique of the Contemporary Pakistani Anglophone Novel”

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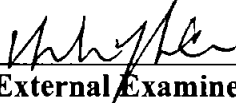
Registration No: 84-FLL/PHDENG/F14

Accepted by the department of English, Faculty of Languages & Literature, International Islamic University, Islamabad, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in English.

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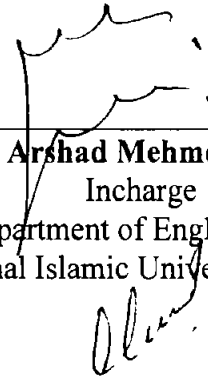
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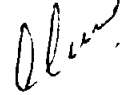
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August 30, 2022

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Declaration

I, Mahmood ul Hassan, Registration No. 84-FLENG/F14, a student of PhD (English) at the International Islamic University Islamabad do hereby declare that during the period of this study, I was not registered in any other degree program and that this thesis has not been submitted for the award of any other degree or purpose. The material produced in the thesis entitled “Author-Function in Objectification of Fiction: A Critique of the Contemporary Pakistani Anglophone Novel” has not been submitted wholly or in part for any other academic award or qualification and shall not be submitted by me in future for obtaining any degree from this or any other university/degree awarding institution. Besides, I also certify that this thesis is my original work based on my research except where otherwise acknowledged in the thesis.


(Mahmood ul Hassan)

Dedication

FOR MY PARENTS AND TEACHERS

without whose support and guidance this journey and everything (in my world) would
have not been possible.

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Acknowledgements

This research project would have not been accomplished had I not had the all-important support, guidance and prayers of the following people and numerous others whose names are not mentioned here: Prof. Ayaz Afsar (my scholarly professor in the Department of English) deserves my deepest regards and earnest gratitude for his critical insight and precious advice since the conception of the idea for the study to the completion of this research project. I have been fortunate to have received his in-depth feedback and invaluable commentary during our several talks that helped greatly not just in conceptualizing this study but also clarifying my several notions about literary studies. Dr. Muhammad Sheeraz (my learned supervisor for this study) encouraged me to pursue this study apart from providing his useful advice and support. I wish to thank him for always being accessible even during the difficult days of COVID-19 Pandemic, while letting me work in my own style. His timely feedback and productive criticism have helped improve my work, for which I am grateful to him. I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to Dr. Aroosa Kanwal, my colleague (in the Department of English and an erudite scholar of Pakistani anglophone fiction), for being kind enough to read my synopsis and provide invaluable feedback during the initial phase of my journey. She introduced me to Graham Huggan (whose influential work on postcolonial exotic is part my conceptual framework). My foreign evaluators (Prof. Claire Chambers and Prof. Cara Cilano) as well as external and internal examiners (Prof. Abdus Salam Khalis, Dr. Sibghatullah Khan and Dr. Saiyma Aslam) deserve my special gratitude for their invaluable feedback which has improved my work significantly, to say the least. I am also grateful to Dr. Hafiz Abid Masood, former Head Department of English, and Prof. Najiba Arif, Dean Faculty of Languages and Literature, for their support and

encouragement during my studies, and for recommending my Study Leave that helped me a great deal in concentrating on my research work. I would also like to thank Mr. Shaukat Ali, my dear friend, who has been helpful in defining my idea while it was in genesis. I feel deeply indebted to the generosity of my professors and colleagues in the Department of English and outside (including Ms. Moin Akhtar, Ms. Khadija Naz, Mr. Safeer Abbasi, Mr. Is'haq Bhatti, Mr. Nazir Khan, Mr. Shahid Rasheed, Dr. Sultan Mahmood, Mr. Fayyaz Haider, Dr. Akhtar Aziz, Dr. Arshad Mehmood Raja, Syed Rashid Mahmood, Dr. Saeed ur Rehman, Prof. Muhammad Safeer Awan, Dr. Ahsan ur Rahman, Prof. Munawar Iqbal Ahmed, Dr. Farrukh Nadeem, Mr. Abdul Haseeb Khan, Mr. Shujaat Hussain, and Mr. Rashid Saleem) for their support, guidance and affection—all the way through. Most of all, I would like to thank my eternally loving *ammi* and *Abbu* whose endless love, untiring support and unending prayers have been the driving force in my entire life. My amazing brothers (W/C Makhdoom Hussain, Dr. Mahtab Hussain, Muhammad Naseem, and A.R. Hashmi) deserve my very special thanks for their help, prayers, and encouragement during my university life and beyond. Last but in no way the least, I would like to thank my beloved wife, Dr. Alina Raza, whose love and companionship have made my life meaningful. Besides, my loving mother-in-law, father-in-law, and siblings-in-law have been consistent in supplying incredible support for which they deserve my heartfelt respect and earnest appreciation. In the end, I would like to thank my dear students at the Department of English (IIUI) for keeping my pursuit of learning alive.

Abstract

This study involves a “symptomatic reading” of the selected Pakistani anglophone novels while analysing “author-function” in (what I call) the objectification of fiction in view of the present-day socio-cultural and political determinants. The study contextualises the unprecedented rise and marketing of the contemporary Pakistani anglophone novel in the last two decades or so. The primary texts for this study include Kamila Shamsie’s *Burnt Shadows* (2009), and *Home Fire* (2017), Mohsin Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), and *Exit West* (2017), H. M. Naqvi’s *Home Boy* (2009), Nadeem Aslam’s *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004), and *The Golden Legend* (2017). The selected texts (seven in total) by four of Pakistan’s (arguably) most acclaimed novelists in English are analysed within the conceptual framework drawn from Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Graham Huggan and Aijaz Ahmad. The study aimed at exploring how the implied/ideological figure functions in situating the textual discourse within the socio-cultural and political praxis and in what ways in so doing the textual narratives get determined. Hence, this study offers textual analyses of the selected novels. It situates the unprecedented boom of the contemporary Pakistani anglophone novel in the prevalent socio-cultural and political contexts as well as the dominant/popular discourses at play insofar as the objectification of fiction is concerned. While tracing the promotion of a trend of politicised fiction writing, the study goes beyond the often-quoted issues of (mis)representation, diasporic identities and cultural alienation to offer an analysis of how the implied author/ideological figure of the selected fiction becomes a socio-political agency in appropriating, creating and limiting textual discourses.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study of “author-function” in the objectification of fiction offers a critique of the selected contemporary Pakistani anglophone novels through an in-depth analysis of the implied authors of the selected texts by employing “symptomatic reading”. The basic premise of the study is drawn from Foucault’s “Author-function”—that problematises author as an ideological figure/discourse maker—rather than a creative genius. I have looked at how the implied author of the selected texts situates the fictional plots, manipulates narrative and exploits characters under the influence of the popular/dominant discourses (driven by the socio-cultural and political contexts of the time). The study, thus, analyses how the implied author operates within the text(s) in appropriating the fictional narratives in their constellation of the prevalent global political events/happenings. It involves analysing the dramatization and overdetermination of the popular political issues, objectification of socio-political, religio-cultural and gendered identity politics as well as appropriation of the popular/dominant discourses (in the context of post-9/11) on the part of the implied authors of my writers in their selected novels (i.e., Shamsie’s *Burnt Shadows*, and *Home Fire*; Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, and *Exit West*, Naqvi’s *Home Boy* and Aslam’s *Maps for Lost Lovers*, and *The Golden Legend*). I consider it important to make certain distinction and clarify some of the concepts I have used/employed in my study of . My idea of the ‘objectification of fiction’ refers to the conditioning of fictional narratives as well as the overdetermination of textual discourse in view of various socio-cultural, political and/or other determinants/agencies while treating the author as an ideological figure and/or a

discourse maker. Thus, the idea of ‘Author-function in objectification of fiction’ governs as the basic premise for this study while the “author-function” relates to how the ‘implied author’ operates within the text at narrative as well as discursive level as an ideological figure. In that sense, my study does not focus the author’s imputation of intent on the novelists’ part for I analyse the author as a function. Therefore, I take author as more of an ideological figure and/or a discourse maker rather than the actual fiction writer—as they operate within the narrative in generation of textual discourse(s) as well as in its management and limitation. Thus, this study concentrates on analysing how the implied author appropriates the grand political narratives of the time as well as the dominant/popular discourses around those; which, I contend, results in not just conditioning of narratives in the given political context(s) but also in objectifying fiction as a form of art. Moreover, I analyse the implied author/ideological figure as it functions within the text, but not without (in the paratexts). Hence, even when I use the phrase ‘authorial agency’ I, in fact, mean the same (i.e., implied author) henceforth. The same goes for the ‘author’ or ‘writer’. That is, after I have defined the term ‘implied author’, I have used it in the same sense (of implied author) even if I use ‘writer’ or (for that matter) a proper name for my selected authors. In this regard, I consider it important to clarify that one of the major differences between my authors and the classic realist novelists (of the 20th Century) has to do with the dual-identity (diasporic positions) of my authors. The classic realist novelist did not have such hybrid identities, but that does not mean they didn’t have an ideological role. Their implied authors did engage in propagation of Eurocentric values and culture as has been unveiled by Said and others. In addition, the ideological role of my author is often determined by the (publishing) market and their habitus. Thus, they must be dislocated from that role (that is actually determined by

the market) and analysed as discursive devices/tools of propagation. Thus, I think that the implied authors of my authors should not be treated the same way as the traditional/classic realist novelists. They are often hailed as so-called postcolonial writers but at the same time their role (as native-informants) has been questioned. Besides, their role is often determined by the (publishing) market and the “institutional system”/habitus. That is why I consider it important to first dislocate them from their position (of power) as celebrated creative genius/ intellectuals/ celebrities of the Third World/ Muslim World first/ cosmopolitan culture/ liberal values etc and analyse their role (“author-function”) as ideological figures/discourse makers, as defined by Foucault.

The research is mainly grounded in Foucault’s idea of “author-function”—that recounts the narratological as well as cultural determinants of the production, reception, and valorisation of fictional (or non-fictional) work of an author. The idea of “author-function” in the objectification of fiction, insofar as this study is concerned, relates to a number of ways of manipulation of narrative, exploitation of characters, situationalisation of the plot and locale and even personalisation of narrative-discourses. It is, therefore, important to underline that the idea of “author-function” (as I define it) problematises the role of an author as it considers them a discourse-maker rather than a creator of a narrative (or a writer). Hence, the research aims at undertaking an in-depth textual study involving mainly close-textual analyses of the selected novels by four contemporary Pakistani novelists while also relying on the contextual niceties in relation to the selected fiction. The study coalesces Foucault’s “author-function”, Bourdieu’s “cultural production”, Huggan’s “postcolonial exotic”, and Ahmad’s “politics of culture” into an analytical/conceptual framework to help explore the rapid expansion of the anglophone fiction in the

historical, cultural, and political contexts of late. The study has drawn from the critical theories of deconstruction and neo-historicism (or cultural materialism) insofar as identifying the relevant theoretical area and conceptualising the framework for this study are concerned. As the study relates to the formations of the texts within the global socio-political and religio-cultural contexts while analysing the authorial agency and discursive implications of the literary production (fiction), the theoretical foundation for the textual analyses of the selected novels has been crucial in identifying and exploring as well as problematising the textual construction. Since the study is essentially textual, the close textual reading remains predominant mode of inquiry while employing the “symptomatic reading”, that offers a thorough descriptive discursive analysis of the selected texts. The study consists of five chapters (excluding conclusion), while it aims at understanding the recent boom of Pakistani anglophone novels in the context of the influence of global politics and corporate culture in defining not just the subject matter but also shaping a tradition/trend of (what I call) the politicised fictional writings; which marks the transformation of authors as products of the (publishing) market and global politics.

1.1 Background of the Study (Contextualisation of the Rise of the Contemporary Pakistani Anglophone Fiction)

Pakistani anglophone fiction has seen an unprecedented expansion in the last two decades or so. As a result, it has drawn attention of the literary critics and academia in South Asia and beyond mainly (I contend) because of its global political currency and socio-cultural relevance. This boom can be better understood in the context of the emergence of a global market of the so-called postcolonial or Commonwealth writings but at the same time it is crucial to understand the role of the global political events over the years that have been mainly responsible in marketing the Pakistani anglophone literature, particularly fiction, because of the growing interest about Islam

and Pakistan mostly in the West. These developments seem to have influenced the promotion of a particular tradition of political fiction, conceivably, in line with the popular discourses, the trend of thought, demand of the so-called global postcolonial market, cosmopolitan society and publishing industry. Hence, we have seen a trend of politicised fiction writing getting promoted with conventional/formulaic plots and appropriation of grand-narrative (e.g., “war on terror”, Islam-West cultural and political divide etc.).

In the last ten years or so several studies have been published that provide useful insight into the contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction from a number of perspectives such as the issues of representation, cultural alienation, identity politics, post-9/11 “war on terror”, gender and religious discrimination, Islamophobia, and so on. I have provided a detailed review of those in the literature review (in Chapter 2). This research departs from the previous studies in the sense that it shifts the discussion away from the endemic issues such as diasporic identity crisis, (mis)representation, cultural identity politics, inter alia, to how the implied author operates within the text in appropriating broader popular political, social and ideological discourses. In that sense, the study examines the ways of the objectification of fictional narrative by analysing how the implied author(s) extend(s) the anthropological scope of their fiction and gain(s) political relevance. It helps tracing (what I call) the trend of manufacturing politicised fictional writings as determined by the socio-political praxes and publishing market; which, it is assumed has been in currency especially for the last two decades or so.

The study explores whether and to what extent the implied authors of the selected Pakistani anglophone writers are conditioned by the larger socio-cultural and political praxis; what impact have the trend of thought had in appropriating the

popular/dominant discourses and, thus, meeting the demands of the publishing market and how that results into the objectification of their fiction. I have linked the authors' function to the larger "institutional system" and/or external agency in understanding how contemporary Pakistani anglophone authors are formed, in what way they operate, and how their fiction gets objectified as a result. Hence, the study deals with the question of socio-cultural and political conditioning of the authors while analysing the authorial agency within the texts. Thus, author is taken as a subject or an instrument in the formation and objectification of fiction in relation to the contemporary Pakistani English fiction (that includes the selected novels by Shamsie, Hamid, Naqvi and Aslam). Hence, from the author or the function of the author I mean the ideological figure and/or political agent/ that acts as a subject of writing. I take the objectification of fiction in the sense of predetermining the fictional plots, twisting the narratives and situating the stories in the socio-cultural and political conditions, locally as well as globally. It also refers to appropriating the popular socio-political and religio-gendered issues and thus co-opting the dominant discourses under the influence of (publishing) market and trend of thought on the part of the implied authors of the selected writers.

As this study explores how the implied authors of the selected Pakistani English novelists politicise the fictional narrative and determine the textual discourses, the author is analysed as a function in the objectification of fiction. Hence, author's ideological figure gains tremendous importance in the production and determination of textual discourse as well as the formation of the textual world. It is considered particularly important to study the role of the author in the context of so-called postcolonial society like Pakistan, where writing in English language can itself be considered a discursive practice. My study, therefore, seeks to explore how the

“author-function” works in generating and limiting the textual discourse in relation to the selected contemporary anglophonic Pakistani novels. For that purpose, I have relied heavily on the close reading of the texts by employing “symptomatic reading” as I consider it is quite useful to analyse how the authors’ ideological figures operate in creating and limiting textual discourses (that I have explained in detail later). I have analysed the selected novels as socio-political and cultural products by employing Slavoj Žižek’s “symptomatic reading”, that explores the latent (suppressed) meanings of the text in order to understand the underlying agendas and discourse making on the part of an author. The study seeks to unravel links between various elements of political and social discourse generation and propagation as well as the fictional objectification while adopting Foucault’s “author-function” as the basic premise and drawing from Bourdieu’s literature as “cultural product” and Huggan’s “postcolonial exotic”. In addition, I have explored how the so-called self-/re-Orientalist agendas get engendered in the textual discourse by the implied author. Thus, it is essentially a study of authorship as it operates within the fictional texts (novels) so I have not made use of the authors’ interviews, essays, critical works, and book reviews etc. except a few passing references given the conceptual framework and scope of my study. The contextual debate is provided in order to explore how the implied author functions in terms of appropriating the popular political discourse as well as the corporate culture. Thus, the contextual study (which is essentially based on the textual analyses of the selected novels and related texts) takes into account the larger political context and trend of thought or tradition of fiction writing in English particularly in the context of Pakistan in the last twenty years. It has focussed on various determinants of the fictional objectification that are often dictated by the global political, religious, and gender-related issues as the study manifests. Hence, the contextual discussion has

entailed the debates regarding the “institutional system”, role of authorial and other agencies, prevalent literary trends, publishers’ interest, or influences of the publishing market and so on. This study, thus, seeks to provide answers to the questions that relate to the function of author as a tool of socio-political neoliberal propagation in relation to the contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction, particularly novel, that has created a substantial publishing and reading market over the last twenty years or so. Therefore, the study offers a departure from the analyses of the expressive value of Pakistani anglophone literature to a neoliberal, political and ideological one while using Foucault’s problematisation of the function of author as an instrument in the propagation and perpetuation of the dominant/popular (socio-cultural and political) discourses and prevalent narratives.

I think it important to elucidate at the onset that this study is not about whether or not the selected authors such as Aslam, Hamid, Shamsie, Naqvi, and others give a factual/accurate portrayal of Pakistani society or whether their representations are biased or otherwise. Therefore, it is not a study of the often-quoted issues of representation or cultural alienation of Pakistani characters in the West amid the post-9/11 political atmosphere. This study, instead, seeks to offer an alternative perspective to rethink and/or problematise the questions of authorial agency that operates within the selected texts and the way the implied authors work to exploit their narratives, interlocutors/characters and actions in order to serve their political agendas. In that sense, it is a counter-discursive or counter-narrative critique of the textual discourse(s). This study has also demonstrated how popular issues, themes, and subject matters are selected and used for propagation of popular/dominant political discourses, within the texts, which otherwise may seem quite innocent. Moreover, the study provides an analysis of in what ways and why the selected narratives get

conditioned so as to appropriate the contemporary anthropological issues and global conflicts and how that relates to the propagation of popular/dominant political discourses. In this regard, it is also important to examine how the fictional writings get politicised consequently as they become predominantly issue/theme-centric rather than character-oriented or idea-driven—which subsequently results into what I call the objectification of fiction. Thus, my concept of fictional objectification refers to the conditioning of narratives, dramatization of socio-political events, exploitation of characters as well as the selection/situationalisation of conflict zones/locales on the part of the selected implied authors in appropriating as well as engendering dominant/popular socio-cultural and political discourses.

1.2 Theorisation of Author and Conceptualisation of Theoretical Framework

The theoretical (conceptual) framework for my study has been worked out from the four writers/theorists (Foucault, Bourdieu, Huggan and Ahmad). Jacques Derrida is not part of my conceptual framework, yet I feel the need to discuss him as a theorist because Roland Barthes and Foucault basically respond to Derrida's idea of decentring (of author as transcendental signifier) in their subsequent writings. Same is true of Barthes as Foucault responds to Barthes' *The Death of The Author* in his *What is an Author?* This section provides a discussion involving my theorisation of author in view of Foucault's concept of "author-function" and Wayne C. Booth's idea of "implied author" as well as the conceptualisation of the theoretical framework (which is essentially a conceptual framework). Although the concept of author has frequently been reimagined over time, the role of author and authorial agency have remained important insofar as the study and interpretation of literature/fiction is concerned. Following the development of new analytical approaches to textual interpretations (particularly in the latter half of the twentieth century mainly owing to the literary

theoretical works of French poststructuralists such as Derrida and Barthes) author and authorship have gained renewed importance albeit challenging the quintessential position of author bestowed by the traditional criticism/liberal humanism (that would mainly concentrate on the role of the person of the author while drawing meanings from the biographical and historical contexts/details). Derrida's influential study of language and text laid the foundation of literary debates regarding authorship which also led to the idea of deconstruction (as it proposes a new method of literary analysis that disregards the authorial voice). However, Barthes' essay, *The Death of the Author*, is often considered a crucial (literary) theoretical occurrence insofar as the authorial agency is concerned. Barthes' concept of "Death of the Author" does not just upset the idea of authorial primacy but also proposes to redefine the relationship between text and world, intrinsically. In that sense, Barthes is amongst the earliest critics in the modern times to have studied authorship in relation to the function of discourse. He has not only questioned the role of the author in determining the authenticity of the original meanings of a (literary) text but has also been responsible in upsetting the traditional ways of literary and textual analyses. That is why while emphasizing that the role of the author has been overtaken by the reader, he says that a text is a multiplicity of voices none of which can be related to the person of the author (Barthes 142). However, Foucault's idea of the "author-function" brings new dimensions to the study of the role of the author or the "author-function". Although Foucault, in a way, seems to respond to the earlier notions about author and authority particularly Derrida's and Barthes' ideas in this regard, his understanding of author and approach to study authorship remain quite different from that of his contemporaries. That is why Foucault neither outrightly rejects nor ratifies Derrida's theorisation of the grammatology of text or Barthes' declaration of the death of the

author as he problematises the very nature of author and scope of authorship—which has been influential in my study of the “author-function” in relation to the contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction. While Barthes seems to be more concerned with the narrative structure of a text; that is why he tends to challenge the idea of the primacy of the authorial agency as he explains his idea of the multiplicity of narrative voices in midst of which the authorial voice gets lost, Foucault goes beyond the narrative voices to analyse what he calls “author-function” where author is taken as more of a discourse maker.

The “author-function” as defined by Foucault does not only concern the author or the textual voice(s), but more importantly it takes into account the entire process from the production of a text to its consumption (Foucault; *What is an Author?* 116). Bourdieu studies literature in the context of cultural and social production. He emphasizes that the role of the author has to be studied in the cultural context rather than treating art/text as a piece of genius that is essentially ineffable and asocial. He views that art is what is considered art in a given context and what counts art is often a social construct (Bourdieu 31-32, 37). In this regard, Huggan, Sarah Brouillette and Om Prakash Dwivedi and Lisa Lau have analysed how the so-called postcolonial literature gets determined under the influence of neoliberal (publishing) market. Besides, Said’s study of colonial texts, Žižek’s analysis of ideology in relation to the Western cultural texts (especially film), and Aijaz Ahmad’s idea of the cultural fetish have been influential in my choice of this counter-discursive study of the contemporary Pakistani anglophone novel. Thus, the study attempts to go beyond the prevalent debates regarding the study of the expressive value of fictional works in English to provide a “symptomatic reading” of the selected novels by four of the most important Pakistani fiction writers in English. For that purpose, it entails the study of

the author as an ideological figure and fiction as a socio-cultural production by offering a counter-discursive and/or critical-textual study; that rallies on textual as well as contextual analyses. The textual analysis involves the “symptomatic reading” of the texts while the contextual discussion includes tracing the trend of novel writing in English in the context of Pakistan (particularly in the last two decades or so). However, the focus has remained on the textual analyses based on the close-reading of the selected texts while exploring the authorial agency and “author-function” in the play of the political over-determination and the identity and religious politics within the texts. But, at the same time, it explores the way a trend of writing fiction gets promoted and direction of literary studies determined in the context of the global politics that surrounds South Asia/Pakistan in the context of the recent global political happenings including the Afghan conflict and the “war on terror”. I have divided the chapters in terms of important aspects, tropes, themes, etc. to include various dimensions of objectification that include cultural, situational, historical, political, and religious. I hope this proves to be a useful addition in the body of critical writings on Pakistani anglophone literature—which, I must admit, is indebted to a number of critical works and contributions on Pakistani anglophone fiction—as they have provided useful insights for this study. In this regard, the selected works by Cara Cilano, Claire Chambers, Madeline Clements and Aroosa Kanwal have been helpful; both in contextualising my study as well as identifying the all-important critical gap, which has been discussed in detail in the second chapter.

Foucault’s philosophic question of what author is fundamentally redefines the relationship of author and texts as well as the nature of authorship in relation to various texts of different types such as philosophical treatise, art pieces, music records, film texts, architecture, and so forth. However, since my focus has remained

on literary texts (i.e., novels), I have borrowed Foucault's idea of "author-function" to provide basic premise for this study in order to problematise the role of author in relation to the contemporary Pakistani anglophone novel. I consider it important, at the outset, to explain important terms, which in some cases have adopted and/or adapted for this study. I have also provided further clarification of my terms where I feel necessary. The term 'author' is not being taken here as the originator or creator of a text (i.e., writer), but rather as a discourse-maker (and in some cases a founder of a trend or a tradition); while 'authorship' denotes a quality or a state or the process of being an author, whereas 'authority' refers to the power of author especially in creating, manipulating, and thus perpetuating (political) discourse(s). It is necessary to clarify my concept of implied author in view of the traditional concept of author for I take author in the Foucauldian sense of "author-function"—which is quite different from the traditional idea of writer (of a novel). Thus, from 'author' I mean the implied author or the ideological figure that works at a higher plane and conditions the narrative, exploits the characters and plays with popular narratives and dominant discourses in order to politicise fictional discourse in a way to appropriate fiction to the larger socio-political contexts, while the idea of 'writer' often refers to the actual person who has written a novel (e.g., Kamila Shamsie).

Foucault believes that author performs a certain discursive function as an ideological product. This has been a departure from the prevalent approaches and traditional conception of the author being the origin of meaning. Hence, it challenges the idea of the centrality of the author to give authentic meaning to a text based on his/her biographical details, as well as the Barthesian idea of 'the death of the author' that dismisses any role of the author in textual interpretation. The "author-function" is, therefore, determined by various modes such as: existence, circulation, and

function of a discourse in a society. Foucault takes the author not as the figure that gives authenticity of textual meaning but in fact the ideological figure that functions in the objectification of the narratives within the text and creation of discourse without (in the so-called “institutional system”). Foucault suspects the idea of the primordial status of writing as put forth by Derrida saying that “the name of the author remains at the contours of the text” (123). He says that there is a need to study not just the “expressive value and transformation of discourse but also its needs of existence (and) modes of modifications (as well as) the modes of (cultural) variations, valorisation, attribution and appropriation” (137). Moreover, Foucault believes that “the subject (author) and (its substitutes) must be stripped of its creative role and analysed as a complex and variable function of discourse” (138). That is where the distrust about the role of author as an ideological figure arises, that I undertake to analyse “author-function” in relation to the contemporary Pakistani anglophone novel in this study.

Bourdieu’s idea of the way cultural production and reproduction including arts and literature become institutionalised in a given society has been crucial in developing the analytical framework for the present study. Bourdieu thinks that in order to understand a literary work as a production it is important to take into account the conditions in which it is produced as well as the process of its reception and the way it relates to what he calls the broader field of power and class. He goes beyond the formalist and internalist interpretations of arts that emphasize on authors’ genius and/or creative talent and sees arts as social production whose value is determined by its appropriation of power structures. Thus, Bourdieu’s idea of literature as “cultural product” is more about understanding the production and valorisation of literature in the social and cultural field (32, 37). He also explains how certain trends and even some authors go on to objectify and appropriate the “habitus”. Bourdieu’s theorisation

of the “cultural production” and his concept of “habitus” have been crucial in my understanding the recent proliferation of Pakistani anglophone fiction in today’s context as well as in conceptualising this study.

Huggan explores how the exoticist discourses—that have provided the postcolonial studies the context and justification—are not different from what colonialism has been about in the past, and how they are being used in marketing and domesticising postcolonial literature for the global audience. Huggan’s idea of the “postcolonial exotic” refers to the global commodification of the cultural difference, which has helped promote the so-called postcolonial writings. It, he thinks, has been made possible mainly because of the extension of global market of publishing industry (1-4). He has discussed the material conditions of production, circulation, and consumption of the postcolonial writings as well as the politics and economics of publishing and their influences—which has provided the basis of my chapter on the commodification of the Pakistani anglophone fiction. I have used Huggan’s “postcolonial exotic” to analyse Pakistani anglophone authors’ fascination of playing with the postcolonial debate by situating their writings in the context of socio-cultural and political divide.

Ahmad’s “politics of culture” (along with Huggan’s “postcolonial exotic”) has also informed my conceptual framework as his study of the Third World novel is quite helpful to understand how fiction gets appropriated by the cultural cliché and vice versa (i.e., how cultural politics determines fictional narratives) apart from understanding pervasive role the neoliberal market economy (*Politics of Culture* 66-68). Ahmad believes that the idea of assembling and professionalising the Third World literatures by employing the authors of the Third World origin should be linked to the project of assimilation under “specific kinds of pressures by appropriating

particular kinds of texts, and by devising a new set of categories within the larger conceptual category of Literature as such” (Ahmad, *In Theory* 43). Ahmad further explains how certain pressures such as “literary, cultural, political...as well as the general ideological conjuncture which impels them—and, through them, us—first speak of a unitary category of Third World Literature and then reproduce that very ideology, on an extended scale, in all we think and say about that category” (Ahmad, *In Theory* 43). Thus, Ahmad thinks that there is a need to demystify the category of Third World literatures as he stresses that this so-called postcolonial literature does not counter the so-called Western canon as he believes that it is in many ways a part or an extension of that (45). Therefore, I believe that Bourdieu’s study of the anthropology of the literary (and cultural) production and Ahmad’s explanation of the appropriation and assimilation of the Third World aesthetics have been helpful in my study of the implied author of Shamsie’s texts.

I have employed Booth’s idea of “the implied author” to define what I mean by ‘author’/‘implied author’. Though it is related to Foucault’s “author-function” (in the sense of ‘ideological figure’/‘discourse maker’), yet it is discrete, as I have explained. Booth believes that “the author's individuality” is different from the implied author in the sense that “he creates not simply an ideal, impersonal "man in general" but an implied version of "himself"” (71-72). Booth takes the implied author as the author’s “second self” that influences because, he says, “[h]owever impersonal he may try to be, his reader will inevitably construct a picture of the official scribe who writes in this manner—and of course that official scribe will never be neutral toward all values” (72). While drawing on Booth’s idea of implied author and Foucault’s concept of “author-function”, I take author as more of an agency at play in the entire process of narrative building. Therefore, when I talk of the implied author, I

do not refer to the writers (such as Aslam, Hamid, Shamsie or Naqvi); hence I do not accuse them, rather I am interested in the 'implied author' which (in the context of this study) refers to the ideological figure that operates on the level of narrative construction.

The "symptomatic reading" mainly drawn from Louis Althusser and Žižek has been used as a method of textual analysis to examine how the implied authors of the selected texts play with the narrative in creating and manipulating the textual discourse rather than simply analysing the manifest meanings. Althusser uses "symptomatic reading" in his *Reading Capital* in order to revisit Marxist thoughts. He explains how his reading is symptomatic (or *symptomale*) "insofar as it divulges the undivulged event in the text it reads, and in the same movement relates it to a different text, present as a necessary absence in the first" (Althusser 8). Thus, Althusser is more interested in finding the gaps/rupture/openings in what he calls the first text (his reading of Marx being the second). He says that "what distinguishes this new reading from the old one [traditional/ conventional/ dialectical] is the fact that in the new one the second text is articulated with the lapses in the first text" (8). That is exactly what Althusser does by reading Marx as he brings latent meanings to the fore and "make[s] them visible" by what he calls "production of the deepest-lying problematic which will allow us to see what could otherwise only have existed allusively or practically" (32). seems more inclined to Lacanian "Real" rather than the "Other" unconscious hidden in encoded symbols (language), as he believes that given the cynicism of what he calls the "post-ideological world" Althusser's "symptomatic reading" may not be enough as we "can no longer subject the ideological text to 'symptomatic reading', confronting it with its blank spots, with what it must repress to organize itself, to preserve its consistency" (26-27). Thus, the idea of "symptomatic reading" (as

theorised by Žižek) refers to analysing a text in a way to bring to the fore the latent meanings (of course) by looking at the symptoms (traces) of what gets left in the text but the relating it to “fantasy” (of the author) in regard to the real world (i.e., not imaginary). Hence, Žižek develops on Althusser’s idea of “symptomatic reading” by bringing Lacanian psychoanalysis and the synthesis gives birth to his idea of the “ideological fantasy” of the author. However, Žižek agrees with Althusser insofar as how the author employs the manifest as well as the latent in textual construction and that the latent is often repressed is the internalities of the text (Buckland). Although Žižek’s “symptomatic reading” seems more helpful in my study of “author-function” in the objectification of fiction in relation to Pakistani anglophone novel (as it aids in not just exploring the ideological/latent meanings of texts but also in relating them to the “Real” (grand-narratives of the time, political and others), I have benefited from both the theorists. Hence, the author’s fantasy (in Žižek’s terms) as well as text’s unconscious (in Althusserian sense) have been coalesced into “symptomatic reading” as my method of textual analysis, but I often refer as Žižek’s because I think his idea of “ideological fantasy” is more relevant to my study of fictional objectification.

In his study of “the colonial texts” Said has used “contrapuntal reading” to uncover the ideological interstices. He views that literature (and, for that matter, the author) is not innocent or apolitical. He rather believes that authors are reticent ideological figures because of being the product of their cultural milieu (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* 66). He also defines the job of a critic while saying that to study the “locale [of the texts] presumably without worldliness or circumstantiality” is to reduce the domain of critic (Said, *The Text, the World, the Critic* 4). Said’s technique of “contrapuntal reading” while coalescing it with Žižek’s “symptomatic reading” has informed and benefited my close readings of the selected texts in order to unveil the

intricacies of how the author operates a function or an instrument within the text. While explaining his concept of “contrapuntal reading” and the intricate relationship of the author and readers with their texts, Said points that every text has its peculiar prodigy “with its own overlapping experiences and interdependent histories of conflict” (*Culture and Imperialism* 66-67). He believes that “no reading should try to generalize so much as to efface the identity of a particular text, author, or movement. By the same token it should allow that what was, or appeared to be, certain for a given work or author may have become subject to disputation” (Said 67). Thus, “contrapuntal reading” offers “to emphasize and highlight the disjunctions” (146) within the text(s) while also unveiling the politics they subsume (111). Said’s “contrapuntal reading” has been helpful in exploring the reticent meanings of the selected text(s) which would otherwise be lost in its/their innocence.

Young notes that “symptomatic reading” in fact seeks to explore the implied question within the text as it “involves not interpretation but the production of new knowledge from a reading that identifies an invisible gap in the text” (40). The use of “symptomatic” and “contrapuntal reading” as a textual analysis method aims at identifying or unveiling the culture of social/cultural production that include literature, film, and other art forms. It contends that the social productions (including the literary texts in the context of this study) provide an evidence about the society that produced those but also the cultural conditions that contribute to the production of those texts. Thus, the idea of “symptomatic reading” (borrowed from Žižek) helps to analyse the selected texts seeks to expose the author’s function as a producer/manager of discourse(s) within the text. When read from the symptomatically as well as contrapuntally the text (that otherwise remains innocent) tends to become a discursive device/a tool of propagation—as it aims to explore what is often kept hidden in the

text—and thus, to contextualize it in the larger scheme of the narrative built by the author. According to Žižek whether one takes Marxist approach or Lacanian perspective, “symptomatic reading” helps in identifying the underlying ideologies of the text as well as the society that produced it. Žižek, like Bourdieu, seems more interested in the society and culture of social production than the individual author; that is why they have used the terms “social production” and “cultural texts” respectively. The basic idea is that the individual author may not matter much because text is taken as social and cultural production. That is what this study bears for the readers as it aims at analysing the selected Pakistani anglophone fiction from the perspective of the idea of objectification of fiction as cultural and social production as well as studying the author as being the product of politics and market and an ideological figure. Žižek believes that “symptomatic reading” of almost everything is possible and that it can help understand the cultural politics better; that is why symptom becomes an important perspective in the cultural studies as well (Žižek 77). Tim Dean, however, believes that Žižek’s symptomology involves a position or critical approach of a hermeneut “that regards the universe as perpetually in need of interpretation” because of a relationship with the world that is based on distrust (23). Moreover, he thinks that “[t]he problem lies in the way that treating aesthetic artefacts as cultural symptoms elides the specificity of art” (23) and that most of examples come from the popular culture which might be true, because I think what Žižek is pointing out does not seem to intend to undermine the aesthetics of arts rather it helps to better understand the role of ideology and politics in the formation, promotion and circulation of cultural productions including arts and fiction; that is why he emphasizes that the form of art is itself important to understand the underlying ideologies of the texts and that artefacts are as much cultural and ideological as

aesthetic—which, I think, also explains the political and commercial agendas behind the mass production and promotion of fiction and film in recent times.

1.3 Methodological Framework and Delimitation of the Study

This research is fundamentally based on the textual analyses of the selected texts while employing Žižek’s “symptomatic reading” in tandem with Said’s “contrapuntal reading”. I use “symptomatic reading” because it helps develop on the clues/traces left out in the narrative/text to make possibility of the interstices/gaps/ruptures that help to analyse the ideological function of the implied author(s) as they function in the management and appropriation of the textual discourse. It is meant to analyse the selected novels closely in order to understand the working of the “author-function” or ideological figure of the author within the formation of textual world as well as in determination of textual discourse as I theorise my idea of the fictional objectification. Hence, my symptomatic (close) reading unveils the implied authors of my selected texts have created and appropriated popular socio-cultural and political discourses in their narratives. It does not look for the obvious/surface meanings but rather analyses the intended/implied significances on the part of author by looking at the formation of discourse through the latent but in relation to manifest. It involves unveiling the underlying textual constructs/latent meanings and exploring how the implied author operates within the text. I have analysed the selected texts through the close textual readings while looking at how the selected authors condition their fictional narratives and manipulates textual discourses in view of the charged socio-cultural and political context and how in so doing ideology gets incorporated into the inner layers of the texts. As the study mainly involves the textual analyses of the selected anglophone fiction (i.e., novels) published during 2004-2017, it is essentially based on the close reading of the selected texts. It, however, also entails the contextual debates to

provide a detailed understanding of the working of author within the text but in relation to the socio-cultural and political discourses it alludes to. For textual analyses, close textual reading of the novels has employed symptomatic technique of close reading that helps explore and unveil the authorial agency and the “author-function” in (what I call) the objectification of fictional narrative within the popular/dominant discourses built around the global political issues and socio-cultural conflicts.

The primary texts (i.e., the novels published between 2004 and 2017) for this study include Shamsie’s *Burnt Shadows* (2009) and *Home Fire* (2017), Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) and *Exit West* (2017), Naqvi’s *Home Boy* (2009), Aslam’s *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004) and *The Golden Legend* (2017). The choice of the authors and their texts has mainly been determined by the conceptual framework I am using for this study as it relates to analysing the function of the implied authors not just in manipulation of textual discourse but also in as agents of discourse making. I contend that the selected authors (Shamsie, Hamid/Naqvi and Aslam) have performed the function of discourse makers at least in case of politicising Pakistani anglophone fiction for which they are often acclaimed. I contend that the implied authors of my selected writers are mainly responsible for popularising a trend of politicised fictional writings that go on to appropriate all sort of trendy issues (political, social, cultural, religious and gendered) in the context of South Asia/Pakistan and the world. The study has, thus, taken into account the development of the tradition of politicised fiction writing, particularly, in today’s socio-political context(s). While this study has helped expose the authors’ ideological figure insofar as the politicisation of fiction writing is concerned, I do not claim that it is representative or universal and that I condemn all contemporary Pakistani fiction writers for having been political agents. That is, because of the limited scope of this

research I could not include many other contemporary Pakistani authors such as Qaisra Shahraz, Bina Shah, Uzma Aslam Khan, Maha Khan Phillips, Ayad Akhtar, Daniyal Mueenuddin, Tehmina Durrani, Jamil Ahmad, Khalid Muhammad, Musharraf Ali Farooqi, Bilal Tanweer, Shehryar Fazli, Fatima Bhutto, among others, given the scope of this research project as a PhD thesis. Besides, I have considered the similar or shared cosmopolitan domain (habitus), that might have been determined by their so-called liberal ideals, globalist world views (globalism) and the world in which they live and write and operate as authors. I argue that the shared habitus of the selected authors contributes to condition them as authors and inflect their texts. Despite the fact that most of the selected authors happen to have lived in the Anglo-Saxon world, but they often situate their narratives within the Pakistani and diasporic-Pakistani contexts. Many of them are arguably among the most popular authors in literary circles in Pakistan and abroad (except Gohar, perhaps). Moreover, they are internationally acclaimed and have won numerous prestigious literary prizes and awards. Also, they seem to represent or respond to the global political issues, neoliberal values, and the multicultural world.

The textual analysis of the selected novels has mainly focussed on the aspects that relate to the subject-role or function of the author as an ideological figure in the objectification of the texts through various techniques such as plot construction, setting, characterisation, narrative and so on. It is pertinent to mention that "*There is no such thing as a single 'correct' interpretation of any text. There are large numbers of possible interpretations, some of which will be more likely than others in particular circumstances*" (McKee 141). The "symptomatic reading" helps discover the silences, absences, contradictions, and gaps as well as the repressed presences in the text. Through this, I have explored the authorial agency in view of my idea of the

objectification of fictional narratives. The authors' choice of dialogues, situations, events, and actions is, thus, quite important as, their choice determines what is deemed important by them and thus is brought into the limelight and what is considered unimportant is therefore kept hidden or ignored in the narrative. That is what "author-function" in one way relates to and that is how the authorial agency that works within the text can be better explored and understood. It is like a film director who decides as to what the viewers should see and what must remain hidden, and what comes into the limelight and what is made blurred in the backdrop of a shot. That is another site that this study seeks to explore in order to dig out the authorial agency in determination of the various aspects of the fictional construction such as subject matter, plot, characterization, events, setting, dialogues, actions and so on and thus understand the ideological and discursive implications of the conditioning of narrative and objectification of fiction. The study involves extensive textual analyses of the selected novels by employing "symptomatic" and/or "contrapuntal" reading. It explores and analyses how the implied author's function operates within the text in constructing plot, exploiting characters, and manipulating narrative(s). Thus, the categories, such as plot (construction of novel), setting (choice of cultural and geographical locations as well as temporal and spatial movements), characterization (development and primacy of characters), themes (recurrent themes, motifs and their significance in the context of this study), etc. have been identified in order to explore the way the "author-function" operates in the objectification of fiction as a form and to explore the trend of politicised novel writing in the context of Pakistan.

For contextual analysis, the textual analysis has provided the basis for the brief discussion that relates to the institutional mechanism (that I often refer to as "institutional system" or "habitus"). However, I feel it is important to clarify again

that this study is critical and interpretive in nature as it employs critical analysis as the main mode of inquiry. It is purely textual and is mainly based on my “symptomatic reading” of the selected texts. It does not discuss the authors as paratextual entities; hence, it does not engage seriously with the question of the production, proliferation, and promotion of the fictional narratives as well as the role of “institutional system” including literature festivals etc. in relation to the selected contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction and its development over the last two decades. That is, while it makes links with the trend of thought that goes back to the time of colonialism and its legacy of anglophone writings (that in a way has been responsible in promoting a particular type of politicised fictional writings insofar as the larger context/tradition of Third World literature is concerned), the study is more relevant to the South Asian literary context, particularly Pakistani fiction, and its development over the last twenty or so years. Though this study does not focus mainly on post-9/11 fiction (that has emerged as a separate category since the publication of John Updike’s *Terrorist* (2006)), it does engage with the question of the appropriation of post-9/11 socio-cultural and political debate in my selected novels in chapter 4. Therefore, I suggest that this study should be understood in the larger socio-cultural and political context(s) of the contemporary times. Likewise, the idea of self-re-Orientalism and politics and economics of publishing (market) in relation to the emergence of South Asian/Pakistani anglophone literature have been discussed briefly in relation to my authors’ fascination with getting marketed as political fiction writers. Some of these can be a good question for future research, though. Thus, my study of the “author-function” in the objectification of fiction has offered an exploration of the ideological/discursive role of the implied authors of my selected texts insofar as the determination of narratives, construction of discourses and formation of anglophone

literary trends/traditions are concerned—that I contend go on to objectify the fiction as a genre.

1.4 Thesis Statement

This study of “author-function” in the objectification of fiction in relation to the selected contemporary Pakistani English novels examines how the implied authors (or an ideological figure/discourse maker) function in politicising their fiction while exploiting narratives, manipulating discourses and conditioning characters for the purpose of situating their fiction within the broader socio-cultural and political contexts of the present-day Pakistan and/or the world. It explores how in so doing the authors of the selected texts appropriate dominant/popular discourses and in what ways the trend of fiction writing gets overdetermined. The study uses a conceptual framework drawn from Foucault, Bourdieu, Huggan and Ahmad while the textual analysis is based on the “symptomatic reading” of the selected texts.

1.5 Research Questions

This study has sought to provide answers to the following basic questions:

1. In what ways (if at all) does the implied author of Shamsie’s selected novels overdetermines narratives and textual discourses in view of the dominant/popular socio-cultural and political discourses?
2. To what extent are the selected contemporary Pakistani anglophone novels conditioned by the implied authors of the selected novelists in order to appropriate the socio-cultural fetishism and political divide in the wake of post-9/11?
3. How does the implied author/ the ideological figure operate (as a discursive function) in determining the textual narratives in relation to socio-cultural, religio-political and gendered identity politics?

1.6 Rationale/Significance

This study has been deemed important mainly for the reasons of providing a counter-discursive and critical study of the implied author in relation to the contemporary Pakistani anglophone novel while politicising the recent burgeoning of “political fiction writings”. The study employs Foucault’s problematisation of “author-function” in exploring the overdetermination of the literary texts, inter alia, in the broader global political contexts including the clichéd socio-cultural and religious identity politics. In the last ten years or so there have been a number of effective critical responses to a diverse range of fiction in English from Pakistan. The critical writings about the Pakistani English fiction have largely focused on the expressive value of the fiction while providing interesting analyses (of cultural alienation, portrayal of Muslims and Pakistanis and the problematics of representation, reportage of 9/11 and its aftermath while admiring the writers’ politicisation of the popular issues including socio-cultural and political both at global and local contexts). That is, the authors of the contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction have often been treated as postcolonial voices despite the lopsided portrayals engendered in a number of their texts. This study analyses how author functions and in what way authorial agency operates in determining the textual narratives while appropriating the socio-political issues of the time as well as global politics in relation to the contemporary anglophone Pakistani novel. Thus, I believe it fills the important gap by exploring how the anglophone fiction gets objectified by the implied author in the given socio-political contexts. I think there is a need of shifting the discussion away from the popular/political issues such as the political history of Pakistan, the 1971 civil war and subsequent partition of the country, rise of extremism in the region in the wake of the Afghan conflict, the 1998 nuclear tests, issues of tradition versus modernity, portrayals of woman objectification, issues of cultural identity, themes of cultural alienation, problems of

immigration and the issues that pertain to the diaspora and so forth. There have been a number of critical inquiries that seem to have challenged the stereotypical representation of Muslim minority in the West by the selected authors. In this regard, the selected critical works by Chambers, Kanwal, Clements and Faisal Nazir are relevant and have been quite valuable in contextualizing this study. It provides a nuanced understanding of the formation and function of literary discourse that often becomes politicised as the direction and trends of fiction writings get influenced. Besides, it helps uncover what function the author plays in determining fictional discourse within the text and in the word of reader. It opens up new vistas and initiates or at least adds to the discussion about the problematics of the literary and artistic production given the role of the publishing market and the issues of politicisation which this study has tried to unveil to an extent. I hope it proves to be a useful enquiry for those interested in understanding socio-cultural, political, and economic aspects of fiction writing as well as the intrinsic relationship of arts, literature, and the contemporary world politics.

Although, sometimes I take into account the larger South Asian/Pakistani context insofar as the politicisation of fictional narratives is concerned, this study is limited to the selected contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction since 2004-2017. While I do not accuse the fiction writers and avoid sweeping generalisations, I do believe that this study leads to exposing the discursive function of the implied authors as well as the formulaic nature of the politicised narratives. The study is based on my extensive reading of the contemporary Pakistani novels in English against the poststructuralist underpinning, as I have explained. Also, I have traced how the narrative structures get appropriated that lead to the exploitation of storylines, manipulation of narrative forms and objectification of characters as well as

conditioning of locales—which I have explained in more detail later. Thus, the study takes a departure from the study of expressive value of the contemporary Pakistani fiction. That is, it does not take into account the often-debated issues such as (mis)representation and cultural alienation unless where it is necessary insofar as the authorial, textual, and narrative inquiries are concerned. Moreover, this study is limited to only novel and not all the fictional works as it does not include short story/short narrative fiction, for instance. Apart from the critical thoughts, especially related to deconstruction and new historicism/cultural materialism, my study is informed by a number of critical works by the writers of Pakistani anglophone fiction from within and outside Pakistan, that I have discussed in detail in the next chapter.

1.7 Chapter Division

The study has been organized into the following chapters (and it mainly involves thorough textual analyses, that make ways for textual interpretations within the conceptual framework for this study):

- Chapter 1 introduces the study. It includes background/context of this study, statement of the problem, research questions, rationale/significance as well as the delimitation of the study chapter division. Moreover, it offers a detailed discussion of theoretical (conceptual framework) and methodology of textual analysis.
- Chapter 2 entails the discussion regarding basic concepts such as author, authorship, authority in the context Foucault's *What is an Author?* Moreover, it includes a review of the related literature.
- Chapters 3, 4 and 5 offer more textual analyses of the selected novels. The discussion based on the textual analyses in chapter 3 focusses on the conflict-ridden and contentious nature of fictional narratives while underlining the

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political “overdetermination” and interlacing of global politics in the selected novels by Shamsie.

- Chapter 4 consists of the analyses of the selected novels by Hamid and Naqvi. This chapter outlines the influences including that of the popular socio-political and religio-cultural contexts/discourses (mainly defined by the incident of 9/11 and its aftermath) especially the ones surrounding the issues of Muslimness/Islamophobia.
- Chapter 5 covers analyses of the selected texts by Aslam; that focuses on the cultural objectification and religious and gendered identity politics and a discussion of how the fiction gets objectified in doing so.
- The conclusion presents an overview of the study, a report of the results/findings, and a short discussion regarding the prospects for the future studies/research into the literary studies in relation to the Pakistani anglophone literature (especially fiction) apart from underlining the contribution the study is believed to have made.

CHAPTER 2

THEORISATION OF AUTHOR-FUNCTION AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter provides a socio-political background to the emergence of politicised fiction writing in Pakistani context in order to help understand the development of Pakistani anglophone fiction with a particular focus on the novels published between 2004-2017; which provides a context for my study of the “author-function” insofar as the objectification of fiction is concerned. The chapter also includes a critical review of relevant scholarship on the Pakistani anglophone literature with a particular focus on the selected contemporary fiction. While surveying the scholarly writings, I have tried to provide answers to the basic questions of whether and to what extent have the selected anglophone writings have been attuned to promote a particular trend of fiction writing influenced by the global political contexts and dominant discourses and whether the critical writings have been mindful of that. Thus, it looks at the role of critical writings on Pakistani anglophone fiction. The chapter also provides working definitions of some of the terms I have used/adopted in/for my study. Moreover, this chapter deals with the idea of author and the study of authorship in theoretical terms while discussing the critical parlance about the role of author and its implications by surveying the development of the ideas regarding the role of authors in creation of texts and the ways in which texts are received and interpreted as social and cultural productions. What an author is and what authorship means or involves and how authority matters have been the questions of the literary and cultural debates for centuries. It is important to trace the development of the idea of author over time in order to understand the role and nature of author and the related issues such as authority and authorship in the context of this study—that intends to explore the

“author-function” in relation to the contemporary Pakistani fiction in English. This chapter begins with a review of the historical development of the author in the Western epistemological tradition after which a detailed account of the theatrical/critical framework is presented. In the end, a critical review of related literature has been provided.

The term, ‘objectification’, is basically taken from the social philosophy which refers to the idea of reducing a person into an object while denying their uniqueness or/and essence. Since Judith Butler’s theorization of gender identification and objectification (1990), the idea of the ‘objectification’ is used in gender studies to understand the social structuring of the gender roles such as woman and man. It is seldom applied in cultural studies, but now, according to Nussbaum, is being frequently used in cultural productions such as films, media advertisements and numerous other forms of representations (249) including literature. Lindsay Wilson, in her analysis, of gender objectification seems to take objectification as a system that employs various techniques to reduce the significance of somebody or something rather than mere practices that might be benign or negative as explained by Nussbaum (22). In any case, it refers to a process of degradation or reduction of an idea, person, or thing. I am using ‘objectification’ in relation to my study of the contemporary Pakistani anglophone novel that seeks to explore the ways in which the form and focus of novel get modified or altered on the part of the implied author in order to situate the stories in and around the political conflicts and the popular global narratives. The term ‘author’ or ‘implied author’, in the context of this study, refers to the idea of the author as a function, an instrument or an agency as explained by Foucault in *What is an Author?* (1969) and Bourdieu in *The Field of Cultural Production* (1993). As regards the analyses that pertain to how the implied authors

exploit their characters the debate has focussed on how characters are conceived and developed in a rather reductive manner where they perform a particular role as subscribed the authors rather. In this regard, various literary foils have also been deployed by the implied authors. The idea of a literary foil or a foil character(s) refers to how certain character(s) is/are essentially constructed in order to highlight the qualities of one or more characters in the narrative. Thus, it relates to the relational function of characters in a narrative. Eder, et al. Anna-M. Horatschek takes literary foil as more of a differentiating element “in dominant identity discourses” (12) while Uri Margolin considers foil “a functional piece in plot conceived as a set of formal moves (56). That is how at times characters get exploited to act as an agent/foil of the implied author in order to reinforce an idea in relation to other character(s) as they hold an ideological and/or a discursive position.

2.1 Evolution of Author in Literary Studies and Theorisation of Author-Function

The idea of author has driven literary theory since its inception somewhere in the early twentieth century and throughout liberal humanist tradition but authorship and authority as concepts have been increasingly influential since the emergence of structuralism and then poststructuralism in the mid-twentieth century (that I have explained in some detail later). In this regard, Burke thinks that since the nineteenth century the critical orthodoxy which considered the author “the transcendental source of the work [or text]” has mainly been quite influential which was in a way promoted by Romanticism (03). That is why the authorial biography was regarded as imperative to understand literature. Earlier, texts were known because of their authors—which changed during the twentieth century—where authors came to be known because of their works, not the vice versa. All Romantics seem to define their works because of their names, for example, William Wordsworth is the poet of nature, Coleridge, the

poet of super-nature while Keats becomes a poet of aesthetic beauty. On the other hand, the twentieth century European writers are mainly known because of their writings. It is true about Henrik Ibsen, Samuel Beckett and others. *Waiting for Godot*, for example, became known not because it was written by Samuel Beckett, rather Beckett became famous because of the play. It would be quite interesting to know as to what happened around the 1960s that led to the proliferation of theories of deauthorization. It was in fact the result of what Burke calls “the epistemological upheaval in the Western episteme”—that was made possible mainly because of poststructuralist thoughts of Derrida, Foucault and Barthes and that lead to deconstruction of the function of author. In that sense, Susan Sontag agrees that a movement to renounce author has been in the making since the latter half of the nineteenth century; which was in fact rooted in the overall demise of authority and a change of epistemological worldview of the Western society (Sontag 13) that ultimately lead to what came to be known as deconstruction. Consequently, under the influence of deconstruction subject-centred position of the author was challenged, which has been the fundamental change or the paradigm shift, as it were, in the study of the author in relation to their works/texts. Thus, during structuralism author was considered to be the creator or originator of meanings, hence, the job of a reader was that of a decipher and/or someone who would decode the meaning that the author had encoded in the text as that remained the only method of analysis back then. Poststructuralism instead derailed the role of the author by questioning the authority of the author. It suggests that the texts have to be read against the grain, that is, the texts should be read as detached from the author or at least without considering author as the originator or what Derrida calls the sovereign signifier of the text/meaning.

The theoretical debates during the past sixty years (especially after Derrida's *Of Grammatology* and Barthes' *Death of the Author*) have centred around contesting the role of author and nature of authorship while previously they had concentrated on the author of the text as the originator of meanings. Barthes' influential essay brought about an intervention, a shift, from the author of the text to the text of the author. Since then, the debates about textual studies, role of author and reader have been in the literary debates as Andrew Bennett explains that the "debates over authorship have been particularly intense in criticism and theory during the last two centuries, and especially over the last fifty years. Literary theory, we might say, is largely a question of author theory" (Bennet 4). In that sense, if we critically evaluate the literary theories in the post-Barthesian era, it seems that every theory takes a certain stance towards author, for example: Formalists deny the role of the author while maintaining that language knows the subject, not the author, whereas New Criticism tries to trace the meaning of the text through the study of its internal coherence as gets woven by the author. The theories that focus more on the socio-political and autobiographical contexts of the text such as structuralism take author at the centre to study text as a product of a genius. While the political literary theories including poststructuralism, deconstruction, postcolonial theory, and others consider author not only the creator of the text but also a discourse maker and/or an ideological figure. Even when the debate seems to have moved away from the traditional sense of the intentionality or subjectivity of the author, it remains bound up to the idea of author, nevertheless. In recent times, authorship has also been studied from the intertextual and intercultural perspectives, that I have discussed later in the chapter, though briefly.

The French structuralist thoughts had been influential in determining the direction of (literary) theoretical ideas as they led to what came to be known as poststructuralism and deconstruction, though they were essentially opposed to the notions that structuralism was built upon insofar as the idea of author and authority is concerned as deconstruction, applies the poststructuralist ideas to interpret a text. Thus, poststructuralism is an elusive approach insofar as it opposes any distinct position regarding the interpretation of a literary text—as against structuralism—that views the text as a part of the whole or a structure (episteme in Derrida's words) in terms of its meaning and relationship. Derrida thinks that the structuralist notions about the centrality of the author (insofar as the interpretation is concerned) have been based on the idea of what he calls “transcendental signifier” or the governing structure that organizes everything, that is, meaning into a pattern—which in his view ceases to exist. He thinks that “without ever posing the radical question of writing, all the Western methods of analysis, explication, reading, or interpretation” have been fascinated with logocentrism as he proposes “the de-construction of the greatest totality—the concept of the episteme and logocentric metaphysics—within which are [the methods of analysis] produced” (Derrida 46). Hence deconstruction takes not only the idea of meaning as a construct but the very source or “the central signified, the original or transcendental signified” (in Derridean terms). He thus propounds that rather than taking texts as texts wherein the centre or the author limits the interpretation we need to approach them and interpret those as discourse. He says that “in the absence of a centre or origin, everything became discourse” (Derrida; *Structure, Sign and Play* 280). That is, “when everything became a system where the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences. The absence of the transcendental signified extends

the domain and the interplay of signification ad infinitum” (280). Derrida links his idea of the demise of centre to “the death of the author” as he explains that the “absence of a centre is here the absence of a subject and the absence of an author” (287). Likewise, regarding the implications of the absence of author as the original source or the “transcendental signifier”, Derrida says that “[i]f it be asked where the real focus of the work is to be found, it must be replied that its determination is impossible” (287). That is exactly what Barthes presents in “The Death of the Author” when he says that after the author has died the textual interpretations become the readers’ domain as they replace the author not just in creating meanings for themselves but also giving meanings to the text itself especially when it travels across unhindered in the play of structures. In order to understand the context of Barthes’ notion of “the death of the author” and Foucault’s concept of “author-function”, I consider it important to review briefly the history of author and authorship from the early times to poststructuralism and beyond given the background above—because—both Barthes and Foucault have been responding to the earlier notions “about the author as the sole source of original meaning” arising from Romanticism in the nineteenth century and during the liberal humanist tradition of literary criticism until 1950s (Donovan 9-10).

Stephen Donovan, Danuta Fjellestad and Rolf Lundén (eds), in *Authority Matters: Rethinking the Theory and Practice of Authorship* (2008), have traced the historical development of the idea of author while analysing how the concept of author and authority have evolved from the Latin origin over the Medieval Clerical and Renaissance periods through the seventeenth and eighteenth century to Romanticism, Modernism Formalism and the age of Digital Production—which has helped in conceptualising my debate regarding the author in the first chapter.

Donovan and others have taken author as a phenomenon (or a function in the words of Foucault) rather than a person; that is why they discuss author's role as more of a discursive, historical and formative agency—which is what I attempt to do in this study of Pakistani anglophone novel—that is, to see how the author's individualization or formation, for that matter, happens and what role the authorial agency plays in the production and propagation of the textual discourses, and the way the “institutional system” works in circulation and promotion of a text as well as a literary tradition. For Donovan it has been an intended effort “to unsettle the notion of authority and the primacy of the author” (9). Although the focus of literary studies has not been particularly on the study of authorship throughout the twentieth century, yet an evolution of author over time especially in relation to cultural productions including literature has been witnessed where an emphasis on the deauthorization has been felt especially during the early 1960s, which leads to a proliferation of ideas about the relevance of author vis-à-vis methods of literary analysis, which this chapter deals with in some detail. Derrida while arguing against logocentrism says that the writing is primordial to writer—it happens much before the birth of the text. His concept of *différance* explains the departure from the logocentrism or structuralism to what later came to be known as poststructuralism or deconstruction. While explaining ‘*différance*’, which is central to understanding Derridean deconstruction, Derrida says that signs of meanings are not only differential but that they are also deferral at the same time (Derrida; *Of Grammatology* 63-65); which actually defines the relationship between the text and its meanings. Thus, Derrida, in a way lays the foundation of what Barthes later theorises in “the death of the author”. Foucault, however, seems to problematise if not challenge the role and nature of authorship and the idea of the irrelevance of author in his concept of the “author-function”—which he bases on what

he calls the 'void' created by "the death of the author" and its implication. He is less interested in discussing the author's presence or subjectivity within the text, rather he takes author as a subject and an ideological figure who conditions his/her writing. He says that "the author-function characterize the existence, circulation, and operation of certain discourses within a society" (124). While problematising the concept of author Foucault transforms the very nature of author and the concept of authorship as it is understood in the structuralist and even poststructuralist tradition as his author transcends the position of an author and becomes a contributor in the mechanism of discourse generation. Foucault says that while employing on the "special dispersion [and] temporal deployment" the role of author cannot be brushed aside because, he says that the text cannot transcend the sociology of its origin, which is mainly determined by its author, nevertheless, but that the concept of author has to be redefined in light of what he proposes as the "author-function".

Barthes' *The Death of the Author* (1967) is perhaps the most radical stance in the modern times to deter the role of author insofar as the textual meaning and interpretation are concerned. He defines the terms of the study of the author while introducing the paradigm shift of the study of literature from the perspective of the author to that of the reader as I have mentioned earlier. It seems a clear anti-intentionist position that counters all previous concepts about the singularity of the meaning of a text—that would often refer to the author—as author has been the originator of the meanings of text. Once the author is removed the textual interpretation becomes quite fluid as every reader would bring their own context to understand the text. That is where Barthes seems to have been inspired by Derridean idea of *différance* and deconstruction. But it is also true (as Bennett suggests) that Barthes' idea is perhaps rooted in the formalist or structuralist notions about the

author which in a way discarded author's role for the reasons of literary concerns, later following the same logic though in opposite sense, poststructuralists removed it for the reasons of intertextual interpretations of literary texts. However, Barthes' anti-intentionalism does not explain exactly what he means by author except that whether writer means what he says and if what he says means anything (Bennett 4-6) or whether he or she intends anything and if what he or she intends should be taken serious by the readers while making meanings for themselves. It is true, until then author was understood as a writer who creates a narrative rather than as a maker of certain discourse, which has been elaborated by Foucault's concept of "author-function". The "author-function" takes into account not just the author but also the mechanics that formulate the author—the praxis and pragmatics of being an author or authorship or what Andrew Bennett calls "the social, historical, institutional and discursive [factors as well as the] conventions of [writing]" (5). Later the conception of the author has further been redefined in the context of the modern developments of publication, technology, marketing, circulation, and consumption. In this regard, I focus more on Huggan's concept of "postcolonial exotic" that relates more to my study of the contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction—that is often discussed as a part of commonwealth or postcolonial literature for whatever reasons. Another dimension of author is related to "gender, ethnic, class or racial identifications and identities for the structure and understanding of authorship and authority" (Bennet 5)—that too relates in a way to my study of the selected authors.

Adding on, Barthes asserts that writing is more often than not the deconstruction of both the idea and interlocutor. That is, it is not just the voice but the very persona is constructed by the writer and that it is not produced necessarily under the influence of his/her biases. For Barthes, it is an enigma as to who is speaking in a

text: the writer, the trend or someone for the moment a text is created the moment writing begins “the voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death” (Barthes; *The Death of the Author* 142). To explain that he gives the example of Balzac’s *Sarrasine* in which a castrated man is shown as a woman. He asks if the woman in *Sarrasine* is in fact: a woman, a man, a transgender, or someone else (142). What Barthes is trying to assert through this illustration is that in the multiplicity of voices the voice of the author diminishes and that that is where author becomes extraneous and even irrelevant. It, therefore, is the text that speaks (not the author), and text speaks to its reader. The idea of the multiplicity voices has basically been proposed by Derrida in his *Of Grammatology* months earlier than Barthes’ declaration of “the death of the author” as Spivak explains in relation to Derrida’s challenge of the concept of “sovereign subject” (Derrida; *Of Grammatology* xi). Barthes’ notion of the irrelevance of the author and primacy and multiplicity of the textual voice is indeed interesting as we cannot certainly locate the author from one voice as it gets lost in the multiplicity of voices. But what is more interesting (especially with respect to this study) is the way author becomes a product of an ideology or an instrument of a discourse insofar as the construction of a fictional narrative is concerned; wherein dialogues, voices and discourses may supply with clues to the understanding of that role of the author. That is where the concept of the implied author comes in as we may not be even interested in who is or is not author in a text. Thus, in my view (in the context of Foucault’s “author-function”), Barthes’ understanding of the author is confined to the narrative/interlocutor/or what he calls the voice(s), that is why he is concerned with how we cannot locating the author from his text as it is neither possible nor desirable. But what Foucault’s “author-function” brings relates to analysing the role of author in generating discourse. It is not even about holding the

author responsible for his/her construction but understanding the text from the perspective of the author who, following Foucault, is just one aspect of what he calls the “author-function” which is what has inspired my study of the contemporary Pakistani anglophone novel. What Barthes has proposed relates more to the idea of subverting the power-structure that promotes, in his view, the figure of the author. That is where reader becomes relevant, as Barthes believes that the idea of the death of the author is in fact based on the idea of challenging the authority of the author, which leads to the birth of the reader (Barthes; *The Death of the Author* 148). Barthes’ position regarding the role of author at times seems duplicitous as well: because while declaring the author dead he still seems to assert that author continues to have an oppressive role in defining the text. He also believes that author’s promotion has been a modern development that happens somewhere in the Middle Ages mainly under the influence of capitalist ideology (142-143). In this regard, Saussure’s emphasis on logocentrism, that promotes the idea of the existence of truth or concept, so to say, independent of the linguistic representation, also seems to get challenged by Barthes. Logocentrism requires that we treat the language essentially distinct from the idea or the whatever it represents. Incidentally, the language-centred approach to interpret literature also gets endorsed as Barthes suggests that when we give primacy to language in fact we empower the reader that in away demolishes authorial pre-eminence significantly as text is then taken as a system of signs and codes that are to be decoded by the reader in his/her own context. Barthes and Derrida also at times come close to Russian Formalism that has been in practice during the early twentieth century as they declare that there is nothing outside the text, although the two approaches are otherwise different because Formalism has primarily been concerned with the form rather than the text while Barthesian and Derridean deconstruction is

fundamentally about the text and its interpretation. Thus, Barthes believes that departure from the logocentric approach comes as a contention against the authorial role which according to him has first been initiated by the French poet, Stéphane Mallarmé, who, he quotes, suggests that the author should be substituted with the language hence with the reader. Barthes says that “it is language which speaks, not the author; to write is, through a prerequisite impersonality... [Writing thus is a pursuit to reach that point where only language acts, 'performs', and not 'me' [i.e., author]. Mallarmé's entire poetics consists in suppressing the author in the interests of writing” (143)—which is actually meant to restore the place of the reader. That has been one of the earliest radical approaches to unsettle the traditional concept of the authorship and authority that until then had historically relied on the authorial figure of the author to provide meanings and clues for the textual interpretations. That is why it led to what is known as a paradigm shift insofar as the role of author is concerned. It is fundamentally based on Derridean concept of deconstruction and came to be known as deconstruction of the role of author in literary studies and was defined by Derrida, Barthes, and Foucault in the context of the debates around the concept of author in France in the 1960s. Thus, Barthes, as opposed to the traditional ways of the textual interpretation, proposes, in fact, demands that the author must be divorced as soon as he/she has finished writing the text hence his textual approach is essentially devoid of the authorial perspective as it focusses entirely on the language as a symbolic system.

Foucault's idea of “author-function” problematises the concept of author and authorship by unsettling the questions related to the nature and origin of textual discourse, formation of author as a subject and working of authorial agency. While questioning the notions about the demise of the role of the author of the earlier critics

that include Barthes and Derrida, Foucault says that “writing has not freed itself from the obligation of expression [hence] it is not confined of its interiority” (116). He takes writing as an interplay of ideology and discourse that includes the author (as a subject), besides other determinants. He also says that the idea of the death of author has also generated a debate about the context of the writing—that forms the text or in which the text is created—hence, the role of the author needs to be reconsidered as a function rather than a figure. In that sense, the author’s function not only determines the creation of the textual discourses but also limits those. Who creates discourse if not the author himself? That is where Foucault keeps quiet, although he does give certain hints that point to what was later theorized by Bourdieu in his study of cultural production. That has also been pointed out by Burke when question assigning the originality to the “author-function” (108-109). If writing is taken as the product of what Foucault calls the “author-function”, that include numerous external factors, what the authority of the author would be and how would that matter. Foucault, although, separates the figure of the author from the figure of the text while emphasizing on an in-depth understanding of how a text is formed in the context or the larger system of discourse formation, yet he believes that separation is different from that of Barthes’ divorce of authorship. Foucault then talks of the implications of that separation which is why he thinks that the author should be studied not just as a writer but as a participant of the discourse formation that happens in the larger system of cultural production; that is where he comes close of Bourdieu’s idea of cultural production in a pre-determined field. Author remains relevant and continues to thrive in the modern times in literary studies. The questions of authority and authorship have been redefined in their relation to the institution and ideology in recent times—that has reinforced the role of author in nuanced ways. In this regard, Bourdieu’s concept

of cultural production has dealt in detail with the question of authorship and the related issues of literary and cultural production which has provided an important theoretical lens for this study.

Bourdieu has been influential inspiration for my study of the “author-function” in relation to the Pakistani fiction in English as it draws on Bourdieu’s sociological study of the “cultural production”. Bourdieu’s idea of arts and literature as social and cultural products has been crucial to broadening my understanding of the intricacies of the cultural productions and their relationship with the conditions in which they are produced as well as the process of the reception and the way it relates to what he calls the broader field of power, class, and global politics. Bourdieu has also theorised how the role of author is determined by the field that forms him/her in the first place as he explains that “the field of cultural production is the site of struggles in which what is at stake is the power to impose the dominant definition of the writer and therefore to delimit the population of those entitled to take part in the struggle to define the writer” (Bourdieu *Field*; 42). He, thus, goes beyond the formalist/internalist interpretations that emphasize on authors’ genius and creative talent to see art as a social production whose value is determined by its appropriation of power structures, whatever they may be (Bourdieu *Field*; 113). Bourdieu’s ideas of “social and cultural capital” and “habitus” have been important in my theorisation as they have provided me an important lens to study the so-called Pakistani anglophone literature in relation to the commodification of literary products such as novel and institutionalisation of (what Huggan calls) the postcolonial academy (Huggan xv). It in a way also relates to study of the author as a subject or product of the publishing culture/industry, that I have discussed in detail in the fifth chapter of this study. The cultural capital, as Bourdieu explains, refers to the accumulation of the knowledge and understanding of the

cultural practices and norms in a given society that helps the social agent operate better in that society. The social capital, on the other hand, is more about the links and references one develops in a given field. In this regard, the concept of academy and what Foucault refers to as “institutional system” is quite relevant with respect to this study as it takes into account the role publishing industry, academy, and literary culture play in defining and forming an author in relation to the contemporary Pakistani anglophone literature. He believes that the social and cultural capitals work more or less the same way as both have importance in term of the exchange value (99). Randal Johnson, the editor of Bourdieu’s collection of the essays titled as *The Field of Cultural Production*, explains how, according to Bourdieu, the cultural capital “participates in the process of domination by legitimizing certain practices as ‘naturally’ superior to others and by making these practices seem superior even to those who do not participate, who are thus led, through a negative process of inculcation, to see their own practices as inferior and to exclude themselves from legitimate practices” (24). Bourdieu’s theory of the “cultural production” as a whole has a number of implications in the study of literature particularly in the context of the emergence of the so-called postcolonial literature and its transformation under neoliberalism as it challenges the universalistic sense of aesthetics and cultural practices while explaining how they tend to form products of privilege. That also relates to his idea of the “distinction” of a particular form in certain fields and marginalisation in certain others—that is in fact based on his ideas of doxa and homology where he explains how certain lifestyle and/or taste is popularised under the influence of the popular cultural and economic capitals (24-25, 46).

Apart from these, Huggan and Brouillette have been quite helpful particularly with regard to their studies of the relationship between postcolonial literature and

global literary market. They have explained how postcolonial exotic has been made into a market commodity in the contemporary times. Huggan in his seminal work of *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins* examines the writings by the so-called postcolonial literary authors especially novelists in relation to what he calls “postcolonial exoticism” and the politics of the margin as a cultural value. He explores a whole range of the third world anglophone fictional writings involving African, south Asian, Australian, and Canadian contexts. Huggan explores how exoticist discourses—that have provided the postcolonial studies the legitimacy and context—are being used in marketing and domesticising postcolonial literature for the global audience. The “postcolonial exotic” refers to the global commodification of the cultural difference, that, in Huggan’s view, has helped promote the so-called postcolonial writings by making possible the extension of global market of publishing industry (Huggan 1-4).

Huggan examines “the sociological dimensions of postcolonial studies: the material conditions of production and consumption of postcolonial writings, and the influence of publishing houses and academic institutions on the selection, distribution and evaluation of these works”. He addresses the issues of sociology of the so-called postcolonial literature while examining the relationship between the postcolonialism “as a cultural commodity” and the so-called neoliberal market economy “that it at once serves and resists” (vii). In Huggan’s view the so-called third world authors such as Rushdie, Ondaatje, Naipaul, and Achebe have been formed by the postcolonial market of publishing as he believes that their writings are influenced by the late-capitalist concerns. Also, while giving example of Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* (1981) and Ondaatje’s *The English Patient* (1992)—that won the Man Booker Prize the same years they were published—Huggan explains how literary prizes (like the

Man Booker Prize) play a crucial role in popularising the so-called fiction of the margin and about the margin. He says that if literary prizes do not get influenced by “such potentially retrograde cultural products” they do legitimise and promote anglophone literature so as to get a wider readership and circulation (115-116). In this regard, Ahmad has studied the cultural politics involving prizes/ acclamation and awards of the Third World authors/ so-called postcolonial authors in the Western academy (*In Theory* 111-112). Dwivedi and Lau have studied the Indian literary writings in English in the context of expanding global literary market. They have analysed how Indian literature has been promoted and influenced by the emergence global literary market where the Indian writers “enjoy the wide distribution necessary to achieve celebrity status” (2). Dwivedi et, al. also note that the “privileging of diasporic writers over those writing from within India” is in line with the project of imaging India from “the diasporic version of India on which the primary focus lies within Eurocentric scholarship and postcolonial studies” as made possible by “the global [literary] market” (2-3). While tracing the material history of the postcolonial literature, Brouillette establishes that authors’ careers are important paratexts to the production, reproduction, and reception of their writings. she thinks that “authorship cannot be analysed without reference to the general circuit through which texts pass” (3). Besides, Brouillette holds that the so-called postcolonial authors often act as the “consumers of their own images” for they “react to their own personae in their literary works, often through attempts at theorizing the process itself” (4). This explains how at times the so-called postcolonial fictional writings become “cultural product” rather than being autonomous texts in the words of Bourdieu. In this regard, Ahmad’s idea of cultural “commodity fetishism” is relevant as it explains how the cultural debates in postcolonial studies have been marshalled in such a way to create a fetishism about

cultural identity and representation in postcolonial literary studies (*In Theory* 102). He explains how the politics of literary postcoloniality has shifted the debates away from the real issues of economics to the clichés of cultural divide and identity politics (69). Apart from these, the critical writings of Marx, Gramsci, Harvey, Macherey and Roy have been quite influential in conceptualising this study, especially insofar as the role of literature and authors/intellectuals is concerned (Marx 12, 58; Gramsci; *Intellectuals* 212-214; *Prison Books* 3-4; Harvey 2-3; Macherey 12-15; Roy 1, 78-80, 90; Gosh 185).

2.2 Scholarly Contribution to the Contemporary Pakistani Anglophone Fiction

In this section I have presented a critical review of the selected writings on Pakistani anglophone fiction while revealing the gap I have identified with regard to the interplay of politics, ideology, and authorial agency. Since Tariq Rahman's *A History of Pakistani Literature in English* (that remains the earliest scholarly study of the history and context of Pakistani literature in English), there has not been much produced in terms of the critical writings on Pakistani anglophone literature and fiction except for few scholarly articles, most notably by Alamgir Hashmi, until the early 2000s. But as more and more anglophone writing started making headlines in the academy, especially Western, during 2000s, critics and researchers started paying attention to that and as a result of that soon Pakistani anglophone literature became part of the local universities' syllabi and academic circles. Muneeza Shamsie has made an important contribution as a leading critic and bibliographer of Pakistani literature in English. She has traced the history and development of Pakistani literature in English since the time of British *Raj* (rule) in India to the present in *Hybrid Tapestries: The Development of Pakistani Literature in English* (2017). Recently a debate about the making of Pakistani anglophone literary canon has been

generated by Aroosa Kanwal and Saiyma Aslam (381-393). However, there are a number of questions such canonization poses. Ahmad explains how “[a]nalogous procedures of privileging certain kinds of authors, texts, genres and questions” is going to be really difficult” (Ahmad, *In Theory* 124).

Rahman’s *A History of Pakistani Literature in English 1947-1988* (first published in 1991) is the first book-length study of the anglophone Pakistani literature since the early partition to the late 1980s. Rahman provides a historical background as well as an important early insight into the anglophone Pakistani literature in comparison to other literatures in the local Pakistani languages. His comparative analysis of the anglophone Pakistani literature vis-à-vis other literatures has been particularly helpful to understand the context of the emergence of Pakistani literature in English in the early phase as he places Pakistani anglophone writings in the larger context of what he calls the Third World literature. He seems to take a liberal approach towards the anglophone literatures which he calls the “purist view of art according to which it would be futile to categorize literature by country of its origin”, because “the best art (and literature is a form of art) transcends boundaries, both geographical and ideological” (Rahman 1). In his discussion about the emergence of Third World literature he challenges the popular notion about the African literature in English—which in his view was rather simplistic. He explains that declaring African literature to be “‘simple’... [just because] the emphasis was on the informative, as opposed to the artistic value of the novel” ...is [in fact] based on the assumption that the African literature [in general and novel in particular] is less sophisticated in response to reality than [its] Western counterpart” (Rahman 3)—which presents Western literature as the standard.

Moreover, Rahman thinks that the fiction writers who are less interested in politics and are more concerned about what he calls the art of writing are better artists. However, at times Rahman seems to contradict himself. For example, although he establishes that the best literature is often less political, he objects to the earlier Pakistani anglophone literature to be apolitical (Rahman 5-8). Also, while quoting Indian critics like Uma Parameswaran, he points out that unlike the African writers of fiction the Indian writers at least in the beginning did face the issue of language and belonging as the earliest critics of the anglophone literature of India considered the expatriate writers as “Western writers” which might be due to the fact that English language has been a part of the British colonial legacy and that its status remains so in India and Pakistan (Rahman 9). In case of Pakistan the question of language has also been important especially when it comes to the status and authenticity of anglophone literature particularly by the expatriate or so-called diasporic writers. I think it is important to study the anglophone literature critically while leaving aside the nationalistic notions and narratives. Hence, I do not suggest that the worth of a certain literary piece or fiction by the expatriate or diasporic writers should entirely rest on the demand that the writers must write from the nationalist narrative viewpoint; because that too would condition the narrative just the way the late-capitalism and publishing market does by determining the fictional narratives, which in fact this study attempts to underscore. In that sense, it would also be interesting to study the emergence of Third World literature from the economic viewpoint in order to discuss the role of market forces in shaping the direction of literary studies which would provide a new perspective to study postcolonial literatures. On the other hand, Rahman seems quite critical of the critical works in relation to Pakistani literature in English (which until then have been few and far between). He thinks that the critical

writings are mostly uncritical, ahistorical, and mere appreciative. While referring to the *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, Rahman says that most of the so-called critical writings have been in fact biographical, hardly analytical, and repetitive (Rahman 11-12). Also, when giving rationale of his approach, Rahman explains that his study of Pakistani literature in English has not been inspired by nationalistic reasons and that it is based on the idea that Pakistani anglophone literature is a part of the Third World literatures in English language. Thus, he defines Pakistan in rather loose terms, that is more in the cultural sense than the political (Rahman 13). In his analysis Rahman discusses the major themes of Pakistani writings in English while comparing that vis-à-vis other Third World literatures as well as the contemporary literatures in other local languages of Pakistan. In this regard, Rahman's analysis of the pre-partition literary trends in India is important especially with respect to tracing the political legacy of the fiction in English in India and Pakistan because the political inspiration and sociological significance of a novel in the context of the contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction goes back to the colonial times—which I argue—continue to define literary trends even today, although the nature of the inspirations differs from time to time mainly because of the change of political landscape and socio-economic conditions nationally and internationally.

Likewise, Rahman emphasizes on the neutrality of the writer and/or the narrator, for that matter. For him, the value of literature, novel in particular, "lies in the fact that it helps us to understand ferment of political ideas" which in my view has mainly been responsible in the promotion of the contemporary novel and its trend in Pakistan (Rahman 30). In Rahman's view the narrator must remain detached, unprejudiced in a narrative otherwise it would turn out to be more of a political statement which is unlike of a novel, that happens to be an artistic production.

However, the early partition literature produced in India and Pakistan unfortunately remains predominantly prejudiced that is why the rendering of the idea of the Two Nation Theory as portrayed in the Indian and Pakistani fiction seems more official than artistic—where in case of Pakistan it gets patronized while in India it is vilified. Rahman seems like praising the fiction where the narrators do not have a clear political position, doctrine or ideology and the narratives are quite detached from the historical and documentary elements—which he calls a defect of the novel—that “detracts [a novel] seriously from its literary worth” (30). He further says that if the political or historical events are to be included in the fiction, they must not look separate from the characterization but should rather be part of the lives of characters in the novel following the cause-and-effect rule. In case of the early Pakistani anglophone literature, according to Rahman, the themes of indigenous cultural identity and nativity do not get reflected unlike what we find under the influence of Negritude in case of Caribbean and African literature (32). In his conclusion Rahman points out some distinctive features of Pakistani anglophone literature including important themes and tropes in comparison with other Third World literatures as well as the literatures written in other languages of Pakistan such as Urdu, Sindhi, Pashto, Punjabi, and Baluchi.

Furthermore, Rahman believes that the earliest Pakistani anglophone literature has been predominantly apolitical in nature for that he cites examples from Mumtaz Shahnawaz’s *The Heart Divided* (1957), Mehr Nigar Mansoor’s *Shadow of Time* (1987) and Bapsi Sidhwa’s *Ice-Candy Man* (1988). I, however, do not agree to Rahman’s view especially with regard to *Ice-Candy Man* because what Rahman considers the external events are shown to have actually been induced by the bigger event of partition itself. In this regard, Rahman also thinks that there has been a little

reference to the colonialism and even less to the anti-colonial response from the anglophone Pakistani writers of the early era which is quite unlike of the other Third World literatures, particularly from the African diaspora in the West, whose narratives are largely based on the colonial experiences of their respective areas and countries [Rahman 284-285]. Thus, Rahman finds that the tradition of the romanticization of the old glory (that is characteristic of classical Urdu literature in consistency) often gets translated into the anglophone literature, which might be one of the reasons why anglophone literature is not as political as one would like it to be. Irrespective of Rahman's view about many such writers both in Urdu and English, I think that several Urdu writers such as Saadat Hasan Manto, Ismat Chughtai and to a lesser extent Faiz Ahmed Faiz as well as English writers such as Zulfikar Ghose, Bapsi Sidhwa and others have presented quite critical politicised fictional narrative in response to the political events in South Asia/Pakistan in their writings where they do seem to hold clear political positions.

Cara Cilano has carried out an exhaustive study of the contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction from diverse perspectives in her three scholarly works on in a span of four years (i.e., 2011-2014). Her first study deals with the national identities in case of Pakistan, especially with regard to the 1971 War and the creation of Bangladesh as portrayed in the contemporary Pakistani Fiction (2011); however, I have reviewed her later work, *Contemporary Pakistani Fiction in English* (2013) in more detail as it is (in some ways) relevant to my study of the contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction. It explores the development of Pakistani literature in English (fiction in particular) in the historical context of the development of the idea of Pakistan its nation and state since the foundation of the country. She discusses the idea, nation, and state of Pakistan in relation to a number of Pakistani anglophone novels including

the ones situated in the pre-twentieth century Islamic history of the Sub-continent, event of partition of India in 1947, partition of Pakistan in 1971, and the periods that include Zia's regime, pre- and post-9/11. Moreover, she has also analysed the socio-political issues during the political history of Pakistan in relation to the contemporary Pakistani fiction in English to bring to the fore the nuisances of Pakistani fiction in English in the development of the new nation with an old legacy. Cilano, thus, provides an important perspective of the history of Pakistan's 'idea', 'nation' and 'state' through the literary imagination, which, in her view, is quite different from the official as well as the media-based often orientalist versions of the representation of Pakistan. She uses anglophone Pakistani fiction to reconnoitre the past, analyse the present and map the future in terms of Pakistani nation and state—that is why 'idea', 'nation' and 'state' remain in the backdrop of her study. She does that by studying the themes and tropes relating to the idea, nation, and state of Pakistan in the fictional representation from Pakistan in English. Although she does discuss the role of English language in the so-called postcolonial context while quoting Ngugi wa Thiong'o's denial of the belonging of the anglophone literature's vis-à-vis local African literatures, yet she seems to be more inclined to Salman Rushdie's stance of English being an Indian (and by extension Pakistani) language. She, however, does not take into account whether such representations of Pakistani history in terms of its idea, nation, and state by the anglophone writers, many of whom, happen to live in the diaspora, highlight Pakistani history and nationhood in a way that is representative in the true sense. In this regard, she seems to contest any true notion of representativeness. That is why Cilano's study of more than a dozen novels shows that the literary works by the Pakistani anglophone writers offer a number of different perspectives to the Pakistani identity and belonging, which, she says, challenge any

single definition of nationhood and representation. Thus, she views that the diversity of the representation of Pakistani society in her selected fiction in terms of the idea, nation, and state “challenges [the popular] assumptions about Pakistan’s “failure” as an idea or a nation or a state” as well as the official nationalist narratives (Cilano, *Contemporary Pakistani Fiction* 1).

Moreover, while discussing Zia’s policies of Islamization of Pakistani society and state and its socio-political aftermaths—that continue to haunt Pakistani society in the wake of the post-9/11 political context, Cilano provides an interesting analysis of the four novels that relate to Zia’s Islamization. She shows how the queer voices of resistance in those text that, in her view, challenge his definition of Pakistaniness. Cilano also explains how the idea of nation, concept of nationhood, and narrative of the state get expostulated in the contemporary Pakistani fiction in English language. She is more interested in the language as it is insofar her idea of ‘English language’ is concerned. Although she appears hesitant to call English a Pakistani language while referring to Ngugi wa Thiong’o (Brydon 3), she does treat it as such. Her stance that English is one of the languages of Pakistan is mainly influenced by Salman Rushdie’s idea with regard to English language as being a part of the Indian (and Pakistani) sensibilities (7-9). However, I doubt if the mere official status of English in India and Pakistan (that too has a lot to do with colonialism) makes it an indigenous language. Rushdie’s admiration of what he calls Indo-Anglian literature being more burgeoning and representative of the Indian society than the literatures in the local languages (New Yorker 50) is reflective of his fascination with the Western languages and literary traditions. But while making this argument Rushdie does not seem to have properly understood and taken into account the rich literary traditions in other South Asian languages like Urdu, Sindhi, Gujrati, Hindi, Tamil, and others. Therefore, such

comparison of the South Asian literature in English (while considering the limited access to English language) vis-à-vis English literature as such, with its long tradition, is in itself problematic. The point is that the tradition of English language and its literature is still quite young in India and certainly more so in case of Pakistan. English might be an equal to native language for the privileged sections of the societies in India and Pakistan but declaring English to be a part of the South Asian sensibility just like other South Asian languages appears to me rather untrue. That is why the representations in the anglophone literature remain limited to the upper-class urban sections of the societies of India and Pakistan. Hence, the literary imaginations of the writers in English might not provide an insight into the lower-class rural South Asian and Pakistani society as is often claimed.

Thus, Cilano's study of the selected Pakistani anglophone fiction from the perspective of Pakistan's socio-political history provides a thoughtful understanding of the relationship of literature vis-à-vis politics and history in diverse ways. In that sense, Cilano's work has been helpful in deepening my understanding of the diversity of the literary imaginations of my selected authors. Cilano's study is in continuation of the tradition of the critical writings on anglophone literature from Pakistan as an important part of the Third World's cultural production that was set by Rahman. Her study does not offer critique of the politics involved in the production of Pakistani anglophone fiction as well as the role of publishing market in the context of so-called postcolonial literatures. However, unlike Rahman, Cilano thinks that Pakistani anglophone is quite mature and political as it incorporates the entire political history of the country, but that might be because of the fact that Cilano's canvas covers a much larger portion of the anglophone literature as she happens to write almost two decades after Rahman's *History of Pakistani Literature in English* that was first

published in 1991. And, because by then Pakistani literature in English had evolved to a great extent. She begins with Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, Mumtaz Shahnawaz's *The Heart Divided*, Zulfikar Ghose's *The Murder of Aziz Khan* and Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* to cover the events around the partition of India in 1947 and the creation of Pakistan as an independent state as well as the socio-cultural and national security challenges faced by the young nation of Pakistan during its infancy. But at the same time, she picks fictional narratives related to the feudal system, the racial differences, and the idea of nationhood. Then, she moves to the second partition i.e., the partition of Pakistan in 1971, to analyse Moni Mohsin's *The End of Innocence*, Durdana Soomro and Ghazala Hameed's *Bengal Raag* and Shah Bano Bingrami's *Without dreams*. After that she analyses the fictional critique of the era of General Zia-ul-Haq during the 1970s and 80s. Zia has been an important figure and remains so because of the religious and socio-political metamorphosis that Pakistan saw during his so-called religious authoritative regime. For the purpose of capturing the literary imagination and representation of this era, Cilano includes Uzma Aslam Khan's *The Geometry of God*, Ali Sethi's *The Wish Maker*, Shamsie's *Broken Verses*, and Mohammed Hanif's *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*—all of which, in her view, challenge Zia's rather confusing project of Islamization that "sought to alter religious practice from private piety to public injunction" (104). However, neither the texts nor Cilano make a mention the role of America in empowering Zia and his collaboration with America in the backdrop of the Afghan *jihad* against the Soviet Union—which is one of the interesting paradoxes of the political history of Pakistan. These texts, in Cilano's view, promote the ideas of dissent by problematizing the sense of belonging as well as the popular notion of Pakistaniness that is characterized mainly by making mockery of the regime and its operation. She,

however, focuses on the elements of conspiracy thinking, homosocial undercurrents and homosexual characteristics of the characters to analyse how the popular national discourse of a good Pakistani or a good Muslim has been contested in the novels (105-106). For that purpose, she gives example of “the queer characters” in the selected novels as they try “to establish viable affective attachments to a collective identity outside of the percepts of Zia’s Islamized state” and how their queer elements swing “the conspiracy theories’ interpretative concerns” (112). This is quite interesting analysis, but at the same time it indicates how the selected authors have conditioned these characters in order to propagate their liberal political agenda(s). I consider it important to highlight that my study of “author-function” in relation to Pakistani fiction in English is in no way informed by the nationalist discourses whether official or media driven.

Aroosa Kanwal’s *Rethinking Identities in Contemporary Pakistani Anglophone Fiction* is quite relevant to my study. Kanwal’s monograph describes how Pakistani anglophone fiction has become even more relevant especially with regard to the question of “representations of and by Pakistani Muslims” and Islamophobic discourses in the post-9/11 political context. Her study “specifically addresses the way definitions of home and identity have continued to be re-inflected and renegotiated, both in Pakistan and in the diaspora as a result of international “war on terror” rhetoric” (Kanwal 1). She explains how Pakistani anglophone fiction writers, particularly those belonging to so-called second generation, respond to and “problematize [the] identity crises resulting from the current antagonism towards Muslims and Islam, focusing on Pakistani migrants’ struggles with hyphenated identities in the context of the sometimes [sic] xenophobic imaginary” in the West (2). Kanwal thinks that the second-generation writers of English fiction from Pakistani

origin confront the negative “attitudes towards Muslims and Islam” (3). However, she also questions the way certain writers have politicized Pakistani society and Islam in their rather polemical writings. She does not think that the representations of Pakistani society by such writers have been realistic and thus expresses her concerns when it comes to using writing for the purpose of misrepresenting Pakistani society and the religion of Islam by the writers like Hanif Qureishi and Nadeem Aslam because of what she calls their personal experiences. In this regard, Kanwal’s main thesis might seem opposing at times. For example, while explaining the rationale of her study she says that she intends to “examine ways in which second generation writers of Pakistani origin inform, *criticise* and *construct* Pakistani Muslims abroad as well as in their culture of origin” (Kanwal 6; emphasis added), while in the following lines she claims that the purpose of doing that is to “discuss [the] second-generation fiction as a robust rebuttal of Western fictional representations” (6). However, I think that Kanwal’s postulation regarding the writers in question is based on the idea that while they stereotype Pakistani culture and society for the political and personal reasons, their writings also provide a rebuttal to the Western literary misrepresentation—that is based on her study of the anglophone fiction from a diverse set of lenses, which makes it very interesting. That is why while providing an unembellished criticism of some of the writers and their texts such as Nadeem Aslam and Hanif Qureshi, she also underlines and acknowledges the response of the Pakistani anglophone writers in general to the stereotypical images of Muslims and Islam in the Western literary and media narratives. In fact, she tries to explain the diverse nature of the representation in the anglophone Pakistani fiction, that cannot be fixated to either side because if it presents a critique of Pakistani society in one way, it also seems to question the partial Western narratives about the Muslims and Pakistan based on Islamophobic discourses

particular in the wake of 9/11 tragedy. She thus “suggests that second-generation writers—through their characters’ postnational and non-territorial affiliation with a global ummah—not only challenge the articulation of new orthodoxies towards Islam and Muslims in Western public discourses, but also challenge the East–West binarism” (Kanwal 12).

Adding on, Kanwal has analysed Shamsie’s and Aslam’s Muslim migrant characters with regard to their strong affiliation with homeland (Pakistan). In her early novels such as *Salt and Saffron* and *Kartography* Kamila presents how the Pakistanis belonging to the second-generation often “prefer re-routing to re-rooting as a result of experiencing sectarian conflicts [in the West]” while “Pakistani diasporics retain strong connections with their culture of origin, even in the diaspora” (12). This might be true insofar as her early novels are concerned but with the passage of time and perhaps because of the incident of 9/11 Shamsie’s idea of home changes. Also, Kanwal’s study of Maha Khan Phillips’ *Beautiful* from this Angle presents an important insight for this study of “author-function” in the objectification of fiction insofar as directing the literary trends is concerned, especially under the influence of popular political discourses and corporate culture. The novel shows how popular issues based on the media images such as gendered identity with regard to Pakistani Muslim society are politicized. That is what my study of the “author-function” has sought to bring to the fore while deconstructing the stereotypical fictional narratives of and about Pakistan, Islam, and Muslims, while also exploring the “overdetermination” of global politics. These narratives, I contend, are mainly based on, and become part of the popular political constructions.

In addition, Kanwal has explored the “connections between the post-9/11 situation of Pakistan and Islamic reforms during the era of Zia’s military dictatorship”

as well as the “political connections between Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Middle East in the context of the rise of religious extremism in these countries and the rise of Islamophobic discourses in the West” by analysing a number of novels by the second-generation writers of Pakistan (18-19). She views that in order to encompass the socio-political issues that are both national and international, the novelists have expanded the scope of their canvas, which has also been highlighted by Chambers and Clements among others. She also gives an account of the religious and Islamic *Sharaiah* allusions and references used by these writers for the purpose of finding faults in the Islamic doctrines as well as the way they are critical of the policies of the state of Pakistan when it comes to manipulating “the conservative tendencies within Islam, particularly as regards the ways it affects women [which has] arguably contributed towards the stereotyping of Muslims as intolerant and extremist by the West” (Kanwal 19). Kanwal’s explication of the setting and foregrounding of the “local, regional and global” locations as well as the “national, transnational and international” in the novels from the second-generation writers is interesting and relevant to my study of the anglophone fiction; which, she says, is quite helpful in the formation of the Muslim identities in the post-9/11 context as well as in positioning the anglophone Pakistani fiction from the position of margin to that of the centre (Kanwal 20). However, I think that the central position of the contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction in the literary world (particularly in the post-9/11 context) is less to do with literary merits of the novels and more about the global political issues engendered in the texts. Thus, in that sense, the role of the selected authors as self/re-Orientalists becomes more important. This idea, however, has not been adequately discussed given the limitation of my thesis.

Furthermore, in Kanwal's view, the religious identity politics has also informed many a Pakistani anglophone writing, particularly the ones by Hanif Qureishi, Nadeem Aslam and to an extent Mohsin Hamid. That is why perhaps identity politics has become a recurrent trope of the contemporary Pakistani English language fiction (Kanwal 37). In Chambers's view, however, the idea of religious identity politics has a lot to do with the tradition set by the earliest writers like Salman Rushdie, Hanif Qureishi and others (Chambers, *Making Sense of Contemporary British Muslim Novels* xiii-xiv, xxi). In this regard, the incident of September 11 and the subsequent developments (that led to numerous incidences of Islamophobic nature in the West) have indeed been mainly responsible in promoting the tradition of political fiction writing at least in the context of Pakistan. The neo-orientalist discourses originating from the West, particularly in the wake of the incident of September 11, are often aligned with Samuel Phillips Huntington's notion of the 'clash of civilizations' which has been picked up by the re-Orientalists (including some of the selected authors) as well as the cultural informants with a renewed fervour. In Kanwal's view, many a writer of the anglophone fiction (such as Shamsie and Hamid) have been critical of the essentialist notions about the Muslims and Islam—which point to how Muslims in large and Islam as a religion are in a way responsible for the acts of a few so-called terrorists/extremists (Kanwal 151). This is true in some cases, but I feel that the anglophone writers are also playing with such notions and the stereotypical images of Muslims, Islam and Pakistanis in their narratives, perhaps, in order to sensationalise their narratives while at the same time making sure that their novels are controversial so as to create a stir in the literary circles and political debates—which they can win then them acclaims and accolades.

David Waterman's *Where Worlds Collide: Pakistani Fiction in the New Millennium* (2015) provides an important historical socio-cultural and political critique of the contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction produced by the second-generation writers since the 1990s to the time of the publication of his book i.e., 2015. Waterman has situated the contemporary fiction in terms of the rich cultural history of the subcontinent while at the same time locating it in the contemporary socio-political and cultural issues that the country has been facing from 1971 onwards. He acknowledges the influence of the first-generation writers as the pioneers of the Pakistani writings in English, which include Bapsi Sidhwa, Zulfiqar Ghose, Sara Suleri and Hanif Kureishi, however, his focus remains mainly on the major contemporary writers such as Mohsin Hamid, Nadeem Aslam, Kamila Shamsie, Uzma Aslam Khan, Muhammad Hanif, Sorayya Khan and H. M. Naqvi. In many ways, Waterman's work is an extension of Kanwal's study of the Pakistani anglophone fiction—that is why he says that the “narratives of Pakistan must compete in the West with the images, prejudices and stereotypes engendered by [the] political discourse and relayed by the press, generally focusing on Pakistan as a problematic partner in the so-called war on terror” (Waterman 1). He thinks that that in general Pakistani fiction in English happens to be historical in nature as it narrates the story of the young nation of Pakistan (Waterman 5). In my view most if not all the contemporary Pakistani anglophone novels do not seem to provide a counternarrative to the rising Islamophobic feelings in the West rather they happen to have dramatised that particularly in the wake of the incident of September 11, 2001. Thus, this study of the author's function in relation to the selected novels exposes how the implied authors reinforce the stereotypical representation of both, the Islamic world and

Western society, in order to create drama and conflict by analysing the authorial agency in this regard.

Moreover, while discussing Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004), Waterman explores the cultural trauma faced by the Pakistani immigrants to the UK which in his view has intensified their vulnerabilities and insecurities in atmosphere of hatred and Islamophobia in the West, particularly in the wake of 9/11. He focusses on the role of memory in the formation of cultural identity while at the same time negotiating with the modernity of the Western locale. He calls *Maps for Lost Lovers* "a clash of civilization novel, in Huntington's sense", but at the same time maintains that it also presents a critique of the concepts of tradition, nativity and modernity in the diasporic context of the UK (Waterman 110-111). Waterman also thinks that the antagonism between the conservative Islamic values and the modern Western culture cannot simply explain in totality the complex relationship between the Pakistani and British ways of life, because, he argues, Pakistan is not as a conservative society as one might think in the UK for it has almost all the institutions of a modern democratic state, such as democracy, judiciary, communication system, market economy, industry, information technology and so on (111-112). In that sense Waterman contests the monolithic notion about Pakistan as a conservative society rather than a modern democratic one. In my view Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers* seems to promote the notion undemocratic and conservative notions about religion in general, Islam, Pakistan, and its society rather than problematising those as everything in the novel appears to have been looked at through a rather myopic lens. Thus, Aslam's novels in that sense present a critique of the religious dogmas which is often characterised by sweeping generalisation because of his own lack of the proper understanding of religious teaching especially Islam, which is why he seems to have missed on various

important and positive sides of religion in general and Islam in particular as Kanwal has explained in her study of Aslam's fiction (158-160) which also make a good part of my own analysis in this study. It is not just Islam but the very concept of religion that has been disputed in his novels (particularly in *Maps for Lost Lovers*) but Islam more so because of the fact that the religious dogmas have been intermeshed with Islam in a way to highlight the incompatibility of Islam vis-à-vis modern democratic Western society. Aslam's frequent use of the fixed nations of identity of his religious Muslim characters such as Kaukab in *Maps for Lost Lovers* are often shown to have caused distress and resulted in the disintegration of the families. That in a way presents a manifestation of his concept of identity formation as an ongoing process despite the religious orthodoxy of some characters. However, at the same time, Aslam does seem to counter the absolutist notions about the immigrants based on race particularly in the milieu of cultural diversity of the West. Waterman explains the paradoxes and complexities related to the spaces of orthodoxy and cultural plurality in the context of British diaspora and Aslam's portrayal of that in the novel (Waterman 112). Thus, Waterman shows how Aslam's characters indicate a paradox in that the cultural trauma can either lead to form or collapse a sense of community and a notion of identity as the immigrants in *Maps for Lost Lovers* "seek to re-establish the traditions and customs which they recognize and which contribute to their sense of identity by association, through a politics of arbitrary closure" (Waterman 115-116).

Furthermore, Waterman explores the issues of exceptions and constituency with reference to H. M. Naqvi's *Home Boy* (2009). He explains the role of American state in creating what he calls a "lawless space" where, to quote Moira Fradinger, "violence is rationalized by the rhetoric of constituency survival and temporarily tolerated by the legal institutions" (qtd. in Waterman 139). Waterman's study of the

novel shows that despite the increased emphasis of the human rights globally, in the post-9/11 American context the state becomes more powerful in deciding who is or is not a good citizen and who has or does not have certain rights and privileges. The novel also shows how because of the 9/11 Pakistani/Muslim identity becomes, if not synonymous to terrorist, a suspect of terrorism. In this regard, he gives the example of the involvement of the FBI to arrest the trio (who call themselves “three Metrostanis”) when they break into the house of the Shaman, one of their friends, just to wait for him inside his house. Their act in the larger context of the 9/11 gets taken seriously by the security officials as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) arrives immediately. Thus, the trivial matter which otherwise would have been a private affair and dealt locally is treated as a serious matter of national security just because the subjects happen to be three so-called Muslims of Pakistani origin because otherwise such petty matter are dealt by the local police (Naqvi 99-100).

Claire Chambers has extensively studied Pakistani anglophone fiction though mostly in the British Muslim context. Chambers has shown how the contemporary fiction has responded to the Western stereotypical views about Islam and Muslims while at the same time problematising the reductive approaches of marketing identity issues on the part of the selected authors. Her first book, *British Muslim Fictions: Interviews with Contemporary Writers* (2011), includes interviews with a number of Pakistani anglophone fiction writers including Tariq Ali, Nadeem Aslam, Mohsin Hamid and Kamila Shamsie. She thinks that the Pakistani writings in English provide useful socio-historical account through a diverse portrayal of the contemporary national and international political, social, and cultural events and issues while at the same time highlighting the problems of representation on the part of the selected authors. She discusses these writers and their works “in relation to religious identities,

[which she thinks] is increasingly gaining recognition from critics, literary prize boards, and research students” (Chambers, *British Muslim Fiction* 1) especially in the wake of the attacks of September 11, 2001, in New York. Thus, political Islam, Muslim identity, Islamophobia in Britain and West and the issues of the representation of Muslims and Islam in the British and Western societies in particular, and the ways the anglophone fiction writers from Pakistan and elsewhere respond to such issues (that are being confronted by the Muslims people and their societies in the West and elsewhere) remain in the focus of Chambers’s writings (13).

Chambers catalogues Pakistani writings in English as a part of larger South Asian tradition of anglophone writings that dates back to the pre-partition of the Indian subcontinent by using Amin Malik’s idea of Muslim narratives as insiders’ view of Islam. However, she maintains that Pakistani writings are distinct from other South Asian (such as India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka) primarily because of Pakistan’s Muslim identity and its affiliation with the Middle East and other Muslim world (14). While taking into account Peter Morey and Amina Yaqin’s works on Islamophobia and representation of Muslims which in her view provide a rather global understanding of the issues of Muslim branding, she discusses the evolution of Muslimness as an identity and the political complexities that become attached to it. Chambers explains the terms like “British Muslims”, “Muslim authors” or “writers of Muslim heritage” and so on thoroughly with a particular focus on the British context, as she explains that they are often misused to demonize communities as we have seen in case of Muslims in the wake of the so-called war against terrorism—which, in her view, has resulted in the “current divisive geopolitics, [because of which] there is a growing and often greatly exaggerated anxiety about Muslims, Islam, Islamism, and terrorism, that are often unhelpfully conflated” (17-18, 24). That is why perhaps she

chooses the British Muslim writers and prefers to use the term, “writers of Muslim heritage”, rather than Muslim writers. Also, she is not interested in discussing the religiosity of their texts but rather how the authors respond to the issues she has highlighted with regard to the Muslims’ representation and Islamophobia in their texts while examining the intertexts, literary techniques and themes. She thinks that the selected authors tackle the issues of representation and phobia in their writing in diverse ways, hence, it cannot be defined in clear categorical terms (14). Despite that, she identifies certain similarities among the writers of Pakistani origins such as Shamsie, Hamid and Aslam, which provides an important context for my study of “author-function” in relation to the contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction that includes these. Later while explaining the rationale of analysing various authors of the Muslim origin, she clarifies that she does “not wish to suggest that writers of Muslim heritage represent a closed group” and that her aims has been to include diverse narratives while at the same time showing differences among them. Her “interviews draw attention to an absence of univocity, indicating that—notwithstanding the attempts in sections of mainstream fiction and the media mentioned earlier to portray Muslims as a monolithic group—these creative writers are highly heterogeneous and sometimes conflicting thinkers” (26). She argues how despite having several differences in terms of their worldviews many common themes can be traced in the writings of her selected authors. She also points out the way writers of Muslim heritage that include Shamsie and Aslan “dramatize issues relating to asylum, migration, and discourses of Otherness in their fiction” (24). In this regard, while giving examples of Hanif Kureishi, Salman Rushdie, Monica Ali, and Sherry Jones she argues that “even fiction writers can be criticized for misrepresenting or producing ‘inauthentic’ accounts of the subjects they portray” (26). However,

Chambers concludes by accentuating the importance of discussing fiction writers of Muslim origin “without pigeonholing individuals or according greater importance than is warranted to the religious or civilizational aspects of their Muslim identity” (270) and that it would be wrong to consider Islam in terms of monolithic entity given its diversity and inclusiveness. In that regard, she discusses the way religion in general and Islam in particular has been politicized as if it were a homogenous culture, while strongly repudiating it (270-271). She also cites Amin Malik to problematize the stereotypical idea of identity which, she says, is often taken purely in the religious sense particularly with respect to the Muslims living in the West—which might be an important aspect of their identity, yet, she contends that by arguing that there can be numerous other factors to define an individual’s identity such as gender, class, ethnicity etc.—that, she opines, are seldom taken into account mainly when it comes to defining Muslims in the West (271). Thus, the book, in a way, is an attempt “to correct misconceptions about Muslims in Britain as strangers and Other” (272). In this regard, Tahir Abbas’ study of Islamophobia, multiculturalism, and the role of State and politics in relation to the British South Asian Muslims is quite important. Abbas defines Islamophobia in view of the conventional media and mainstream politics while explaining how in Britain the “notions of cultural and social identifications of the “Other” stem from an understanding and experience of imperialism and colonialism” (Abbas 28). He believes that the current portrayal of Muslims and rise of Islamophobia or what he calls racial prejudice against the British Muslims is different from the old tradition of Islamophobia in the sense that it is quite subtle and more systemic, and that it has been associated with extremism/terrorism (30). Following Chambers’s Interviews of the anglophone fiction writers, Mushtaq Bilal has also published *Writing Pakistan: Conversations on Identity Nationhood and*

Fiction (2016) in which he has tried to probe the questions regarding representation, misconceptions, stereotyping, political underlining, postcolonial expectations, censorship and influences, etc. (Bilal 21).

Besides, in *Britain Through Muslim Eyes: Literary Representations, 1780-1988* (2015), Chambers extends her discussion of the representation of Islam in British and South Asian fiction by the writers of Muslim origin, while in her latest work, *Making Sense of Contemporary British Muslim Novels* (2019), she analyses the novels by what she calls “Muslim-identified authors”—which include the most recently published novels by Aslam, Shamsie and Hamid among other writers’ latest works. She contends that the fatwa issued by the Iranian supreme leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, against Salman Rushdie for his *The Satanic Verses* of 1989 rather than the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York City in 2001 has been the turning point in the rise of religious identity politics and representation of Muslims and Islam in the mainstream politics in the West that, she says, led to the “emergence of a specific form of Islamophobia in British culture” (*Making Sense* xiii) as she argues that “[w]hereas national origins and race had previously been interpreted as the dominant attributes of particular migrant groups, it was after the Rushdie affair and then accelerated by 9/11 that religion came to the forefront in British debates about multiculturalism” (xxi). In this regard, Chambers refers to *The Clash of Civilization* (1993) by Samuel Huntington that brands Islam as the new enemy that led to the rise of Islamophobic discourse in the West (xxi). Her study of the selected novelists demonstrates a common obligation to the questions of Islamophobic and other experiences, particularly as reflected through various senses (xiv). Chambers takes into account the last thirty years of fictional representations of Muslims and Islam in order to trace the stereotypes and the issues of representations as well as their counter-

discourse as she “defines new paradigms for literature that engage with, while going beyond, both postcolonial and sensory studies debates” (xiii). She believes that majority of the contemporary Muslim-heritage authors including Aslam feature multiculturalism (that she explores through the description of the sense of smell) in Britain and its failure in the wake of the events that follow the 9/11 and 7/7. She also traces the negative impact of multiculturalism on minorities and women in particular that it was supposed to protect (71-71). Chambers explains, albeit briefly, how the novels such as *Maps for Lost Lovers* and *Brick Lane*, are critical of Islam but her focus remains on the sensory depiction in these novels. Aslam, she says, uses “specifically Muslim South Asian myths, art forms, and religious stories in order to translate and transculture the England in which his characters live” which, in her view, help to forge what she calls pluralistic but at the sometime contradictory identities through transculturation. In this regard, she gives the example of his use of sensory images, similes, and metaphors from Urdu ghazals of Ghalib and others and the qawwalis of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan (86-87).

Moreover, Chambers shows how “literary “texts can supplement sociological, psychological, and criminological analyses of radicalization” (201) by analysing Shamsie’s *Home Fire* and Tabish Khair’s *Just Another Jihadi Jane*, which tell the tales of radicalization of the British Muslims. To do that she explores the leitmotifs of sound and fury and the way these themes relate to the radicalized subjects such as Parvaiz (169). Chambers points out how Shamsie has been influenced by Charlie Winter’s theorization of the Islamic radicalization that she incorporates in her novel, *Home Fire*, (173). That, I think, indicates how the authors pick on the ideas in order to situate their fiction around the popular issues and ongoing conflicts. Chambers, however, makes it clear that Shamsie’s portrayal of London or the UK, and West, for

that matter, is unlike that of *Daish's* problematic portrayal of the West as "other" as she depicts the hospitable environment and diversity of life in London in *Home Fire*, yet, at the same time, pointing to the Islamophobic and anti-migrant feelings (180). Thus, Chambers thinks that literary texts by Shamsie and others are important for providing a socio-political explanation of the issues that are confronted by the British society in the wake of Brexit and the rise of anti-immigrant feelings in Britain, because, she says, "Fiction delves beneath words to shadow forth why individuals have spoken them, and what symbolic bearing they have on our age" (201).

Furthermore, in her analysis of Hamid's *Exit West*, Chambers delves into the issues of refugees, cultural divide between the natives and immigrants, and posthuman sensory perceptions in, what she calls, a digital age, which are "subjecting us to new forms of control...[but] they are also allowing us to enhance and extend the range of our senses" (213). She "gives cultural and historical contexts of Hamid's novel" (242) including the colonial past and recent native-migrant-divide especially with respect to the election of Donald Trump as the US president while focusing on the issue of Migrants' plight in the wake of the mass migration in the backdrop of the political conflict mainly in the Middle East. Moreover, she states that Hamid's use of sensuous geographies in the novel are otherworldly and posthuman that create tensions which in a way oppose the idea of globalization (216). Chambers also explains how *Exit West* demonstrates the use of technology by the refugees who happen to be otherwise powerless in posthuman ways to make possible their journeys across geographic boundaries and cultural divides (217).

Madeline Clements in *Writing Islam from a South Asian Muslim Perspective* (2016) has analysed the selected novels by four South Asian novelists that include Rushdie, Hamid, Shamsie and Aslam, in terms of their response to what she calls "a

reductive trend in Anglo-American discussion about Islam” particularly in the wake of the attacks of September 11, 2001. Basically, she explores how the selected novels portray Islam and Muslims particularly in the South Asian context (both at home and in the Western diasporas) in the backdrop of the rise of the main-stream discourses of the American-led war against the terror. She does that by juxtaposing their fictional narratives with the non-fiction writings including the journalistic essays offered by most writers as well as their biographical details. Her emphasis, as the title of the book shows, remains mainly on the representation of Islam and Muslims in the fictional depictions of the selected novels by four acclaimed South Asian writers with a particular focus on the cross-cultural conflict and inter-faith harmony (Clements 10). In this regard, she tackles the question of representation by the selected novelist by introducing the readers to the often-quoted issues of representation.

She begins by referring to Said’s tradition and the complexity of the issues of representation of Muslims and Islam Muslim world as she seeks to explore “how, as authors of Indian and Pakistani origin, Rushdie, Hamid, Aslam and Shamsie negotiate their identities and the tensions of being seen to act as Muslim spokespeople in (conscious) relation to the complex international and geopolitical contexts in which they write” (Clements 3). Yet she seems to contest the authenticity of their portrayal of Islam and Muslims. She also thinks that these writers are critical of the multicultural idea but at the same believes that they offer global understanding of the complex political issues (Clements 2-3, 9). Clements’ analysis of the novels has been helpful in developing my own argument so far as the problematics of the fictional portrayal by the contemporary Pakistani anglophone writers is concerned as I too contend the idea that these writers represent the Muslim world or, for that matter, Western and that they play a role for bridging the two worlds. I think that by pitting

the Islamic worldview with the Western concept of democracy they are employing conflicts within their narratives, that in a way reinforces the stereotyping on both sides while broadening the fault lines rather than bridging the gulf. Clements also points out how the selected writers consciously set their stories in the global settings and politicize the subject matter, which she argues helps them in gaining the symbolic importance (9), which I think is more about gaining political significance of their writings rather than analysing the issues as such. Therefore, in my view it is a conscious effort on the part of these writers to become a part of the debates surrounding the controversial political issues so as to create dramatization based on clichés rather than creating an artistic nuisance. That is why the settings are chosen carefully in order to situate the story in a conflict zone and the subject matter is pre-decided so that the political events in currency are exploited in their novels—which in my view is meant to remain relevant politically by creating controversies and showing conflicts in their novels and explaining the same in their non-fiction writings. This not only helps them in gaining larger readership but also grabbing spaces in the literature festivals etc. which is one of the demands of the publishing industry, other than writing political and issue-driven fiction. Thus, the choice of taking the responsibility of becoming a part of the political debate within the fictional world and outside by the contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction writers is an extension of the idea of “author-function” which becomes even more interesting given the nexus of the “institutional system” of the writer and the neoliberal economy represented by the publishing market in that regard. Moreover, while situating her argument in Paul Gilroy’s idea (which posits that the post-9/11 has led to a rise of conflicts “between people of different races and ethnicities [as a result of which certain communities] have come to be viewed with scepticism”), Clements argues that her selected novels

take into account the desire of the Muslim community to integrate and gain equal importance in the Western cosmopolitan society (10). Clements understands how the marketability of anglophone literature and the exoticism that gets built around it determines fictional narratives and their selling as has been explained by Huggan and Brennan. But her focus remains on the depiction of Islam and Muslims in the multi-cultural interactions in the anglophone fiction of the selected novels (11-13). Clements also seems to suggest that the fictional accounts and non-fictional writings by her selected writers may be combined to better understand their viewpoints as she believes that the fictional narrative of these writers seem to be situated in the real-life experiences and events but also because the narratives are quite expressive in their own right (22), which has been helpful in situating this study. Although Clements explores the ways in which these writers are similar so far as the depiction of Islam and Muslims is concerned, she also highlights the differences in terms of their portrayals. In this regard, she places Salman Rushdie as a trend maker in larger tradition of political anglophone fiction writings in South Asia, which is why she has included him among the writers from Pakistani diaspora, while at the same time underlining how various writers depart from certain norms of writing, both in terms of the form and content.

In addition, Clements has discussed Huggan's idea of the commercialisation of postcolonial studies, while underlining that Shamsie is well aware of the commercial aspects of her novels and how all her post-9/11 novels depict the international political issues in currency through privileged cosmopolitan characters (129), yet, she argues that Shamsie's portrayal goes beyond Huggan's idea of exotic politics as she shifts her focus to the present-day apprehensions about Islamic differences both at home and in the diaspora (133). I think that Shamsie, like her

contemporaries, tends to play with her cultural and gender positionality as an author by situating her novels in a globalized political setting and delving into the issues of global political nature as well as by politicizing the South Asian domestic issues of cultural and religious identification in her novels, which ultimately foregrounds the commerciality of her works, whether she does that intentionally or not. I argue that Shamsie does seem to play with the popular issues related to the identity politics, whether by involving stereotypical portrayal of Muslims or Westerners or framing of her woman characters, who are often shown quite resourceful in some cases yet helpless when it comes to exercising their free will in the so-called patriarchal South Asian Muslim societies, which, in Clements' view, does not sustain.

Masood Ashraf Raja has recently presented an interesting critique of the contemporary diasporic Pakistani anglophonic fiction by relating to Ahmad's concerns of the influence of cosmopolitan market in the determination of the writing culture. Raja says that most of the Pakistani writers in English in the diaspora use the "native raw material" while their writings are "aimed at metropolitan audiences", therefore, thus their writings are "strongly overdetermined even before a book is perceived, written and published" (348). He elaborates that the hopes and aspirations of the metropolitan readers are "prescribed in an act of writing performed" by the anglophone writers from the so-called postcolonial countries such as Pakistan (348). Unlike Rahman, Raja considers Pakistani anglophone literature a part of the postcolonial writing traditions such as African and Indian which could be an interesting inquiry given the fact that the contemporary diasporic Pakistani writers (such as Aslam) are in no way writing back to the metropolitan centre the way the African writers like Chinua Achebe and Ngugi wa Thiong'o have done, yet, there is an aspect of the contemporary fiction which could be considered as such or at least

studied from the so-called postcolonial perspective. I have discussed this so-called postcolonial aspect of the contemporary Pakistani anglophone novel later in the chapter in relation to the more recent critical writings particularly the ones by Chambers, Kanwal, and Clements. Also, the way Raja problematises the linkages between the acts of writing, publishing, and the larger political nature of literary production is quite interesting and relevant to my own study of the “author-function”. Raja employs Bourdieu’s concept of habitus to explain the worldliness or otherwise of the Pakistani writings in English. He views that most if not all Pakistani writers in English particularly the ones in the diaspora often get determined by what he calls their “cosmopolitan habitus”. He believes that these writers “unconsciously forestall and incorporate the expectations of the metropolitan market in their writings” that relates to what I contend in the present study where I also look at the relationship of literary production to the publishing industry that include publishing houses, the politics, and economics of publishing and the “institutional system” that I often refer to in my study of Pakistani anglophone fiction.

Apart from these, many other writers have studied Pakistani anglophone fiction through various perspectives some of those (that I deem more relevant) include Nukhbah Taj Langah who has studied the post-9/11 Pakistani anglophone fiction by connecting the processes of what she calls the Islamization at home and rise of Islamophobia abroad, that she believes have influenced the formation of Pakistani-Muslim identity in the post-9/11 political context (Langah 79-80). She argues that “within the local context Islamization and at the international level Islamophobia complemented each other and contributed toward the ongoing stigmatisation and stereotyping of Muslim and Pakistani identity” (Langah 79). She, however, challenges the notion that the complex political discourse that 9/11 has generated can be

understood through fiction, yet she relies on the fiction produced around 9/1, though partly, to substantiate her argument (80). She has analysed selected fiction by Hamid and Shamsie (along with texts from other forms of arts) to suggest that whereas the artist have resisted Islamophobia through various literary techniques, they have also highlighted the way Zia's project of Islamization has been influential in creating the grounds for has contributed towards the increase of religious bigotry including Islamophobia in the West (93). Therefore, Langah concludes that "[a]t one level most of these authors also want to replace the negativity related to 9/11 and Muslim-Pakistani identity and emphasize the need for initiating a dialogue through various literary and cultural discourses" (92-93). Likewise, Shazia Rahman has studied "Pakistani women's lives, particularly in terms of how they engage with the land and their environment" by analysing the selected woman characters in terms of the alternative ways of belonging and environment that provides a counter analysis of the "dominant discourses of religious nationalism and global Islam" (Rahman 05). She addresses the "place-based identities as a vital concept in Pakistani culture" which contributes to the current debates especially those related to the place of women in Pakistani society vis-à-vis non-human environment and patriarchal discourses (Rahman 06). More recently, Aamer Shaheen and Nazir have contributed to the existing debates regarding the socio-political relevance of the Pakistani anglophone fiction by analysing the national imagination and diasporic identities in relation to the post-9/11 political context. Shaheen, in his study of the selected contemporary Pakistani anglophone novels, analyses the impacts of 9/11 and its aftermath on Pakistani society that led to terror and trauma as has been recorded in the selected novels by Aslam and his contemporaries such as Hamid and Naqvi besides others. He argues that Hamid and Naqvi "allude to the post-9/11 socio-political conditions of the

American society, blinded by exclusive American nationalism.” (Shaheen 142). Nazir’s important response to the contemporary anglophone fiction underlines the need to study fictional works in the context of the socio-political history, particularly the one defined by the 9/11. Although Nazir is “interested in analysing representations that deconstruct the orientalist attitudes and beliefs as in the literary and cultural contexts, [he also believes that the] oppositional attitudes are often seen to be derived from the very discourse which they try to oppose” (Orientalism Post 9/11 18). That is why while Nazir tries to focus “how certain Pakistani writers in their selected texts deconstruct the orientalist discourse by the use of innovative narrative techniques and textual structures”, he has identified some neo-orientalist/self/re-Orientalist inclinations with reference to some anglophone Pakistani writers who he thinks “have reinforced the orientalist discourse in their selected works” (19). Apart from these, a number of other relatively less well-known works/ and less relevant to this study yet very important contributions have been made that include the following, among others: Zakia Shahzeb and Shahzeb Khan have analysed Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* from the perspective of neoliberal epistemology by showing the way “all human relationships have been surrogated to capital pursuits” (448) as shown in the novel. They give example of how Changez is asked by Jim, his employer, to focus on the fundamentals of the capitalist system (that essentially relate to the idea of maximizing the profit) while showing also how neoliberalism operates more like imperialism with regard to the poor nations like Pakistan, that Changez realises later (443). The researchers contend that the “political (neoliberal) ideologies and colonial economic ideologies affect the epistemic understandings of socio-cultural spaces, human beings and their relationships of love” (448). Gheorghiu has shown how, through the use of magical realism, Hamid, like Salman Rushdie, has highlighted the

refugee crisis in the wake of the recent international political conflicts and ensuing civil wars in his last novel, *Exit West* (80, 88-89). Pei-chen Liao has analysed Shamsie's *Offence: The Muslim Case*, a non-fiction work, in coalescence with her two topical novels, *Burnt Shadows* and *A God in Every Stone* while examining her engagement with local and global politics which she terms critical cosmopolitan. She reveals how Shamsie's writings remain "locally rooted, universally diverse, and essentially self-reflective" (263-264). She also thinks that while Shamsie's fiction has effectively represented the "marginalized Pakistanis, Muslims, migrants, and women by showing the imbalances in the "international and cross-cultural relations, it also acutely discerns, from a micro-societal perspective, changes within personal, national, and other local identities" (Liao 264). Esra Santesso has analysed the treatment of human rights by Shamsie and Hanif in their selected novels. She shows how the novelists have employed various characters to challenge General Zia-ul-Haq's concept of Islamization while at the same time highlighting the gross human rights violation particularly under the martial law rule as portrayed through various characters in *Broken Verse* by Shamsie and *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* by Hanif (Santesso 128-129). Likewise, Shazia Sadaf has also traced what she calls the rise of human rights literature in English from Pakistan. However, while she recognises the genuine issues of human rights with respect to the Pakistani society, she seeks to question the portrayal of the so-called issues of human rights in the anglophone literature by suggesting a nuanced understanding of such projections as she believes they are often influenced by colonialism (Sadaf 141). She, nevertheless, hints at a shift that has brought the foci of Pakistani literature to more humanitarian aspects—which—I believe will make a better brand of Pakistani anglophone literature, Sadaf suggests (141). Daryoosh Hayati has studied the dilemma of dual identity that

Changez is faced with in Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* as the Eastern and Western identities clash amid the incident of 9/11 in the US (31). Likewise, Asma Mansoor has analysed the post-9/11 identity crisis in H.M. Naqvi's *Home Boy* while examining the idea of self and the way it gets translated into political consciousness when a person is othered and how the narrative in the novel problematises the stereotypical framing of Muslims in the West (particularly the US) in the aftermath of the incident of 9/11 (14-15). Sayyid and Yaqoob have also studied what they call "Religifiction of Metrostanis in the Post-9/11 Era" wherein they have analysed how the post-9/11 narratives by the selected Pakistani writers that include *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Hamid and *Home Boy* by Naqvi deal with the issues of the so-called "racialisation of Islam" in the discourses that were operated after the incident of 9/11 while exposing how the idea of identity gets constructed in the wake of the complex configuration of social and political realities in the post-9/11 political context (318-333). In addition to that, numerous studies from diverse cultural backgrounds and lenses have analysed the impact of 9/11 and its aftermath including the issues of the rise of Islamophobia and cultural clash in the Western diasporic settings through varied perspectives but essentially relying on the textual portrayals of the treatment of the Muslim characters in the American and European societies by the anglophone writers of the Pakistani origin (Anjaria 51-52, 54-55; Nordinger 60-65; Zaidi and Sahibzada 10-15; Mustafa 8-10; Azeem 77-81; Frank 178-179; Abderrazag and Serir 101-102; Shihada 553-555, 561-563; Keezhatta and Tilwani 343-345, 348; Lao and Mendes 80-85; Mehmood and Janjua 15-16; Soukaï 70).

This review of the scholarship on the contemporary Pakistani anglophone literature (in general) and fiction (in particular) indicates how the recent boom of Pakistani anglophone fiction has received tremendous attention in South Asia and

beyond. I contend that the overwhelming reception and acclamation of the contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction (particularly) in the Western academy have a lot to do not just with the emergence of the so-called postcolonial publishing market but also because of the fact that the South Asian region especially Pakistan and Afghanistan have been in the limelight of the global politics following the 9/11, the Afghans conflict and the insurgency in Pakistan and elsewhere. In many ways these historical occurrences have been treated by many as watershed moments in redefining the relationship between Islam and the West. This review of literature confirms that the foci of the critical writings about the anglophone Pakistani novel thus far have mainly been on the expressive value of the anglophone Pakistani fiction; that have, indeed, provided useful interpretations of the fictional merits while problematising the issues of representation, diasporic identity issues, experimental nature of Pakistani English language fiction and the questions self/re-Orientalist views and so on. This study departs in ways of exploring the questions of the socio-political and cultural overdetermination of fictional plots as well as the politicisation of locales and exploitation of characters on the part of the author while treating them as function/discourse makers or ideological figures; which, I contend, results in the objectification of fiction. This research, thus, fills the gap by providing an-in-depth analysis of how implied author functions as an instrument in proliferation of popular and dominant ideas consciously or unconsciously while at the same time creating and limiting discourses.

CHAPTER 3

SOCIO-CULTURAL AND POLITICAL OVERDETERMINATION IN KAMILA SHAMSIE'S (SELECTED) NOVELS

This chapter provides a symptomatic analysis of the implied author with reference to Shamsie's selected novels including *Burnt Shadows* (2009) and *Home Fire* (2017). The chapter has also provided answers to the questions related to the way Shamsie's art of fiction gets conditioned by the political "overdetermination" and politicisation of popular global issues/conflicts born out of the global wars, political conflicts, gendered and religious identity issues, East-West or, for that matter, Islam-West cultural and civilizational divide as well as the ensuing political issues springing out of the Afghan conflicts as well as the incident of 9/11 and its aftermath. This has been done by adopting Bourdieu's theorisation of "cultural production"—which explains how cultural productions (including literature/fiction) are determined by the socio-cultural conditions of the time (Bourdieu 9-12). Ahmad's "politics of culture" helps understand the recent emergence of Third World novel and the cultural politics in relation to novel writing, particularly by the so-called postcolonial authors (*Politics of Culture* 66-68; *In Theory* 41, 213). Ahmad also talk of the ways and need to demystify the Third World literature/fiction to avoid cultural fetishism/political overdetermination (*In Theory* 43/45). In this regard, Cilano explicates the way Shamsie has implicated Pakistan, Afghanistan and the US in her international narratives while exploring how migrancy leads to what she calls reluctance of belonging and identity myths among the major characters in the novel (Cilano 215). She has also explained how Shamsie rejects or at least problematises nationalism as a divisive regime and, thus, proposes a diverse, inclusive, and multicultural society

(222), as has been represented by Lara in *The Wasted Vigil* and Hiroko, Sajjad and Harry in *Burnt Shadows*.

3.1 *Burnt Shadows* (2009)

Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows* recounts the impact of global conflicts and chaos following the wars across time and continents on the ordinary people and societies. It begins in Nagasaki, Japan, in August 1945, exactly during the time of World War-II. Hiroko Tanaka, a twenty-one-year-old Japanese girl is shown talking to the love of her life Konrad Weiss, a twenty-nine-year-old German man as they prepare to marry. That is exactly when the atomic bomb detonates in the city obliterating everything around them. Konrad gets killed by the atomic bomb while Hiroko survives but carries the bird-shaped scorches all over her back, which as a reminder of the tragedy go on to define her entire life. She moves to live with Konrad's sister, Elizabeth, where she marries Sajjad Ashraf, an employee of the Burtons, with whom she comes to live in Pakistan following the partition of India. The story then suddenly moves many decades ahead to the 1980s with the backdrop of the war between the Soviets and Afghans in Afghanistan as the second generation of Burton and Ashraf become engaged in Afghanistan and then in New York City (US) amid 9/11. Thus, "*Burnt Shadows* is different in that the expectation of a happy ending is frustrated by a last-minute turn in events, but the form of the novel, a flashback, means that events were already determined" (King 148).

3.1.1 Socio-Political Overdetermination and Identity Politics in Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows*

In this section, I have analysed how the implied author of Shamsie implicates the global politics and international conflicts while building her plot, choosing locales, and situating events in this novel. In order to do that, I have explicated the spatial and temporal elements under the influence of political "overdetermination" of the

narrative. This has been done by using Bourdieu's concept of the cultural field wherein he explains how writers/artists are led to appropriate the popular trends as they become a part of the habitus of the literary field (Bourdieu 39). I think, this novel provides a clear example of this kind of fictional objectification as it tells a tale of three generations told over a period of more than half a century (60 years) involving seven countries (i.e., Japan, India, Pakistan, Turkey, Afghanistan, Germany, and the US). It is spread over several socio-political issues including the Second World War, partition of India, war in Afghanistan against Soviet Union, the incident of September 11 and the post-9/11-US and its war in Afghanistan against the Taliban. The natural law of cause-and-effect is seldom followed as the characters are led to wherever some political event(s) of global importance take place. This shows how political overdeterminism bounds the plot and structures narrative. On this subject, Madeline Clements in her study of the Pakistani anglophone fiction has explained, albeit briefly, how Huggan's "postcolonial exotic" relates to the contemporary anglophone fiction from Pakistan (such as that of Shamsie's). She explains how Huggan "identifies the ways in which writers operating within a discourse of the exotic may manipulate its tropes in order to some extent to critique them" (Clements 128). In this regard, Ahmad exposes "the relation between the internal structure of such rhetorical forms [novels] and the historical coordinates within which they arise" (Ahmad, *In Theory* 13), that has informed the discussion in this chapter.

The novel begins in Nagasaki, Japan, during the World War-II in 1945 exactly at the time when the US drops two atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. It seems that the choice of this particular time in history and place has been made deliberately to situate the story amid the global conflict i.e., World War-II and its aftermath. The Japanese Hiroko Tanaka and German Konrad Weiss are shown

to be in love as they prepare to get married. However, the bomb devastates their world as it kills Konrad and leaves Hiroko injured with burnt shadows all over her back. The shadows go on to become a permanent reference to the horrendous incident as she carries the signs of the horror of war around the world. Interestingly, the terror of wars runs throughout the novel and her life. I have used her first name as that is what she is called in the novel, Hiroko. As this study analyses in what ways the implied author manipulates events and exploits characters for the purpose of politicising fictional narrative and textual discourses, it is quite interesting how Hiroko appears in Nagasaki at the time when the city becomes hapless victim of the American atomic attack which transforms her existence. The narrative then takes a twist as Hiroko moves to India exactly at the time of the partition of India in 1947. This time the author casts Sajjad Ashraf, a native Indian, who develops an intimate relationship with Hiroko partly because of the fact that the burnt shadows on Hiroko's back (which serve as a reminder of her Japanese tragedy) move Sajjad. Also, the way author brings Hiroko and Sajjad closer is quite interesting as Sajjad starts teaching her Urdu. Their relationship that is initially friendly soon grows into something more intimate. When during the lesson Hiroko asks Sajjad of the prospects of his wedding with one of his cousins, Sajjad asks Hiroko if she would ever marry after what has happened to her with respect to Konrad. Hiroko explains that she will never be married but that is not because of losing Konrad but in fact because of what the bomb did to her as she shows Sajjad her burns which makes Sajjad sentimental as he starts caressing her body that gets sensual. Hiroko screams out loud that brings Elizabeth out to see Hiroko half naked and Sajjad hold onto his paints (Shamsie, *Burnt Shadows* 90-92). The incident is understood as an attempt of rape by Elizabeth who then reports that to James, her husband, and advises him to fire Sajjad that James does despite

Hiroko's insistence that it was not Sajjad's fault. What is important in this incident is the way Shamsie creates *A Passage to India* type controversy around the cultural cliché of India and in order to bring Sajjad and Hiroko closer into an intimate relationship. That is why after the incident both Hiroko and Sajjad start thinking about each other more seriously as Hiroko senses that Sajjad's feelings for her are genuine; that is why he has touched her lovingly despite her "ugly" burns while Sajjad feels the same for Hiroko as he tells his brothers during the funeral of their mother that he has been planning to marry a Japanese girl which turns out to be true as Sajjad returns to Burton despite having been fired and marries Hiroko soon after in spite of Elizabeth's warning that Hiroko will never belong to the world of Sajjad nor Sajjad to hers (97). Hiroko rebukes Elizabeth for being xenophobic and thinks that the "Englishwomen was crazy" (98). This explains how the implied author of Shamsie regenerates the cultural divide as she manifests the gulf between the two worlds. It also shows how the implied author manipulates the narrative and characters as per her requirements.

Hiroko becomes a witness of the Indian partition and the violence that follows during her stay in Delhi. That is how she becomes a part and thus an affectee of the two major political events of the same decade happening in two distant countries of Asia. This also indicates how the author determines the narrative and objectifies characters; which becomes even more obvious when we meet the following generations of Sajjad and Hiroko and James and Elizabeth to cope with the realities of their relationship as Harry, one of the cousins, who initially works in the US embassy in Pakistan becomes a CIA contractor in the war-torn Afghanistan during the soviet war in the 1980s. Then, again, we meet some of these characters including Hiroko and Kim (Harry's daughter) in the US amid the incident of 9/11 and subsequently during the American-led war on terror in Afghanistan we meet Harry and Raza (Hiroko's

son) in Afghanistan, which is too much of coincidence, given the twists and turns of the plot. This shows how the plot has been contrived in a way to situate the story in the political events of the time as I have explained. That is exactly what I mean by the objectification of the fictional writings and conditioning of the plot in the global political contexts. The author seems to have taken it as her responsibility to cover each political upheavals of the last two centuries in her narrative. That is why she has incorporated a range of issues and conflicts within the single novel; whether it is American nuclear attack on the Japanese cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, partition of India and massacre that follows, Zia's regime and his project of Islamization in Pakistan, Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the CIA's sponsored war against the Soviets, 9/11 and its aftermath, the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and American-led war of post-9/11, Islamophobia in the wake of 9/11 and infamous Guantánamo prison and so on. In this regard, it is also interesting how in the beginning a story of Matsui Tanaka, Hiroko's father, is introduced to report on the ensuing cultural and racial intolerance in the otherwise tolerant Japanese society amid the Second World War. The story relates the way Japanese society gets overtaken by xenophobic atmosphere and how because of that, the social space for the foreigners as well as iconoclast artist and thinkers become shrunken. As we are told that "[t]here was even less place in wartime Japan for an iconoclastic artist [like Matsui] than for magazines about modern girls" (13). Matsui Tanaka was arrested by the military police for his "outbursts against the military and Emperor which had become "a symbol" of anti-state or treason as put by the omniscient narrator in the novel. Hiroko Tanaka is dismissed from her teaching position in a local school for being the daughter of a traitor as the principal tells her that "there was no room in his school for the child of a traitor and no need for the students to learn a foreign language any way" (14). Hiroko

is then recruited to work at a munition factory while she lives in a shelter, but she is often haunted by a voice that tells her that she is the daughter of a traitor. People usually avoid engaging with her in a way that suggested they do not want her amongst them as she happens to be a daughter of a traitor (7, 14-17). Yoshi Watanabe, a friend of Konrad Weiss, tells him clearly not to visit him as he informs him that he simply could not give the Japanese authorities “*any other reason to think [that he had] divided loyalties*” (12). Konrad responds that that was like saying “*your Jewish friends [in Germany during the genocide]: I’m sorry I can’t hide you in my attic but come over for dinner when the Nazi government falls*” (12). While Hiroko and Konrad maintain their fortnightly meetings, on one occasion when military presence is felt “they [would] speak loudly, in Japanese, about the glorious history of Japan about which she pretends to instruct him” (18). That is how Shamsie portrays fear, anxiety, and uncertainty that Hiroko has been facing every now and then while living in Japan around that time. She uses multiple narrators to depict the transformation of Japanese society from a pluralistic, hospitable, and peace-loving society into rather claustrophobic one amid war, but what is more important is that the novel does not seem to be about the people in the novel rather it is more about the politics that has taken hold of the narrative. That is how the selected authors often condition the characters as they are objectified and made to sink into the political quagmire of the narrative, as we see in the following sections of this novel that relate the political tales of Pakistan and Afghanistan in the backdrop of the Afghan conflicts, both in the wake of the Soviet invasion during the 1980s and following the post-9/11 American attacks, that have led to endemic insurgency in the region. That is how the author creates a pretext in which Hiroko has to leave Japan and come to live with Elizabeth, Konrad’s sister, in Burton’s house in Delhi. That is where the entire family saga begins through

which certain complex issues related to the Indian partition get narrated. All that is happening so fast in the novel that sometimes one feels as if one is watching an old Bollywood movie where a generation's time passes in a span of a song. It is also important how Shamsie has made sure to portray the way transnational loyalties amongst German, English, and Japanese change as Konrad Weiss is told by his brother-in-law James Burton in Delhi, India, that he is not welcomed there just because of being a German national but when Germany surrenders to the allied forces the German nationals were considered enemies just like the rest of the Europeans in Japan. Later in the novel we see similar political transformation in the context of Afghanistan when the author describes how after the incident of 9/11 as allegiances change, the same Afghans who were once considered friends of America suddenly become America's archenemy. It is also interesting how several characters like Sajjad in this and other novels selected for this study tend to be quite aware and educated about the national and international affairs as they are made to comment every now and then about the socio-political issues—which is how the author operates at the level of the narrative to voice her political opinions.

The novel, then, covers the political turmoil that India has been going through in the wake of its partition and the communal riots looming in the dark. It is important to mention that it has been exactly during the time Hiroko is in India recovering from the traumatic experience of Nagasaki. We are told that the people of the subcontinent were left with clear choices of choosing either India or Pakistan as Muslims living in the areas erstwhile India were faced with a greater dilemma inasmuch as the creation of Pakistan was in essence based on the two nations theory i.e., Hindus and Muslims should have their own countries—Pakistan and India, respectively. It seems that the primary purpose of bringing the plot to Delhi, the heart of the partition crisis, has been

in fact to highlight the issues surrounding the partition of India and the dilemma people of India had been faced with in the wake the bloodshed and communal violence. When James Burton (while discussing with Sajjad the outcome of partition with the likelihood of the creation of Pakistan) hints at the way it would affect the lives of people like Sajjad and Hiroko, Sajjad responds that it would not have any impact on his life as he will live and die in Delhi no matter what happens and that “[w]hether it’s in British India, Hindustan, Pakistan—that makes no difference to [him]” (40)—through which I think the author tries to relate the views of the ordinary people who seem to have little or nothing to do with the politics of religion and partition and that the concept of home has more to do with one’s place of birth than the religious affiliations and cultural divide, though it is proven untrue given the fact that the ordinary people do not matter when it comes to politics.

The relationship between James and Sajjad is of much significance with regard to the postcolonial politics and undercurrents in the novel as the two represent colonialist and postcolonialist mindsets respectively while it also reveals the cultural conflicts between the English and Indian values and societies. Sajjad is an Indian Muslim boy from Delhi who works for James Burton, an English colonial official in India. James, however, develops a rather friendly relationship with Sajjad as he likes discussing political and literary matters with him while playing chess. Sajjad, however, keeps distance in Burton’s household because of his social status and Indian background. That is why James often laughs at Sajjad for withdrawing even when it is his move. It also involves a joke about Sajjad being “too conscious of the disparity of their social positions to contradict anything the English man said” (39). In fact, James deliberately wants to stage a comradeship with Sajjad so as to dent as well as to uphold the barriers between the two men at his will, which Sajjad accepts as

inevitable while James never notices (39). Similarly, their discussion about the literary worth of *Twilight in Delhi*, one of the earliest Indian anglophone novels by Ahmed Ali, indicates that their views about the novel are based on their respective nationalist affiliations. James considers the novel a “nonsense that was being praised as an Indian masterpiece” (39). And that even Sajjad could have written a better novel than that, while Sajjad thinks otherwise as he would often quote from it to impress James of its verbosity. Then, Sajjad asks James, “Do you think an Englishman will ever write a masterpiece in Urdu?” ‘No.’ James shook his head. ‘If there ever was a time, we were interested in entering your world in that way, it’s long past. And you would not know what to do with us if we tried” (39-40). This indicates how sometimes the author employs Sajjad to challenge the superiority of Englishman’s culture/civilisation. It is also interesting how Sajjad is presented as much more politically aware than someone of his background would otherwise be. This explains how both Sajjad’s, and James’ characters are objectified in the context of the colonial politics of the time. That, I think, is done by the author to express her own political views. I think the relationship Sajjad, and James is quite unnatural as James’ only socialization shown in the novel is playing chess with his servant despite being a high-profile colonial official in India, while Sajjad rebuts his orientalist views about India. That is because the author is not interested in other things as she wants to depict the relationship of the English and India in the political context of colonialism. According to the concept of whole truth, the experiences that are represented in a piece of literature should look like logical or actual, so to say, as “[g]ood art possesses a kind of super-truth—is more probable, more acceptable, more convincing than fact itself” (Huxley 177). However, that is not true in case of this and most of the other novels selected for this study (as I discuss). I, therefore, maintain that the selected

(implied) authors are less interested in the whole truth and, thus, are more concerned about the placement of their narratives amid socio-cultural and political issues, which often leads to compromises on the art of novel writing as the focus of writing becomes political propagation rather than development of character(s).

The author then employs Hiroko to tell her story (which she narrates to Sajjad) that after the horrible bomb that killed her unfortunate fiancé, she starts working for some Americans as a translator because, she explains, the person who asked her for the job “had such a gentle face...[i]t was impossible to hold him responsible for what had been done. It was impossible, really, to hold anyone responsible—the bomb was so... it seemed beyond anything human” (62). She, thus, kept working for the Americans until “the [same] American with the gentle face said the bomb was a terrible thing, but it had to be done to save American lives” (62), which proved to be the point of her total disappointment with the American nationalism as it was too much for her to bear so she left the Americans and even decides to leave Japan. That is when she comes to live in India disgruntled. The incident seems interesting insofar as how Hiroko is placed by the author into a politically difficult situation as she has to work for the same American who have been responsible for the killing of hundreds of thousands of her countrymen including her fiancé and that how “the American with the gentle face” turns out to be an agent of the American empire. Sajjad too seems to have often taken a postcolonial stance as reflected in his several discussions with James (that I have referred before also) which I think in fact has to do with the way the author exploits the narrative to express her opinions, which in this case is about the colonisation of India by the British. Also, when Elizabeth remarks that Sajjad has come to India from Turkey, he clarifies that he is a bonafide Indian while Hiroko remains absorbed looking at a mosque’s minaret with Arabic inscriptions upon it. In

the long speech that follows Sajjad underlines how the English have always remained English while in India (82-83); which is a reference to his (and for that matter the author's) postcolonial stance. This is yet another example of how the implied author objectifies Sajjad's character to voice her political views.

Interestingly, the narrative even incorporates the World War-II and harassment under Nazi Germany when the author makes Hiroko think of a Konrad's relative, Willie Liebling, who had "been working with the underground in Germany, helping Jews and homosexuals to escape the Nazis, and that at the end of the war he'd migrated to New York (71-72). The author has consciously covered all the major political issues of the 20th century in the novel. Similarly, while narrating the history of his Indian ancestry, Sajjad at one point feels extremely nostalgic of the glory of his lost civilization as he explains to James, Elizabeth, and Hiroko the history of Qutb Minar. He tells them that his "ancestors were soldiers in the armies of the Mamluks" and that their "English historians call them the Slave Kings" which according to Sajjad is factually incorrect (80) as, he explains, Qutb Minar is named after the first king of the dynasty named Qutab-Uddin-Aibak, who was a slave but then rose to the position of a general and subsequently a king while his son-in-law, Altamash, became the second ruler of that dynasty. During that the author makes Sajjad realise "that this was how things should be—he, an Indian, introducing the English to the history of India, which was his history and not theirs" (80). It is interesting to analyse how the author empowers Sajjad in order to make a subaltern speak for himself as he tries to set the history, which has been altered by the English colonizers, right. That is similar to Changez's rebuttal to the American hegemony in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* later. When Sajjad tells them about Razia Sultana and that of all the stories of the dynasty he loves Altamash's daughter's the most, Elizabeth intercepts him saying if

hers was a tragic love story to which Sajjad says that “[w]omen [of India] do have roles in other kinds of stories [too]” (81). This is how the author employs the idea of cultural relativism in order to deconstruct the Western stereotypical discourses about Indian culture and society as well as status of Indian women; according to which they were only found in the tragic love stories as they did not have any other active/constructive role in the society. That is why Sajjad is employed by the author to narrate the story of Razia Sultana while challenging the clichés about India and its society and the ignorance of the English rulers. Sajjad tells Elizabeth that since “Razia Sultana was the most capable of Altamash’s children” including his sons, he had named her the heir to the throne but when “Altamash died one of the sons seized the throne, but Razia soon defeated him” (81). Sajjad has always admired Razia Sultana greatly for being an “an amazing woman—a brilliant administrator, [and] a glorious fighter” (81).

The narrative then moves to the rising tensions between the Muslims and Hindus and Sikhs in the wake of the partition of India and the creation of a new country for the Muslims of India named Pakistan. Lala Buksh, one of the domestic employees of Burton, whose family lives in a Hindu majority area in Punjab, often narrates the stories of the rising tensions and riots to Sajjad according to which “Muslim men [were being] slaughtered, Muslim shops set on fire, Muslim women abducted—he had to force himself to stay at home because if he went out and saw a single Hindu his eyes would reveal what was in his heart, and it would get him killed” (87-88). Sajjad resents the loss of the old harmony between the communities of India as for “years he’d watched Lala Buksh joke with the Burtons’ cook, Vijay, and flirt with Henry’s ayah, Rani, and sometimes he’d walk into the kitchen to find the three of them grumbling amiably about the Burtons. Now the only break Lala Buksh took

from his duties was this one, with Sajjad” (88). Also, the narrator tells us that while “talking to Lala Buksh, Sajjad realised that atrocities committed on Muslims touched him far more deeply than atrocities committed by Muslims—he knew this to be as wrong as it was true” (88). That is how the author twists the narrative in order to cover the political and religious divide as the Indian society partitions along those lines. The whole narrative is marked by political conflicts, wars and bloodsheds from the streets of Nagasaki to the distant towns of Punjab in India to the streets of New York and mountains of Afghanistan as the plot moves around finding the areas wherever there are major political happenings occurring. This shows how the global politics gets played within the text by the author, which is what this study seeks to unveil. Soon after their marriage Sajjad and Hiroko are faced with the agony of living through the violence perpetrated by the partition rioters on either side (i.e., Hindus and Sikhs for united India and Muslims for Pakistan) which by then had already started. That is why James “talked about the likely increase of violence leading up to, and leading on from, Partition. The communal make-up of Delhi he laid out in great detail” (121) as he suggests for the couple to move out of India at least for a while. Sajjad knows that “[e]verything James Burton said about violence is true. It is the most contagious of all the madnesses [sic]” (125). That is why he agrees to going on a trip to Istanbul with Hiroko to live through the period of violence in Delhi on the peaceful and quiet bank of Bosphorus. There is an endless series of action that continues taking place in the novel and it seems the story is one long pursuit of going through the crises that takes three generations. That is how several episodes are made to link together through a rather thin string which seems quite improbable if not implausible. James arranges their trip to Istanbul through one of his connections in Istanbul where they spend a couple of months, but as they prepare to come back to

India, Sajjad goes to the Indian consulate in Istanbul to get their paper process done for going back home in Delhi as it was required after the partition of India. But he is shocked to hear from the Indian officer in the consulate that since he is one of “the Muslims who chose to leave India. It can’t be unchosen”. He tells Hiroko, “they said I can’t go back to Dilli. I can’t go back home” (125). That is why they decide to come to Pakistan and live in Karachi and when the next chapter begins, we meet Sajjad and Hiroko in the 1980s while living in Karachi bringing up a son named Raza, who, like his mother, speaks a number of languages including Urdu, Japanese and German. Shamsie considers it important to bring the story to 1980s in Karachi as it was one of the main routes of the American weapons to reach the Afghan and Arab *mujahideen* who were fighting shoulder to shoulder with the Americans and Pakistanis against the Soviet infidels in Afghanistan. Apart from that we also get to know that Henry Burton, son of James’ and Else’s, is now working for the American CIA as a contractor and an undercover agent in American Embassy in Islamabad in synchronization with the Pakistani ISI to help the fight against the Soviet aggression. Interestingly, in a turn of events Raza ends up being in one of the training camps along the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan which devastates Hiroko and Sajjad as they come to know how Raza goes on an extremely risky journey with Abdullah, an Afghan teenager, just to have an excursion in the dangerous war zone of Afghanistan. Later events are even more melodramatic as the Burtons and Ashrafs are once again brought closer in their subsequent generations; which shows how the novel gets objectified by the implied author in an effort to cover several notable political events of the late 20th and early 21st century in just 400 or so pages. In so doing, I believe, the novel loses its focus and impact. That is what I refer to as political “overdetermination”; that leads to the fictional objectification. This, I contend,

happens for the reasons of politicising the global narratives of the time and appropriating dominant/popular discourses; which as a result makes the narrative a political account of events rather than a fictional narrative that focusses on the people (i.e., characters). Likewise, it is interesting to analyse how the author conveniently skips several important phases in the narrative from the lives of the characters in order perhaps to incorporate certain political happenings/events and fallouts. For instance, when Sajjad and Hiroko come to Pakistan after they are denied entry into India, there is a huge time-lapse during which nothing seems to happen in the novel. That is why when we meet the characters in the following chapter they had almost lived half their lives in Karachi, that is, probably over three decades between 1947-1980s. Similarly, the author does not track the events between 1980s and 2001; because, perhaps, she has been more interested to cover the political events and cultural clashes amid 9/11 and the subsequent war in Afghanistan rather than showing the growth of her characters. I think that Shamsie, like other fiction authors in this tradition, considers it important to politicise her fiction by creating dramatic narratives and exploiting characters rather than keeping her narrative ordinary and developing characters naturally; because they seem to be mostly shaped by the prevalent global political incidences and issues. In fact, there are too many political events to cover in one novel and too many characters to do justice with. That is why she has to keep most of the things elusive for the readers, while many a character remain underdeveloped at least for the readers. I think it would have been a better novel if Shamsie had concentrated on developing few characters and even fewer incidents rather than straddling it with the global political events and people of all sorts—because that would have given her a better chance to narrate the stories in totality and hence would have created a far more profound impact on the readers.

The author also employs the narrator to describe how Raza meets Abdullah and strikes friendship with him during his visit to Sohrab Goth's Bara Market where he is mistaken as a member of Afghanistan's Hazara community. The two friends are then shown discussing the ways to drive the Soviets out of Afghanistan while holding on to American weapons. In this regard, it is interesting how the two teenagers from diverse socio-economic backgrounds are brought together by the author to deliberate on the dynamics of Afghan crisis as if they were military strategists/commanders. Raza says that "there are ways of driving out Soviets without directly handing Kalashnikovs" (199) as he explains that a "true Afghan doesn't waste time with the CIA. He attacks the Soviets directly" while Abdullah responds that if Hazara and Pashtuns fight together "[t]he Soviets won't stand a chance" (211). But as Raza Hazara spends time in Sohrab Goth with Abdullah and other Afghans he starts missing life with his parents and "a world free of guns and war and occupied homeland" (207). He soon feels tired of his dual identity and wants to go back to his life as Raza. In fact, through Raza's story Shamsie wants to bring out the dilemma that every young boy was faced with while being recruited to be a *jihadi* camp—to fight a war they are in a way not a part of, which makes them unsure about their choices (207-209). Even though, after a couple of weeks Raza gets on a truck filled with guns along with Abdullah to move from Karachi to Peshawar and then to a training camp in Afghanistan. But for Raza at that time, it meant only an excursion as he has never show any intent of joining a training camp for the cause of freeing Afghanistan from the Soviet aggression. In fact, he has not been sure of anything and had nothing to do with the war in any way. But when he reaches Afghanistan he realises that he is being recruited as a *jihadi* to fight against the Russians. That is when he tries to flee the camp but to no avail until he is suspected as a CIA agent and

driven out of Afghanistan with the help of probably an ISI operative. On reaching Karachi he finds that Sajjad, his father, has been murdered by an acquaintance on the suspicions of being a CIA informer, for which Raza blames American and attacks Harry at the funeral of his father for being responsible for the killing of his father as he has come to know that Harry works for CIA while in Afghanistan. But soon he realizes that his father has been killed after he disappears and latter goes searching him. This is meant to show the impacts of the war on people from all nationalities. Also, Abdullah talks of the choices the Afghan kids have amid the destruction of the war as he says that there is no option for him other than joining the *mujahideen* (216). Similarly, the implied author brings to the fore the transnational nature of the war in Afghanistan where a number of countries from around the world have made an alliance against the Soviets as “Harry couldn’t help enjoying the idea of Pakistan, India and Israel working together in America’s war. Here was internationalism, powered by capitalism” (203). This again indicates how the implied author plays with the narrative and exploits her character to situate the novel amid global politics. On this, Clements thinks that “Like other Anglophone writers who appear to have risen with the current wave of interest in Pakistani writing, Shamsie has been and remains quite alert to the potential commerciality of her work” (Clements 128).

Moreover, the way the author brings Harry (who changes his name to Henry after becoming a US citizen) and Raza together seems quite farfetched yet significant as the former visits Sajjad in Karachi while working as an American official in the American Embassy in Islamabad. The narrator relates how Henry goes to the US from England to get education and decides to live in the US because of her society’s open mindedness. There are clues in the text that point to how Henry starts working for CIA and moves to Afghanistan where Raza rejoins him. Harry and Raza are now

working for a private firm contracted by the American CIA. That is when and where during a gun shooting Harry is killed by an Afghan because by then the loyalties of Afghans towards Americans have changed dramatically due to the post-9/11 chain of events and American-led war in Afghanistan. Raza and Harry once again come closer as Raza becomes part of Harry's firm because Sajjad, his father has died by then and Raza who is in a way responsible for his father's death wants to do whatever he could to help sustain his mother and himself. That is how time and again the two families of James-Elizabeth and Sajjad-Hiroko are brought together for more than half a century and three generations as later Harry's daughter also gets involved. The author keeps them tangling together while getting them embroiled in the political affairs wherever they go be it Japan, India, Pakistan, the US and in the end Afghanistan. The point I am trying to make is that the characters are not allowed to grow naturally but rather they are determined by the political events as get conditioned and swept away by the waves of politics. Hence, the author does not seem particularly concerned as regards the portrayal of the lives of these characters. He is more interested in the coverage of the contemporary global political issues and events that are in the limelight which seems true in case of most of the selected novels as I have presented later. That is how the selected Pakistani fiction of present-day gets determined by the international and national grand narratives.

In addition, like Hiroko and Sajjad, Harry's character has also been conditioned in view of the political events by the author as the narrative shows. That is why when his parents are still in India Harry goes to England for getting better education but then we meet him in the US where he is shown getting fascinated by the all-inclusive and multicultural American society and the concept of equal opportunities for all as he integrates fully in the American world and starts pursuing

his personal American dream, which is how his character is objectified by the author as later Harry aspires to bring about a shift in the world politics. That is why after his university education Harry opts American foreign services and joins the US Embassy in Islamabad, but soon we come to know that in fact Harry has been working for the American CIA in Pakistan to aid the *Mujahideen* in Afghanistan against the Soviet. That is when he comes to Karachi to meet Ashraf and asks Raza to pursue admission in an American university, which remains an elusive dream for Raza. Interestingly, Harry once again gets involved in the post-9/11 American war in Afghanistan (though as a contractor of the CIA this time) against the Afghan *Talban*, the same people who he had been working with in the 1980s to drive the Soviet infidels out of Afghanistan. Later, in turn of the events, Harry is killed by one of the same people he had been helping in their war against the Soviets. After his death his daughter, Kim, implicates American agencies in arresting Abdullah and Raza while they are in Canada in vengeance for his father's killing. The author, then, introduces Kim as the third generation of James in the novel in order to reveal the mistrust of the US society in the wake of the 9/11 especially in New York City where she lives. Like others, Kim's character is also objectified to reveal the post-9/11 American paranoia. In this regard, it is also interesting how the author turns Kim against Hiroko, Raza, and Abdullah to show the environment of distrust and atmosphere of hatred among various communities in the US amid chaos following the dreadful incident of 9/11 from the perspectives of the insiders as well as outsiders. Furthermore, the author shows how young kids as young as fourteen (Abdullah) and sixteen (Raza Hazara) have been becoming fuel of the war in Afghanistan even when they really do not know what wars are, why they are fought and who one fights against and why. For them wars are about the glamour of flashy AK-47s and Kalashnikovs. We are told that all the

brothers of Abdullah are *mujahideen* (guerrilla fighters) and that he “grew up knowing it was his next step the way you knew tenth grade follows ninth grade” (286). Abdullah narrates how his brothers, had had him sent to live in Karachi with the promise that he would be brought back to a training camp when he becomes fourteen. After he gets fourteen, he is brought back to one of the training camps when and where he meets Raza and makes friendship with him that lasts until the two are arrested together by the CIA in Canada, as we see later in the narrative.

In the following, the narrative moves to the New York City’s airport as Hiroko arrives there. The immigration officer while looking “quizzically” at her Pakistani passport and Japanese face “heaved a great sigh as he opened the passport and saw her place of birth scrawled beneath her husband’s name. ‘It’s OK,’ he said, stamping her passport without asking a single question as he says, “You’ll be safe here”” (286), which gives the impression that the man assumes that she must have fled from the persecution in Pakistan for being a non-Muslim Japanese woman. The man’s assumption is in fact reflective of the inherent negative image and stereotyping of Pakistan and its society in the US/West. That is also reflected on certain other occasions in the novel such as when Harry returns to Pakistan from the US his character is exploited to present the shortcomings of Pakistani society. For example, “One of the more perplexing things about Pakistan, Harry had found, was the tendency of the elite to say ‘middle class’ as though it were the most damning of insults” (149). In this regard, the very idea on the part of the implied author to move Hiroko to New York City in 1998 just before the incident of 9/11 is significant. As Hiroko settles in New York with Ilse and Kim and starts loving the city for its life and pluralism 9/11 strikes that changes Hiroko’s world once again. Once again, Hiroko’s liberal/neutral perspective is exploited by the implied author to tell the story of 9/11

and its aftermath. That is how she becomes a witness of the fall of the twin towers on September 11, 2001, and the way the cosmopolitan culture of the city transforms into claustrophobic as the city plunges into chaos. This is quite interesting from the perspective of this study of “author-function” in the objectification of fiction as it explains how the authorial agency works in situating the narrative and constructing characters. We also get to know that Harry and Raza are now working together for a private security company franchised by the CIA in the post-9/11 war-torn Afghanistan where their relationship gets redefined. But soon Harry is killed by an Afghan as a part of the developing hatred for the Americans in Afghanistan that are now being considered more as agents of colonial power rather than the saviours they have been during the 1980s. As Raza is accused of killing Harry by Steve, he is sent to a prison cell probably in Guantánamo Bay Detention Camp. After the tragedy of 9/11 Hiroko feels great grief for everything that has been happening in the world since the fateful day she had to see in Nagasaki as she tries to grapple with the reality of the world while feeling “a swoop of affection towards everything in the world—from New York and its inhabitants to a dictator half a world away. Not that she’d ever had faith in leaders—not in Pakistan any more than in Japan” (290). Hiroko has lived most of her life in the midst of wars, whether it is Nagasaki, Delhi and now New York. She is turned into a witness of the follies of humankind as the implied author objectifies her character to comment on cruelties of wars. Later, As Hiroko observes the disaster of 9/11 turning into a socio-cultural war, Raza (her son) is shown sitting on mound of ground under a tree in deep introspection “bleached to whiteness, some bright as fresh blood, each marking the burial place of those who had died in some version of the war which had rolled across Afghanistan for over twenty years... he was one of the hundreds of thousands of people from around the world whose conscience had been

buried in Afghanistan” (297). When asked by Ismail, Abdullah’s brother, if he works for the CIA, Raza wonders “[w]hy would any Afghan today admit having worked with the CIA” but before Raza would answer Ismail himself says that ““it was a different time before,’... ‘We believed they were helping us [then]’ (296). Through this conversation Shamsie is trying to show how times have changed, as the same *mujahideen* who fought along with Americans against the Soviets have turned terrorists, which shows how the selected texts get structured by the authors to express their political views and generate and enhance discourse around the global political problems and actions. It also indicates how the author tries to bring everything into the text by involving the issues pertaining to the rise of Islamophobia in America and the West, Afghan crisis, General Musharraf’s choice of becoming an American ally in Afghanistan and so on. That is why she consciously gets the characters scattered around in the world as they become her mouthpieces to report on the issues of political significance.

Interestingly, all the remaining characters from the second and third generation of Sajjad and James are brought together in New York City exactly during the time of the 9/11 incident and in the background of the post-9/11 political scenario. For instance, Abdullah somehow moves to the US and is working as a cab driver in New York City but is being chased by the FBI on the suspicion of being involved terror-related cases. In that sense, the conversation between Raza and Kim (Harry’s daughter) about Abdullah (who tries to rescue his childhood friend) is meaningful, especially in the backdrop of the socio-political changes the US and New York City have been witnessing lately. The narrator explains how “[t]he whole country was jangling with fear, and all the Raza Ashrafs of the world could do was sneer about it” (299). When Kim suggests that Raza should ask Abdullah to surrender as the FBI

would not care if he were an illegal immigrant, Raza wonders if she has read the American Patriot Act that explicitly says that an illegal immigrants could be detained for the foreseeable future “with just minor visa violations if they have even the vaguest suspicions about them” (299). Raza then tells her that Abdullah cannot stay in the US and that “there is a way for him to get back to Afghanistan from Canada only if Kim drives him across the border into Canada as he explains that “[t]hey’ll never search a car driven by someone who looks like [Kim]. None of his friends in New York look like [that]” (299). Interestingly, Kim agrees to that and does take Abdullah out of the territory of the US into Canada but during the journey her conversation with Abdullah reveals to her that he is in fact a Muslim fanatic who remains religiously motivated as he starts talking about *jihad* as a religious obligation and glorifies what Raza has done (by teaching *mujahideen* English) and what Hiroko had done (by converting to Islam)—that he explains—is better than the combative *jihad* according to the Holy Quran. While Kim in response challenges him by asking if he has ever read the Quran in a language he understands. She then claims that she understands Islam better as she has read the Holy Quran in English and that “the Quran says nothing of the sort” (346). She asks him, “If an Afghan dies in the act of killing infidels in his country does he go straight to heaven”? Raza replies, “If the people he kills come as invaders or occupiers, yes. He is shaheed. Martyr” (346). At this, Kim gets infuriated as she attacks Abdullah by saying that such “man is a murderer” and his “heaven is an abomination” (347). This upsets Abdullah while Kim gets overwhelmed by the anger mainly because she remembers how her own father has been killed by an Afghans probably on account of the same argument as Abdullah’s. That is why as soon as they reach their rendezvous and the moment Abdullah leaves her car Kim calls the FBI to arrest him. But Kim feels surprised to see that Raza

receives Abdullah in the hotel. As the old friends meet, they are arrested by the FBI. Kim first thinks of intervening to save Raza but then drops the idea as police take Abdullah and Raza along. The narrator describes later how a police officer calls Kim (while Hiroko is in the loop) to tell her that the US “government has been searching for that man [Raza]. They’re very glad to have him in their custody now” and that Kim’s father would be proud of her for getting his killers and American enemies arrested (363). This explains how the so-called postcolonial literature (such as this) contributes “in the spectacularisation of a cultural otherness that is projected out in mythicised space and back in imagined time” (Huggan 115). Thus, this analysis manifests how deliberately the selected authors set their novels amid the global political conflicts and international wars in order to politicise the socio-political issues in currency and to address the wider international audience. In that regard, it is quite interesting to study these texts symptomatically as it helps understand how the politics of war or war politics determines the major tropes of these novels and objectifies the characters and twists the narratives, which is also quite true in case of *Burnt Shadows*, as the title suggests. That is why the novel involves a number of wars including the Second World War, partition of India, tragedy of 9/11 as well as the post-9/11 Afghan conflict and so on. That is how the author objectifies the whole narrative in order to incorporate the global political crises since 1945 including the 9/11 and its aftermath.

3.1.2 Politics of Gendered, Postcolonial and Religious Identities

This section presents how the gendered, postcolonial and religious identity politics gets played in the novel by the implied author he she conditions the narrative and exploits characters. First, the feminist perspective (that relates to the way author exploits the so-called gendered identity politics and issues in order to attain political relevance/correctness of the narrative) is quite important with respect to this novel just

like others. The author has cast a number of strong woman characters in the novel such as Elizabeth, Hiroko, Kim and Sajjad's mother as well as the historical woman figures like Razia Sultana (that the novel refers to). The author often deploys and at times exploits the woman characters such as Elizabeth, Hiroko, Kim, Sajjad's mother and others to reinforce the popular discourses at times and to denounce certain traditions/narratives at other times. For example, when Sajjad visits his sick mother the family women are shown discussing the emerging political chaos in the otherwise peaceful multicultural Indian society in the wake of the Indian partition (as it seems inevitable). That is how the author presents women as dynamic members and active participants of social change in the South Asian society of that time. One of the women relates how the "Muslim League nonsense about a new country is disrupting everything.' [as] 'Mohammed Ali Jinnah is starting to supplant Allah as the chief accused for all the problems of [their] life. There's a kind of devotion in that which exceeds even that of the most diehard Muslim League supporters'" (51). Sajjad's mother worries a lot about the creation of the new country, as she has been having negotiations with Mr. Yousuf's family about the wedding of Sajjad and Sheherbano but after Sheherbano's father announces that their family is moving to Pakistan and that Sajjad will have to do the same if he marries Sheherbano, because Sheherbano has been a diehard Muslim League activist. This follows a debate regarding the modern Indian woman when Sajjad says that he will prefer marrying a strong modern girl and that if Sheherbano is determined to for something it would not bother him, to which her mother explains to him that her concept of a strong woman is totally different from that of the modern (Western) women and that she has been a strong woman all her life, but that does not mean getting rid of one's *dupatta*. Sajjad is reminded of the two powerful woman characters that her mother had introduced him

to during his childhood (i.e., “the Rani of Jhansi and Razia of the Mamluk Dynasty”) who had commanded armies and would sit with men in their councils (52). The debate about modernity and womanhood is quite relevant with respect to the premise of this study. It happens between Sajjad and his mother with many other women in the loop; which indicates that there have been a number of dynamic woman characters like Sajjad’s mother and the historic characters like the Rani and Razia that contributed in a big way in the Indian society, which, I think, in a way assert the feminist discourse in the narrative particularly with regard to dismantling the Western stereotypes about the South Asian women in history. Even Sheherbano is being portrayed as a strong and a daring woman character. Second, the narrative seems to deconstruct the notion that English were in anyway revolutionizing the Indian society especially when Sajjad’s mother repeats the English words with revulsion, as Sajjad tries ““not to imagine the Burtons’ laughing at her pronunciation: ‘Maa-dern’. ‘Do they tell you that’s what they are, your English? Modern? These are words created only to cut you off from your people and your past’” (52). In either case, the narrative becomes overtly political rather than personal. This indicates how the author politicizes the situation in the wake of the Indian partition through various situations and dialogues. That is exactly why the story that begins in Nagasaki in 1945 is brought to Delhi, India, in 1947—to situate it in the political backdrop of the political and ideological divide amid the imminent partition—which indicates that it is not just the story of people and their relationship but more, so a political account that brings to the fore chaos of wars and trauma of loss in the midst conflicts.

There are a number of characters and instances in this novel where woman characters are employed for the purpose of articulating authorial positions and political views as they become discursive devices. For example, it is interesting how

Elizabeth is employed by the author to expose the colonial mindset of the English women in India, which seems to be quite similar to the portrayal of English ladies in *A Passage to India* by E.M. Foster. The author also uses Elizabeth's character to instruct Hiroko not to take her relationship with Sajjad seriously as she tells her that their worlds were not just different but poles apart from each other's. She says, "His is a world you either grow up in or to which you remain for ever an outsider. And maybe he'd give up that world for you—if that's what it took to have you in his life—but when that first intensity of passion passed, he'd regret it, and he'd blame you" (97-98.)—that indicates how cultural divide is exploited by the author—as she presents Elizabeth as a bigot from the West/England, while Hiroko (who not only rejects Elizabeth's logic but also exposes her racial profiling of human beings) is presented as an emancipated woman from the East. Apart from this, Elizabeth also tells Hiroko that no matter what part of the world it is or what culture it maybe, it is a universal norm that women are the ones who "enter their husbands' lives" and they are the ones that adopt to the ways/society of their husband's family as "[i]t doesn't happen the other way around. She continues, "They don't know how to do it. They don't see why they should do it" (98). That is how narrative is twisted by the implied author in order to incorporate the global feminist agenda within the text, which I argue is consciously transpired in the novel to achieve relevance and political correctness because (for whatever reasons) the publishing market and academia consider certain controversial anthropological and political issues especially the ones involving the politics of gender and religion crucial. Hence, the issue-driven narratives are often popularised because they are counted among important factors as regards the so-called success of a novel/film, which is mainly determined by the critical acclaims and literary accolades/prises. In this regard, Huggan's discussion about the relationship

between the Man Booker Prize and the way it is exploited in the promotion of certain writers and literary trends (105) has informed my study of the “author-function” especially with regard to the “institutional system” that I have often referred to. Likewise, the discussion between Hiroko and Sajjad regarding the loss of their world is quite important especially with respect to how the novel is built in the midst of the international conflicts involving Japan, Germany, India, and others during the Second World War and amid the partition of Indian subcontinent. Hiroko tells Sajjad that despite living in Delhi she has not seen his world while Sajjad regrets saying that he too had not seen hers, to which she says that her world does not exist anymore as the bomb took away everything. Sajjad then explains to her that his world is also falling apart as the partition of India seems imminent. He says, “[t]his Pakistan, it’s taking my friends, my sister, it’s taking the familiarity from the streets of Dilli. Thousands are leaving, thousands more will leave. What am I holding on to? Just kite-strings attached to air at either end” (113).

Hiroko’s conversion is also important episode with respect to how the implied author exploits characters and their roles to comment on the socio-cultural issues in a subtle way. For example, when Sajjad proposes Hiroko to marry him, he also tells her that as per the Muslim law he is not supposed to marry her unless she is either a Christian or Jew. Hiroko tells him that she is neither of those but then she asks him how one becomes a Muslim and Sajjad tells her that one becomes a Muslim by saying Kalama three-time, which Hiroko does as to become a Muslim without much trouble before they get married (118-119). That is a manifestation of how conflicts across the world are brought into confluence and how the sense of loss gets shared between Hiroko and Sajjad. Thus, I retreat that the implied author incorporates the popular feminist trope in the novel in a rather subtle way. Likewise, I think that although there

are a number of strong woman characters in the novel, yet when it comes to depicting the South Asian traditional societies the narrative becomes rather domestic and patriarchal in order to expose the patriarchy in the Indian and Pakistani religious societies. I think that Shamsie's South Asian woman characters seem to submit to the patriarchal power structures of the societies despite being educated and enlightened, while the Western woman characters are depicted quite independent and assertive, which is reflected through Elizabeth and Kim. Hiroko, on the other hand, becomes a typical obedient wife of Sajjad as she not only submits to convert to Islam to marry him (because Hiroko has to convert to Islam to become worthy of becoming Sajjad's wife, as the author presents surreptitiously) but after they become a couple Hiroko has often let her role in the family defined by Sajjad; that is why she follows Sajjad wherever he goes. That is partly because Sajjad always demands Hiroko to be a traditional/domestic wife as for him "a steaming-hot cup of tea brought to a man first thing in the morning by a woman of the family was a basic component of the intricate system of courtesies that made up the life of a household" (132)—which is indicative of the feminist tropes that are often advertised to expose the domesticity of Pakistani women. Also, Sajjad wants Hiroko to be connected to his family, but Hiroko remains aloof insofar as Sajjad's larger family is concerned as she feels that she is not warmly welcomed into the family. That is also because even while Hiroko is with Sajjad, their notions of society, home and family are often defined by their respective cultures, which remain worlds apart, despite having several commonalities. It is partly because of Hiroko's nature, exposure, and diverse experiences that she has had through her tumultuous journey of life and partly because of the domesticity of Sajjad as a husband as presented in the novel. He once asked her to wear the traditional clothes of his people and celebrate with them the religious holidays, but she often "insist[s] that

they would see it as false and had to learn to accept her on her own terms” (132). Hiroko wants to continue her work and resumes teaching while Sajjad is determined to provide for his wife as a man; that is why he becomes at times overprotective towards her and Raza, his son. Hiroko on the other hand wants to be more independent and resourceful but there is no space to be an independent person while living with Sajjad, which remains the same until he dies. Although after Sajjad’s death Hiroko comes to live in New York with Else and Kim, Harry’s daughter, (who have always been quite independent and ingenious American women), her Pakistani cultural legacy keeps defining her character and personality. This reflects how Shamsie presents her views about the docile role of women in post-independent religiously conservative Pakistani society vis-à-vis the active role of women in the former Indian and modern Western societies. The narrative shows that Sajjad has remained under constant fear that Hiroko might leave her until Raza is born; that is why Sajjad feels that “she looked at Sajjad, differently from ever before, and he knew she was tethered to their marriage by the tiny, wailing creature” (136). This shows the vulnerability of Sajjad as a husband, but it is also a statement about the Pakistani/South Asian culture that ties women to marriage and thus to the domesticity by virtue of having children. Hence, Shamsie’s woman characters are reflective of the patriarchal structures of the conservative Pakistani society. But at the same time, she underlines her daring woman characters like Hiroko and the confrontations in the society mainly because of the emancipatory movements that have been launched by liberal segments of the society. Likewise, in *Broken Verses* a number of strong woman characters such as Aasmaani, Samina and Shehnaz are cast. These women are not only independent but also involve in emancipation of other Pakistanis during General Zia’s project of Islamization (Cilano 104).

In addition to that, the engagement with the so-called postcolonial politics is evident on a number of occasions in the novel as the narrative becomes covertly postcolonial at times. Now and then it is done through an omniscient narrator, but most often the characters from within the novel are employed by the author to propagate the postcolonial narrative, that, I think, relates to the author's political position, and is incorporated for the purpose of achieving literary adaptation/assimilation of the popular narratives. For example, Hiroko is extremely critical of the Western world and its values. Sajjad, who is often portrayed more refined and educated than expected, is transformed as a postcolonial character who through various ways poses a challenge to James's English superiority and their colonial project. That is reflected through various dialogues on several occasions in the novel. For example, after one such dialogue what Sajjad thinks and how the omniscient narrator describes English colonisers (including James and his English fellows) provides an important postcolonial description:

'[M]odern India will start the day the English leave. Or perhaps it started the day we used their language to tell them to go home.' *Faintly, he wondered if he really believed this.* 'No, modernism does not belong to the English. The opposite, in fact. They've reached the end of their history. They'll go back to their cold island and spend the next ten generations dreaming of everything they've lost'. (52-53; emphasis added)

Although Sajjad's voice is exploited to politicise his so-called postcolonial position (to talk back to the centre), he remains confused and vulnerable as indicates in his mumbling of thoughts. Likewise, when James informs Sajjad that they have come to know that Sajjad was, to a certain extent, seduced into touching Hiroko and that Hiroko had confessed that it was not his fault, Sajjad in response says that he

“understood that the English might acknowledge their mistakes in order to maintain the illusion of their fairness and sense of justice, but they will not actually apologise for those mistakes when they are perpetrated on an Indian” (111). This is, in fact, one of the tongue-in-cheek comments that Sajjad often makes while talking to James about the British colonialism in India. It is interesting to see how Shamsie brings to the fore the conflicts while pitting otherwise friendly characters like Sajjad and James against each other in the context of colonial India. We have also seen the same or similar nature of the relationship between Hiroko and Elizabeth and later between Harry and Raza.

Apart from that, the “symptomatic reading” shows how the implied author has also played with the religious identity politics as it gets incorporated in the narrative. I argue that the author politicises the narrative and creates religious controversies by situating the text within the larger religio-political narratives that have been popular in the world. For example, the narrator reports that Raza fails Islamic Studies paper in his secondary school exams and thus fails in total as it is a compulsory paper. Which is then used to comment on how religious concerns of the state is affecting the lives of the people in Pakistan in the backdrop of the project of Islamization by the Zia government during the 1980s. We are told that when the examiner was collecting the papers he finds that Raza’s paper was still blank, but before he returned it, he “picked up his pen [and] wrote firmly on the page, ‘There are no intermediaries in Islam. Allah knows what is in my heart,’ and handed in the paper” (144). When Hiroko comes to know that the paper he had failed and because of which he could not pass the exams was that of the Islamic Studies, she allows “herself a long, luxurious expression of disgust” (145). While Sajjad voices his disapproval of the Islamicist policies of the government in a rather blunt way when he “cursed under his breath the

government which kept trying to force religion into everything public” (147), as he mutters that his “mother, with her most intimate relationship with Allah, would have personally knocked on the door of Army House and told the President he should have more shame than to ask all citizens to conduct their love affairs with the Almighty out in the open” (147).

The religious identity politics is exploited again later when Steve tells Harry that he was “an idiot to hire all these Third Country Nationals” and that he should “stop recruiting them from Pakistan and Bangladesh” as it is not a “territorial war and they’re [not] neutral parties” because, he explains, they are Muslims and that he should rather recruit from the non-Muslim countries like Sri Lanka, The Philippines and Nepal and from India “so long as they’re not Muslim” (280). Harry tells him that the Muslims he refers to had been with him for a long time. He also gestures in a way to express his disapproval of Steve’s logic which was entirely based on the religious divide. But at the same time the omniscient narrator tells us that Steve’s logic about religious affinity was right as “Raza Konrad had dinner every night with the Third Country Nationals, translating between them from Urdu to Bengali to Tamil” (281). That also shows how Shamsie employs religious divide in the novel to create a conflicting situation not just between the Americans and the Muslims but also between the Americans themselves. After Harry gets killed by an Afghan for being an American citizen as the hatred against the US amongst the Afghans rises, Steve uses the same logic to reach the conclusion, though falsely, that Raza has been behind the killing of Harry. The implied author is actually trying to show how religious prejudice can sometimes blind the people and lead to wrong decisions but at the same time through this she explicates the complexity of the war in Afghanistan. The author thus exposes how the Afghan conflict gets propagated as a religious war during the Soviet

invasion but becomes a non-religious during the American operation in the wake of 9/11 attacks in the US. Before Steve leaves Afghanistan, he warns Harry of Raza being a dangerous ally as he reminds him of how Raza had once accused Harry of killing his father, Sajjad, to which Harry snubs Steve but before he leaves Steve suggests Harry to be on guard as he tells him that “[t]he United States will play no part in your private incursions into Pakistani territory tomorrow” and that he must make sure to get the wanted guys (Osama Bin Laden and his associates) as the “Uncle Sam is getting so bored of failure”, while Harry in response tells Steve to ask the CIA to help reduce tensions in the region (282), which suggests how the author seems to criticise the US’s role in dividing countries by creating conflicts in various regions as the relationship between Pakistan and India have come to an all-time low. That is why the author uses Harry who by then has become critical of the American hegemonic policies in the region. He has also come to know of the horror that was created by his country when it used atomic bombs against Japan through one of his uncles in Nagasaki. That is why he suggests Steve, a superior officer in the CIA, that he will not like the terrible history of destruction repeated (282). Similarly, religious concerns of the author become clear on other occasions as well. For example, after the incident of 9/11, when Hiroko goes to donate her blood, she “was touched to be given a badge announcing she’d donated blood, ‘because intention matters’, the exhausted Red Cross woman had told her”. Hiroko in response tells her that “the Prophet Mohammad [PBUH] made exactly that point—surprising herself by the need to say such a thing— [while] the woman smiled and said, ‘I’m sure he did’” (289). That is also meaningful with respect to the way the novel gets overdetermined by the cultural, and religious politics in every possible way and in case of every incident. Likewise, at one point in the novel Abdullah feels that he has betrayed Raza for revealing to his commander

that he was working for Harry and the CIA while Raza feels he has betrayed Abdullah for not being able to help him get out of the situation he had been locked in. It is also interesting how the author objectifies the relationships among various characters in the novel to indicate the way relationships beyond borders and cultural limitations have been impacted due to the ongoing wars as it has been between Harry and Sajjad, Sajjad and James, Harry and Raza, Raza and Kim and Hiroko and Kim and so on. In this regard, it is also important how Abdullah explains to Kim that countries like hers “always fight wars, but always somewhere else. The disease always happens somewhere else. It’s why you fight more wars than anyone else because you understand war least of all. You need to understand it better” (344). The implied author uses Abdullah’s voice to counter Kim’s views as the narrative politicises:

‘You hear them now all the time. Talking about how they won the Cold War, now they’ll win this war. My brother died winning their Cold War. Now they say he makes heaven an abomination.’ (352)

Similarly, when Hiroko comes to know that Kim has got Abdullah and Raza arrested in connection with the Islamic terrorism, they have a harsh exchange of words during which Hiroko calls Kim a racist to which Kim condemns Islamists and declares that Muslims are not suspected for nothing as she says, “it wasn’t [sic] Buddhists flying those planes, there is no video footage of Jews celebrating the deaths of three thousand Americans, it wasn’t a Catholic who shot my father. You think it makes me a bigot to recognise this” (361)? That is how Shamsie provides the perspective of the American rightists with respect to complex nature of the “war on terror” that becomes a religious war in that context. Later, while justifying her action of getting Abdullah and Raza arrested Kim says, “In the big picture of the Second World War, what was seventy-five thousand more Japanese dead? Acceptable, that’s what it was. In the big

picture of threats to America, what is one Afghan? Expendable. Maybe he's guilty, maybe not. Why risk it" (362)? In reply to that Hiroko gets enraged as she condemns Kim's logic by telling her that it is because of bigots like her that she has come to understand "how nations can applaud when their governments drop a second nuclear bomb" which follows a silence (362) that signifies that the end of intimacy between them and by extension among various peoples/nations as they become hostage of their respective brands provincialism so-called nationalism that seems to have taken hold of nations' senses. That is how Hiroko sums up her analysis of a lifetime with regard to the political conflicts and religio-cultural divide that she has seen during her painful yet eventful journey across the continents and cultures. That is how the author propagates her idea of multicultural world while condemning divisions based on nationalist agendas and religious, ethnic, and racial segregations.

3.1.3 Contestation of the Idea of Nationalism

This section deals with the debate about how the implied author presents nationalism (as a provincializing idea) in contrast to the social and cultural globalism (that is taken as more of borderless idea or at least nationless concept). I think it is important to explore the rendering of these ideas or their promotion or demotion with respect to unveiling the authorial intent and revealing the "author-function" within the narrative in this and most of the novels selected for this study. Besides, it also helps in understanding how the authorial agency determines the narrative and conditions characters in order to challenge nationalist ideas in view of the global political events in the narrative. There are different strands of nationalism as demonstrated by various characters in the novel. Hence, if nationalism is condoned at times, it is also condemned at other times. In this novel, Sajjad's concept of patriotism, which is fundamentally based on the idea of the affiliation with place(s) rather than nation(s),

(which is similar to that of Hiroko's) seems being advocated by the implied author. For example, Sajjad expresses his love for Delhi by saying that "[t]he idea that anything could cut him off from Dilli was not just absurd but [also] insulting" (52)—which is quite interesting—because he refers to Delhi, not as India or Pakistan but in fact as his home; and whether it becomes a part of India or Pakistan does not make much difference to him as long as he is allowed to live in Delhi. This provides a clear contestation of the idea of nation state based on nationalist ideology and a drift to localism that is identified by the birthplace or dwelling; and not defined by a nation or a cultural entity—which, I think, tends to be more of a narrative of globalism. Same can be said about Raza, Harry, and Abdullah as all of them do not seem to believe in the concept of nation state in the traditional sense as they seem to have transcended boundaries, both cultural and geographical, eventually, by rejecting parochialism of their previous generations. There are a number of international movements and examples of trans and multiculturalism, that, I think, is an important characteristic of this novel and other novels, because, in a way, it indicates the way agendas of globalism get subsumed in the cultural texts in relation to the Pakistani (and by extension South Asian) anglophone writings. In Cilano's view, however, these trans-geographical movements of the characters as well as the historical allusions and absences distort any nationalist narratives with respect to the 9/11 and the subsequent events (Contemporary Pakistani Fiction 194). I have further explained the implied author's play with the trans-geographic movements/migrations in the context of Hamid's novels, particularly *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* later where Changez proudly declares himself to be a New Yorker rather than an American or Pakistani. But after the events of the September 11 everything changes, and the New Yorkers

become more American than ever as the whole nation gets engrossed in the American nationalism and xenophobia (Hamid 41-50).

In that sense, it is also important to analyse how Hiroko Tanaka is presented with regard to getting excited by the Indian way of life as she becomes anxious to intermix with the Indian people, at least in the beginning. That is why she gets enthused to learn the Indian languages, while the Burtons are portrayed as somewhat claustrophobic, as they do not feel the need to intermingle with the Indian subjects and learn about India, its rich cultural history, and languages, because (as it is presented) they do not seem to feel the need to connect to the people, yet they have been ruling over them for a century. When Hiroko once expresses her desire that she would like to learn the native Indian language(s) James tells her that that is “not necessary [as] English serves [just] fine” and because the “natives [she will] meet are either the Oxbridge set and their wives or household staff like Lala Buksh, who can understand simple English” with a mixture of Urdu that Ilse could help her with. But for Hiroko it was one of the oddest things to hear about somebody’s language, that is why she insists on finding someone to help her learn Indian languages (57), that is, how Sajjad enters Hiroko’s life as he starts teaching her Urdu. Sajjad helps in Hiroko’s integration into the Indian society as he introduces her to Indian and its cultures. Hiroko soon realises (as she explains to Sajjad) that she as a Japanese has had a lot more in common with Sajjad and India than she has with the Burtons or English. That is why when Sajjad tells her that he has never seen her fiancé and that might not be believable for her, she says that that is quite plausible for her as arranged marriages used to be quite common in Japan but then she also tells him that she does not like to have an arranged marriage for she does not have the courage that require to do that (90). That is how while she explains that she does not have a problem with the

concept of arranged marriage she does convey to him subtly that she does not approve it, at least in her right, yet the eastern cultural affinity and mutual understanding helps Sajjad, and Hiroko build trust which Sajjad could never develop with the Burtons especially Elizabeth for whom “he had been only one rung up from a servant” (180). But what is more important as regards my study relates to the way the author uses Hiroko’s character to rebuke English’s way of governing India without ever trying to understand the Indian way of life and aspirations of the common people and acknowledging Indian cultural richness and linguistic diversity, while at the same time she appreciates Hiroko’s cultural sense and pluralistic outlook—which I think aligns more to the globalist and multicultural worldview of the author as presented here in this and other of her novels. Likewise, when Sajjad starts teaching Hiroko Urdu the very first thing he explains to her is that she “will have to let go of the notion that writing starts on the left-hand side of the page and moves right” (60) as in case of Urdu, like many other Persian-influenced languages, the writing starts right-hand side. Sajjad who otherwise seems quite an ordinary person has been employed by the author to subtly voice her personal political opinions as I have explained. Hence, Sajjad’s explanation about the linguistic variations and his use of the word ‘notion’ is quite significant apart from its socio-political implications. This reveals how the implied author plays the role of an ideological figure within the textual discourse.

Hiroko often thinks that American nationalism has a lot to do with the decision of dropping bombs on the Japanese cities while questioning the need to drop the second bomb on Nagasaki after having seen the destruction that first had made in Hiroshima (62, 99). That becomes evident from what an American who she was working with in Tokyo had once said that “the bomb was a terrible thing, but it had to be done to save American lives” (62). That is why “Hiroko often remembers

Americans!” and after what happened “[i]n Tokyo, thirty-five years ago, she had decided their snobbery was not of class but of nation (‘The bomb saved American lives!’ Even now, even now, she could feel her face burning at the memory)” (180). The inclusion of the American and Kim (later) indicates how the implied author exploits characterisation to explicate her political views about race and nationalism. This also shows how Kim works as a literary foil of Hiroko to bring to the fore the issue of provincializing America in its fight against the terror; which is also reflective of how later Kim encounters Hiroko for remaining nostalgic of the Nagasaki bomb, to which Hiroko reacts furiously as she rejects Kim’s reasoning while calling her a racist (293-294). Similarly, in the wake of the tragic incident of 9/11 when Hiroko goes to donate blood for the victims she smells a strange nationalist smell in the multicultural and cosmopolitan atmosphere of New York City:

The island seemed tiny; people’s views shrunken. How could a place so filled with immigrants take the idea of ‘patriotism’ so seriously? Ilse had laughed and said, ‘The zeal of the convert.’ And that phrase spoken by a smiling young man in Tokyo kept returning to her: ‘American lives.’ It was a talisman, that phrase, the second part of it given weight by the first part. (289)

The author presents how conflicts that are often triggered by provincialism result in the creation of hatred among various peoples/nations as has been explained before with regard to the xenophobia in the Japanese society in case of the foreigners (i.e., Europeans). In this regard, the conflict between the Japanese and Americans amid the World War-II is depicted through Hiroko’s reaction to the American bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki which is enunciated in the following passage. This, to an extent, explains how the tragedy resulted in altering and defining the lives of thousands of Japanese such as Hiroko and others while

robbing them of everything including their past and future (49). Also, in the backdrop of the Indian partition it gets reflected in the stories of religious and ethnic divide and communal violence that trigger a massacre on national level. In case of Afghan wars, the change in terms of Afghans' relationship with the US and Americans is dramatised in the novels particularly in the wake of American-led war in Afghanistan. That is why I say that the author seems to twist the narrative in a way to situate it within the political events while also exploiting the characters as per the requirements of incorporating political incidents. In this regard, the choice of the writer to bring Sajjad and Hiroko to Karachi seems quite planned because the author wants to show the plight of the refugees who had left all behind to come to Pakistan and the predicament they were faced with on reaching the land of pure. Sajjad explains to Raza that it is really important for him to become a lawyer as it is the only way to protect his rights for he has been witnessing the exploitation of refugees in the city (136-137). This is also noteworthy especially with respect to how the implied author presents the tradition of the importance of sons and power in the Eastern/Pakistani society, given the socio-economic inequalities in the society.

Moreover, Shamsie's concept of home (as presented through various characters) is essentially based on her globalist ideals as I have discussed before with respect to her fascination with globalism. For her, home is where one lives rather than the one defined by nationality or origin. In this regard, Shamsie's notion of homeland alters as she starts emphasizing on "the spatial configuration of home rather than location" (Kanwal 16). This might be true in case of her later novels that include *Burnt Shadows* and *Home Fire*. However, I argue that Shamsie's implied author gradually grows to problematize the traditional idea of nation as well as homeland as it become more of globalistic, so to say, that is why she does not accord value to the

traditional concept of home/homeland that gets determined by territorial or nationalistic denominations/identities, as we have seen in case of many of her characters in this and other novels. Hence, her concept of home becomes rather international/cosmopolitan. That is why most of her later novels present a political conflict wherein the characters are shown to negotiate with their hyphenated identities while, in most cases, maintaining their Muslimness. Thus, many of her (favourite) characters like Hiroko, Harry, and Sajjad, to an extent, have least to do with nationalism that often gets reflected in the novel. Similarly, when Hiroko is talking with Elizabeth about Sajjad and the possibility of their marriage she explains that she does not believe in cultural differences and that she did not have a special association with Nagasaki for that matter until it was destroyed by the American bomb. That is why she says, she has been able to come and live with Elizabeth and James in Delhi. Interestingly, all the people who have come into her life including Konrad and Sajjad have been from distant lands and nations. When Elizabeth still warns her of the consequences of marrying Sajjad she explains her idea of homeland as she says, "I keep thinking of Nagasaki. You said to me once that Delhi must seem so strange and unfamiliar, but nothing in the world could ever be more unfamiliar than my home that day. That unspeakable day. Literally unspeakable. I don't know the words in any language" (99). Then she talks of her father who was reduced into scales by the bomb and the devastation it had done to the people and nature of Nagasaki. Likewise, the discussion regarding a visit to Sajjad's old Delhi is quite appealing with respect to how Shamsie through the discussion that happens there endorses multiculturalism while underlining the challenges posed by the closures caused by provincialisms and nationalism as we are told that Sajjad's world has never been closed for the foreigners to enter and that despite the fact that the Burtons were not the type of people who did

not like “entering an India outside the Raj” (82) yet they had not ever entered that world to intermingle with their subjects just because of maintaining the distance created by virtue of them being the rulers in India. “Hiroko Tanaka, [however] was the one to show both Sajjad and the Burtons that there was no need to imagine such walls between their worlds. Konrad had been right to say barriers were made of metal that could turn fluid when touched simultaneously by people on either side” (82).

Moreover, while living in Pakistan, “[i]t didn’t bother [Hiroko] in the least to know she would always be a foreigner in Pakistan” as “she had no interest in belonging to anything as contradictorily insubstantial and damaging as a nation—but this didn’t stop her from recognising how Raza flinched every time a Pakistani asked him where he was from” (208). The author highlights how Hiroko’s foreignness and the (metaphorical if not real) shadows of the Nagasaki bomb get in the way of Raza’s belonging in the Pakistani society as he gets castaway by Salma, his own sweetheart, let alone others (188-189). Even Abdullah, during his stay in New York City gets conditioned in a way by the author to advocate Shamsie’s concept of home as he tells Raza (when the latter asks him to go back to his home and family in Afghanistan) that his home is New York City and that the fellow cab drivers are his family as he has been living there for over ten years (352). Thus, it seems that the author tends to challenge the traditional concept of home that is often defined by nationalism as I have explained. It also gets resonated on various other occasions in the novel. For example, when Harry asks Sajjad that he “used to talk about Delhi as if it were the only city worth belonging to—and now listen to you, speaking with such pride about a place you would have mocked once for its lack of history and aesthetics and poetic heritage” (161), Sajjad becomes speechless, although, he tries to explain that that was the only option then as he had been denied the entry back to Delhi, his home in India.

Then Sajjad tells Harry the tale of the massacre of portion and the devastation it had brought to his family in which his eldest brother, Altamash, was brutally killed, while another of his brothers, Iqbal, “couldn’t stay in the city that had murdered Altamash. He left behind his wife and his children—they tried to follow him, but they were on one of those trains. The ones that arrived with the dead as their cargo” (161). While Sikandar, another brother of Sajjad, moved out when their Delhi property was robbed by the Hindu vigilantes along with his and Altamash’s family, and has been living in Pakistan in extreme poverty; so much so that Sajjad avoids visiting him (161). To this effect, it also seems plausible to relate Shamsie’s treatment of the local brands of nationalism within Pakistan and Afghanistan as on a couple of occasions she does seem to comment on the plight of the *muhajirs* or the Muslim migrants who came to live in Pakistan in the wake of the partition-bloodshed. For instance, when she refers to a statement made by a businessman in Islamabad while talking to Harry that Karachi was a “Muhajir depot”, as stated earlier. In which, she, in fact, seems to refer to the ethnic and nationalist politics in the context of Karachi. Also, Altamash and Bilal, the two of Raza’s cousins, are shown playing a guess game while Bilal stops a rickshaw to ask the driver to guess which one of the boys is not Pakistani—which is a reference to the dubious national status of *muhajirs* in Pakistan. At that Altamash gets angry with Bilal and tells him that that is not funny because “[i]n India when they want to insult Muslims, they call [them] Pakistani”, while Bilal, laughing out loud, says that “[i]n Pakistan when they want to insult Muhajirs they call [them] Indian” as Raza is shown wondering “to understand why such injustice should be seen as humour” (190). The same thought process seems to be working again when, while responding to her father’s comment that he likes the people of Pakistan, not the officialdom, Kim says that she “used to think the rule which said you can’t be

President of America if you're born somewhere else was really stupid because of course people who migrate in are going to be more loyal citizens than the ones who take it for granted" (169).

Harry's character is also important with regard to the author's denunciation of nationalist politics and religious and racial prejudice (despite being a part of the American interference in Afghanistan). He, like Hiroko, considers nationalism xenophobic and a threat to world peace and thus joins the CIA in order to neutralize nationalist thrust and to help end the Cold War as Elizabeth once explains (178). The narrative suggests that Harry becomes an American citizen mainly because of its pluralistic values and cultural diversity (185). That is, his pluralistic ideas as well as "his foreign birth and the question of divided allegiances" have had tremendous influence in deciding what he wants to do in life. That is why he decides to join CIA and "when he was asked his views on the dropping of the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki" during the interview, being "aware of the polygraph machine attached to him, he had said, 'Like President Eisenhower, I believe we should not have done that'" (177). In this regard, it is also interesting how the novel gets set around the acute sense of the loss of home or homelessness that makes all the characters nostalgic but at the same time coming in terms with the realities, as they are shown helpless to go back in time and space to relive their past that is why they have to make new homes wherever they go. The sense of homelessness is then connected to the idea of the demise of nationalism and relevance of globalism. For example, for Hiroko, Nagasaki has been a home until the horrible bomb turns it into scales; then Delhi becomes her home because it had the reminiscence of Konrad, her lover and future husband, and because of Sajjad as he becomes her family; and then Karachi becomes her home as they move there after their beloved Delhi crashes into pieces amid

partition. For Sajjad initially Delhi has everything for him as he would often say that nothing could ever take him away from Delhi, but that Delhi, his Dilli, is taken away by the storm of partition; so much so that he is even denied coming back to Delhi, his home as I have explained. Hence, he settles in Karachi which then becomes his home forever despite that he “would not ever have believed that he would come to think of Karachi as home, and that his bitterest regret about his separation from Dilli would be the absence of safety nets that the joint-family system had once provided” (134). Thus, this study of Shamsie’s *Burnt Shadows* shows that the implied author propagates the idea of globalism and multinationalism over nationalism, xenophobia, and cultural myopia. The author presents that nationalism is a dividing force and has been responsible for cultivating racial and religious intolerance and honing prejudice while causing hostilities and conflicts in various parts of the world that have led to the sufferings of common people globally. The author seems to relate characters’ personal experiences to the larger socio-political conflicts and international wars that nationalism has triggered in the world. Hiroko, Sajjad and Harry have been witness to and (in some cases) victim of the miseries wrought by nationalism as they keep observing throughout their journey. That is manifested from a number of instances in the novel, as I have presented.

3.2 *Home Fire* (2017)

Home Fire is set in the modern-day England particularly in the political backdrop of the post-9/11 and/or post-7/7 and involves mainly two families of Pakistani origin. The novel is an adaptation of the Greek Tragedy “Antigone” by Sophocles as described by the writer herself. It tells the story of how a British-Pakistani family is torn apart mainly because of the association the family men have had with the Islamic caliphate of Syria. The family consists of three siblings: Isma, a 28-year Pakistani-

British woman, the eldest of the siblings and Aneeka and Parvaiz, the twin siblings of Isma, who happen to be far younger. When Adil Pasha disappears mysteriously and their mother dies, Isma takes upon herself the role of a mother and guardian for her younger siblings as she makes compromises. Their father had in fact been inspired by the caliphate ideology and was killed in one of the battles in Afghanistan bringing a lifelong disgrace to his children, who are now coping up with the questions about his death and life while living in a society where being a Muslim is a hard thing (Shamsie, *Home Fire* 3-6, 24, 90). As Isma goes to study in the US to fulfil her lifetime dream, Parvaiz is convinced into following the footsteps of his 'brave' father as Farooq, an ISIS agent, recruits him. While in the US, Isma befriends Eamonn, son of Karamat Lone, a British MP (with a Muslim background), who later becomes the British Home Secretary. Aneeka, Isma's nineteen years old sister who takes into accounts the prospects of a relationship with Eamonn, so she conspires to have Eamonn fall in love with her in order to use the influence of his father to bring back Parvaiz, who by then had been disillusioned after having joined the caliphate. But Parvaiz is reported to have been killed in the British consulate in Istanbul by the same people he had joined. When Karamat Lone comes to know about Aneeka's plan to use her relationship with his son for the vested interests, he revokes Parvaiz's British citizenship as his body is expatriated to Pakistan. This upsets Eamonn as he leaves his home along with Aneeka for Karachi, Pakistan, where both the lovers are killed in a targeted attack on Eamonn involving a bomb blast, as the novel is brought to a thrilling end.

3.2.1 Political "Overdetermination" and Abuse of Human Rights in *Home Fire*

The structure of plot is one of the important aspects that can help us understand how and why certain construction is considered important. *Home Fire* is perhaps among

the one of the finest examples of the authorial manipulation of the plot, as the entire plot gets built around the globally politicised issues, especially the ones that spring from the so-called “war against-terror” such as Islamophobia in the West particularly in the context of Britain. It seems that the implied author has been conscious of situating the story in a volatile political conflict constituted by the new laws about immigration, nationalism, terrorism, Islamophobia and so on. That is why when the novel begins, Isma is being taken to an “interrogation room” at Heathrow. The omniscient narrator then tells us that she did expect the interrogation as if it were a routine “but not the hours of waiting that would precede” (Shamsie 3). It indicates how the author exploits the narrative in order to campaign her political agenda while also incorporating the trendy issues. These and proceeding clues exemplify how Shamsie employs the culture fetish to situate her narrative in the identity political context. In this regard, Speller, while drawing on Bourdieu’s cultural domain “examines literature’s function as a vehicle” for cultural and ideological/political identity formation as well as propagation (131). Then, we are told that while packing her luggage Isma makes sure not to pack things like the Holy Quran; even then her belongings get searched and taken into custody. She is also asked questions like if an expensive jacket hanging on a chair belongs to her and as to where she has got that upon which Isma tells the investigating officer that the jacket was left on a laundry shop (because of a grease stain) where she was working. The lady officer then asks her if the manager at the laundry knew about that to which Asma tells her that she herself was the manager (03). This again explains how petty details of the conversation; which might not be logical—because—why would an immigration officer ask if a passenger’s dress was stolen. It, I argue, is in fact meant to serve the

purpose of incorporating the incidences of cultural significance and religious objectification. The conversation between Isma and the interrogating officer goes on:

“Do you consider yourself British”? the man said.

“I am British.”

“But do you consider yourself British?”

“I’ve lived here all my life.” She meant there was no other country of which she could feel herself a part, but the words came out sounding evasive. (05)

Once more, we can see how the narration is being overloaded to bring forth the issues that matter in the world particularly in the wake of 9/11 and 7/7. The point I am trying to make is not that the narrative is political and that it should not have been political, but that it is being overdone unnecessarily. That is what I mean by controlling or conditioning the narrative on the part of the writer in so as to create dramatization and situate the novel in the larger context of Islamophobia and alienation of the Muslim characters in the West. There is always a purpose the author intends to serve when a narrative is twisted and not let flow naturally. What I mean by letting the narrative flow naturally is that the flow of narrative as well as the development of characters have to be kept detached from the popular issues like the ones explained above. That is, that the writers are not supposed to explain things through any means (whether by using the narrator or the character) so that the readers would understand the situation and interpret that the way they want. It is also not about taking sides and voicing one’s personal political views through the characters but the very practice of voicing any views—political or otherwise—using any of the means. The officer then asks about “her thoughts on homosexuals, the queen, democracy, invasion of Iraq, Israel, suicide bombers, dating sites” (05), etc. Later, while she is waiting in the lounge, she talks to herself saying that she does not ““distinguish between one Muslim and

another” and that occupying “other people’s territory generally causes more problems than it solves”—this served for both Iraq and Israel and that “Killing civilians is sinful—that’s equally true whether the manner of killing is a suicide bombing or aerial bombardments or drone strikes”” (05). That is how we get to know about her pluralistic religious and political views amid the racial, religious and ethnic divisions.

It is quite interesting how the implied author manipulates the narrative by employing the omniscient narrator (in view of this study of the “author-function”) to give a detailed description of the way Isma’s passport, personal computer and mobile phone, travel and the browsing history are inspected by the airport officials while she is investigated as if she were a suspect of terror. For a moment, she thinks of Parvaiz, her brother, who we know had been to Raqqa, Syria but she lets go of the thought as she has decided not to remember the past of her family and the links of her father and brother with the Caliphate in Syria). Finally, she is cleared and allowed to take her flight to the US which has already gone. She gets the next flight and while on board she keeps thinking if she will face another interrogation at Boston but thankfully that does not happen (7-8). That is how the novel begins—centring around Isma’s origin and religious background—which reflects upon how Shamsie builds the narrative around the popular political issues as explained earlier. This is partly what I mean by the repressed presence and absence in the text that I intend to unveil in this study as it assumes that that has been a hallmark of the contemporary Pakistani anglophone literature in general and fiction in particular.

The “symptomatic reading” of the novel shows how the narrative has been structured by the author with the view to appropriate the socio-cultural and political issues of the time. For example, even the cars on the road are described as “announcing all their political beliefs on bumper stickers” as Isma walks around the

streets of Amherst in the US (10). Similarly, 'Eamonn' (the name given to Isma's Pakistani-British friend) is significant with respect to the way the author operates insofar as the objectification of certain characters is concerned. His name is described by the newspapers as "a[n] Irish spelling to disguise a Muslim name— "Ayman" become "Eamonn" so that people would know the father (Karamat Lone) had integrated". While Lone's wife, an Irish American woman, "was seen as another indicator of this integrationist posing" (15-16). Isma meets Eamonn in Massachusetts and soon they become good friends, which is itself quite coincidental in the first place given that Eamonn on returning England becomes her younger sister's boyfriend mainly because of his influential position by virtue of being the son of Karamat Lone, a British MP, who is nominated to become the foreign secretary soon. It is interesting how Isma's turban becomes a subject of discussion during their conversation mainly because of its symbolism, that is, Muslimness, as Eamonn asks Isma if her turban is "a style thing or a Muslim thing", while Isma replies, "the only two people in Massachusetts who have ever asked me about it both wanted to know if it's a style thing or a chemo thing". At this Eamonn asks her while laughing, "[c]ancer or Islam—which is the greater affliction" (21)? Before Aneeka leaves she shakes hands with Eamonn that surprises him because he had assumed that "women who wore turbans as "a Muslim thing" couldn't possibly shake hands with men (22). While this reflects on Eamonn's secular upbringing, it also shows how Islam and Muslimness of Isma's character has been objectified by the author perhaps in order to problematize the discourse around the religious divide. The newspapers often describe Karamat Lone who later becomes the British home secretary as a man "from a Muslim background" which is followed by a commentary by the omniscient narrator that explains how he is described as a Muslim as if his Muslimness "was something he

had boldly stridden away from” (33-34). This indicates how Muslim background of Karamat Lone has been exploited by his political rivals to defame him. The whole narrative, it seems, is conditioned in a way to consciously situate the characters in circumstances where their Muslim background/Muslimness becomes highlighted; that is how the plot has been built around the issues that stem from the cultural and religious identity politics. For example, When Aneeka comes to know that Lone has been elevated as the home secretary, she points out the politics that gets played around the religious divide, while mentioning how Karamat Lone “has to prove he’s one of them [i.e., the British], not one of us [Pakistani-British Muslims], doesn’t he? As if he hasn’t already” (34). It is also interesting how the British newspapers, both, that favour him and those against him, are used to discredit and admire Karamat Lone, respectively. For example, he is shown while entering a mosque “that had been in the news for its hate preacher”, while the headlines go as “REVEALED, LONE WOLF’S PACK” (35). The narrative then turns to his pro-newspapers’ reports in which he clarifies that “the picture was several years old; he had been there only for his uncle’s funeral prayers and would otherwise never enter a gender-segregated space” (35). This is followed by an image showing Karamat Lone entering a church holding the hand of his wife. This points to the way author manipulates the narrative in order to reveal the fault lines within the British society and a stark contrast between the Muslim vis-à-vis the Christian/British cultural values—where former is shown as orthodox and gender-segregating while the latter as enlightened and gender-empowering. The narrative also reports how Karamat Lone loses big in the election for MP in a constituency with Muslim majority, while later, because of the same reason, he wins a by-election in a largely white electorate. That is how the religious divide in the British society gets played in the novel by the author. I also feel that the

narrative often becomes rather descriptive and even prescriptive at times, as the author tends to tell everything herself rather than letting the readers make their own decisions. That is done in a number of ways as I have explained. One of the techniques of narrative manipulation on the part of the author is to exploit characters to express certain political views that the author wants to propagate. For example, oftentimes Isma's character is used for the purpose of serving as a mouthpiece of the author. For example, Isma explains how Karamat Lone has been playing with his religious background to gain political benefits:

...all the accusations she'd heard, and that seemed entirely accurate, that Karamat Lone had precisely calculated the short-term losses and long-term gains of showing such contempt for the conventions of a mosque. Sell-out, coconut, opportunist, traitor. (35)

Moreover, there are numerous other such understatements which unveil the way narrative incorporates certain mindset but in a rather subtle way. One such example is when Isma asks Eamonn about his relationship with Karamat Lone, his father:

"You know what fathers and sons are like."

"Not really, no."

"They're our guides into manhood, for starters."

She'd never understood this, though she'd heard and seen enough anecdotally and academically to know there was something to it. For girls, becoming women was inevitability; for boys, becoming men was ambition. (35-36)

This underlines how a strong feminist perspective gets incorporated through Isma. It is not about whether the feminist voice but rather the way it is interlaced in the text as the implied author objectifies social conventions with regard to gender and sex. For example, while in her university, one day during a presentation on control orders and

their impact on civil liberties Isma makes an impactful speech to defend the case of Muslims in Britain (38). On that, the implied author conditions the narrative further as Isma, later, puts her thoughts into an essay on “The Insecurity State: Britain and the Instrumentalization of Fear” (39) to vent her anguish as the narrative becomes agenda-driven, so to say. I think, the characters, in this way, are not let grow naturally as they end up becoming the mouthpieces of the implied author. The narrative seems built around the multicultural conflicts in the British society, especially in the wake of the post-9/11 religio-political divide, Muslimness/Islamophobia in the West and so forth. In this regard, the so-called *hijab* politics or the politics surrounding the Muslim female veil is another important aspect of the novel from the perspective of the “author-function”. Eamonn, who is portrayed as a modern British Pakistani and has done away with his Pakistaniness or Muslimness, is suggesting Isma to “[r]econsider the hijab” in order to fully integrate in the British/American society (40). In this regard, a conversation between Isma and Hira Shah, her former professor, is also important in the context of how certain tropes have been reinstated through the intended portrayal of the cultural clashes. Hira Shah while suggesting Isma to have a boyfriend says that “the Quran tells us to enjoy sex as one of God’s blessings” to which Isma replies that that is true only within marriage and that we “all have our versions of selective reading when it comes to the Holy Book” (40).

Another important theme in the novel relates to the dilemma of choosing either state or family, which is co-opted in such a way so as to support the basic thesis of the novel; that is concerning the way fear is institutionalised on the part of the British state to approve the draconian laws such as disowning people, which otherwise would not have been justifiable for being against the fundamental citizenry rights. The author, thus, tries to unveil how the British state like others justifies

seizing the fundamental rights of its citizens and interfering in their private matters. That is summed up in how Isma has been confiding the state about his brother's connection with the caliphate, which becomes evident when she explains to Aneeka that their only choice is to side with the British state. That is when Aneeka comes to know that Isma, her own sister, had in fact colluded with the British state against their brother, who is repatriated to Pakistan (country of his origin) after his links with the so-called ISIS is proven (as we get to know later in the novel). Isma, however, tells her that they simply cannot afford to have state doubt their loyalties (42). The author also employs a Muslim preacher from a local mosque to describe how the families (whose men had gone to fight in Afghanistan) were made to suffer at the hands of the government agencies and society at large (49), while another friend tells Aneeka's grandmother that the British government is seriously considering of withdrawing the benefits available to the immigrants by virtue of being the British citizens (including that of free education and national health service) in case they are suspected of supporting terrorism (49). That is how the author brings to light the popular religio-political issues surrounding the British Muslims and their dual cultural identities while actually twisting the narrative.

Likewise, Adil Pasha's death largely remains a mystery as almost nothing or a little is certainly known about that, which, I think, is in fact used by the author to create drama in the novel. Isma tells Eamonn that they do not know even if he was given a burial to which Eamonn ensures him that they must have "dug a grave" to which Isma enquires what makes him so sure of that whereupon Eamonn explains by saying that "they're so civilized" (50). Isma's first reaction to that is cold as she feels upset, but then he apologises. This episode, which might be otherwise unimportant, becomes quite meaningful when we interpret it symptomatically—because—Eamonn,

here, represents someone who has got completely integrated in the British society not only apparently but also ideologically, as he believes that the people of the West or England are inherently civilized and perhaps the vice-versa. Isma, in contrast, remains sceptical of that mainly because of her own experiences, which have been quite different from that of Eamonn. One example of that is reflected in what we have seen at Heathrow earlier. It seems that the author also exploits her Muslim *hijab*, as she shows that a major reason of the unfair treatment that Isma has been getting (as is evident from her discussion regarding harassment with Aneeka before flying to the US) might have something to do with her Muslimness that is reflected by her *hijab* and because of which she feels she is less integrated, so to say. This is how the author creates situations by manipulating the narrative and exploiting characters to propagate her own political views regarding the cultural divide with respect to the Muslim-versus-modern British society. This reflects on how seemingly simple incidents in the text can, in fact, gain greater significance when analysed symptomatically. Similarly, Adil Pasha's death in detention is dramatised wilfully in the novel in order to bring to the fore the issues of the immigrants particularly from Muslim backgrounds. When an MP from Pakistani descent is approached by someone on behalf of the Pasha family to get the answers regarding the death of Adil Pasha on his way to Guantánamo, the MP has nothing to say except that Adil Pasha's family is "better off without him" (50). This is followed by a long speech by Eamonn in defence of the MP (who happens to be his father). He explains to Isma that in his father's case things have been different because of his Pakistani and Muslim origin and that his father often becomes a target of his political opponents because of his background and that he had made hard choices which he regretted sometime. But, he goes on, "everything he did, even the wrong choices, were because he had a sense of purpose. Public service,

national good, British values. He deeply believes in these things”, as he continues explaining his father’s position saying that whatever he had to do he did because it “necessary to get him to the right place, the place he is now” (51).

It is also important to analyse how the implied author makes use of the narrative in the novel while exploiting the narrative and narration including various characters as well as omniscient narrator to prescribe issues and philosophise situations. There are a number of instances where the author uses narrative to voice her political views/opinions. For example, when Eamon is walking towards Aunty Naseem’s house to deliver Isma’s parcel, as he reaches near a mosque, he makes sure to turn away to avoid the mosque lest he is spotted near a mosque and then crosses back to avoid being seen avoiding the mosque (59). At times, such actions and comments also become culturally biased, for instance when Aunty Naseem is “wearing a shalwar kameez with a thick cardigan” Eamonn comments that “her internal thermometer was still set to another country [i.e., Pakistan]” (61). There are a number of passages narrated by the omniscient narrator that can be analysed to study how the “author-function” works within the text for the purpose of politicising various religious, gendered, and cultural issues and fabricating conflicts in order to either promoted or demoted a particular discourse. In this regard, the apparent comparison between what Karamat Lone stands for and the aspirations of the British Muslims at large and the ensuing cultural conflict is constructed to dramatise the situation. Karamat Lone’s views regarding the social role of church and mosque is important with regard to how cultural and religious differences get played by the author in the novel. He had once seemingly declared (as Eamonn explains) that church was quite unifying as regards gender representation and that mosque on the other hand looked to him discriminatory toward women. Eamonn calls it expressing “a completely

enlightened preference for the conventions of a church over those of a mosque and [that his father in fact] spoke of the need for British Muslims to lift themselves out of the Dark Ages if they wanted the rest of the nation to treat them with respect” (59). Similarly, the clip of Eamonn’s father addressing a population of predominantly Muslim students at a school in Bradford is significant in which he explains he stresses that the British Muslims must be loyal with their country, as it has given them all they have. The “two twenty-year-olds who had been killed by American airstrikes in Syria earlier in the year” were, in fact, the same school’s alumni (87). The same resounds in the next passage as the narrator describes the warm reception Karamat Lone receives in the British parliament following his firm stand against the home-grown radicalisation (88). This explains how Shamsie plays with the popular issue of radicalisation of Muslim youth in the West. Kanwal explains how the “local–global [political] nexus has prepared the ground for current perceptions of radicalised Islam in the West (Kanwal 9).

In addition, it is also interesting to analyse how sex and gender are used by the author to contest the prevalent stereotypical notions about the Muslim women, particularly in the West, as the novel seems to have essentially been written to address the British/Western audience—which I argue is also true of a number of other contemporary Pakistani novels in English in that tradition, particularly the ones by the selected authors, even when the plots are exclusively set inside Pakistan; this, I have discussed in detail later in relation to the debate about the way fiction writing has been objectified in the global political contexts. I think that using sex and gender identifications in the novel relates to the idea of exoticizing the Muslim culture while at the same time neutralizing the notions about Muslims, which is symptomatic of what I call the fictional objectification. For example, during their first meeting in

Eamonn's apartment, Aneeka offers Eamonn for sex in order to win Eamonn's help to bring Parvaiz back home through the influence he has (by virtue of being the son of the home secretary). But, I think, what is more important (in the context of this study of the fictional objectification) is about the way religious sexual imagery, if you like, gets exploited by the implied author as the narrator relates the details:

She unpinned the hijab, folded it carefully, and placed it between the two of them on the counter, then pulled off the tight-fitting cap beneath it. She shook her head slightly and her hair, long and dark, fell about her shoulders like something out of a shampoo advertisement. (68)

The narrator recounts that during "their first kiss, she'd broken away and started to put her hijab back on, before his entreaties convinced her to stay" (69). So, she stays and proceeds because she wants to do everything for Eamonn before she asks him for the favour to bring Parvaiz back (194) by using his father's influence. In the morning, when Eamonn walks to the bedroom he "find[s] her praying, a towel as her prayer mat, the hijab nothing more alien than a scarf loosely towels as her prayer mat" (70). He "couldn't help watching this woman, this stranger, prostrating herself to God in the room where she'd been down on her knees for a very different purpose just hours earlier" (70). In the next scene Aneeka proposes to have sex with her scarf on that Eamonn agrees to as we are told by the omniscient narrator that she "undress[es] until there was nothing left but the white scarf covering her head, one end of the soft fabric falling just below her breast, the other thrown over her shoulder" (71). The narrator exoticizes Aneeka's dress again when she puts on her bonnet cap and the blue scarf to transform into chaste Muslim woman. And, when Eamonn asks her why she feels the need to wear full *hijab*, she explains to him sternly that it is based on her personal choice to decide which part of her body can be seen by the strangers in the public (71-

72). Thus, the use of religious sexual imagery in this and other texts (such as *Home Fire*, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, *Exit West*, and *Maps for Lost Lovers*) is symptomatic of the how the implied authors have exploited gender and religion. In this regard, it is interesting how Eamonn (while he is with Max and his other English friends) jokes about his decision to grow beard and stop drinking (as Eamonn has in fact started drinking less after Aneeka tells him that she does not like the smell of alcohol in his mouth). Max, one of Eamonn's friends hints at Eamonn's Muslim background:

"Twenty-something unemployed male from Muslim background exhibits rapidly altered pattern of behaviour, cuts himself off from old friends, moves under the radar. Also, are we sure that's an evening shadow rather than an incipient beard? I think we may need to alert the authorities." "Take it straight to the home secretary," Hari said. "At least he's drinking Pimm's, so we know we haven't lost him completely." (82)

Then, Eamonn asks his friends what they would do if he "walked in with a full beard" in response to which one of his friends says that they would hold him down and shave his beard off; because, he explains, good "[f]riends don't let friends become hipsters" (83). Later, while remembering that little chit chat with his British friends, Eamonn asks Aneeka if she has been given a hard time because of her *hijab*; to which she replies that if you are a young woman, you always get some hard times no matter what you wear and where you are as she confesses having faced discriminatory attitudes and hard time just because of her Muslim dress. She tells Eamonn that she has had shower just a while ago because somebody had spat on her in the tube probably because of her Muslim dress/*hijab* (90). I think, this is quite meaningful because it indicates how Muslim scarf and beard as signs of Muslim identification are

consciously exploited by the author for the purpose creating drama, controversy and cultural clash in the text. I think it also serves the purpose of creating exoticism and melodramatic effects on the part of the author. Besides, it is also useful to challenge the stereotypes about the Muslim women, which, I think, is yet another way of political manoeuvring of the text by the author. This might also be taken as an example of the apologetic attitude of some anglophonic Pakistani writers towards certain religious and cultural practices and customs. The use of *hijab* and beard is a significant and recurrent trope which is, interestingly, found in most of the selected novels. Apart from the beard and *hijab*, it is also interesting to analyse how woman characters often get objectified in these novels (to advance the so-called feminist agendas by the authors). Aneeka's response to the treatment of the Muslim women in the British/Western society hints at the systemic misogyny and objectification of women in the world irrespective of the cultural differences as she underlines that a young woman has to face hard times irrespective of her choice of the dress, religion, or society (90). Nevertheless, there are particular references towards the systemic oppression of women in the Muslim households. For example, when the story unfolds further, we get to know the way Parvaiz controls or at least tries to control his elder sisters despite that fact that they have been bringing him up after the early death of their parents, because Farooq, his ISIS friend asks him to assert his authority of being a brother/male member of the family.

In addition, it is interesting how the author uses the video clip of Karamat Lone's speech (that I have discussed before) in order to reveal the conflict Eamonn is confronted with especially with regard to his growing relationship with the girl who has been a mystery to him as she displays "total lack of self-consciousness in everything she did—[including] love and prayer, the covered head and the naked

body” (88). That is how often the narrative gets objectified by the author to politicise the issues/events. Furthermore, when Aneeka watches the clip of Lone’s speech she asks Eamonn what he thinks about Karamat Lone, his father, as she explains that in her view his father has been playing on the socio-cultural divide of the British society to get himself elected and that in that process he has stigmatize people especially Muslims for wearing a certain type of dress. She asks Eamonn if his father will also tell people how one becomes a victim of racial hatred, extra-judicial detention, torture, air-port interrogation, surveillance of family lives, etc. for being a Muslim to which Eamonn says that his father has done everything in order to get the Muslims due respect and acceptance in the British society, so that people like her (i.e., Aneeka) do not have to face racial hatred (91). Eamonn tries to defend his father’s stance saying that that has been the only option available for him as he is often criticized for having a Muslim heritage; so, he has to make it clear to the bigots that he is not with the fanatics and that by doing so he is in fact defending the rights of the Muslims like Aneeka. The dialogue between Eamonn and Aneeka is meaningful with respect to my study as it creates two categories of the Muslims living in the UK: The ones represented by Eamonn and his father, who are portrayed as fully integrated into the British society while compromising on their ex-national and ex-religious allegiances. And the ones represented by Aneeka and his brother, Parvaiz, and their father, who are still clinging onto their religious affiliations above all else. That is how drama is created by the author by pitting these two types of people against each other and politicising the religious, cultural, and political conflicts and issues, while, at the same time, in doing so objectifying the fictional narrative within the larger/global political context of 9/11. The rest of the story seems to have been built around this conflict, which is within and without at one and the same time. The novel is thus mainly about

the paranoia of the Muslims living in the West, particularly the British Muslims of Pakistani descent while coping with their dual nationalities and cultural identities that happen to be quite popular narratives that emanate from the tragedy of the September 11, 2001, and its aftermath.

At a later point, Aneeka leaves the pretensions behind to tell Eamonn plainly that she has become intimate with him because she thinks that he (being the son of the British home secretary) will help her to bring her brother, Parvaiz, back home while avoiding the terror related charges as she tells him that he wants to come home clean (95-96). Eamonn gets upset to hear that, as he asks Aneeka if that has been the reason behind her intimacy with him to which she admits that in the beginning it has been the main reason but that she has started loving him along the way. But, despite that, Eamonn remains committed to her as their relationship has become genuine by then; that is why he plans to convince his father to do something for Parvaiz but when he talks to him things become even worse as his father gets devastated to hear that his son is in love with the terrorist's daughter who he has been vehemently condemning all along in the public. Thus, it was a bad choice not just because of Lone's ideology, which has been reflected in his video footage, but also because of the political reasons, as he will lose the credibility if the news of his son dating a terrorist's daughter goes viral. Interestingly, when Eamonn tells his father about Aneeka being the girl he loves and wants to marry, the first thing Karamat Lone asks is if she is from Pakistan to which Eamonn tells him that she is indeed from Pakistan and that her mother was raised in Karachi, while her father was a second-generation British who had come to Britain on scholarship in LSE for law and that she had become an orphan at twelve and has been raised by her elder sister at Preston Road (105). Their

conversation goes on during which the author brings to the fore the issue of Pakistani immigrants' Muslimness that further complicates the narrative:

“Well, if it's love you'd better bring her around. Next Sunday?”

“There's one thing I should warn you about. She's a bit, well, Muslim.”

“How ‘well, Muslim,’ exactly?”

“She prays. Not five times a day, but every morning, first thing. Doesn't drink or eat pork. She fasts during Ramzan. Wears a hijab.”

“Uh-huh. But she has no problem—” He brought the palms of his hands together and then separated them.

“What? Opening a book?”

“Sex.”

“Dad! No, she has no problem with that.” (106)

Karamat Lone tells Eamonn that he does not have any problem with him marrying a British-Pakistani Muslim girl, but that Eamonn's choice does convey a message to Karamat Lone's British friends that his son is not worthy of marrying their daughters though as they were interested in getting their daughters married to Lone's only son. And, about Aneeka's *hijab* he says that since Aneeka is quite young i.e., only nineteen, “she can be persuaded out of the hijab in time” and that he should get his “sister to take her off to the hair salon next time she comes to visit”, while he also tells his son that he had grown up as a religious Muslim and that he had harmed no one except himself because of that (107); which is, in fact, a subtle comment about his disapproval of being a religious Muslim. That is when Eamonn becomes encouraged as he tells him about Parvaiz, Aneeka's brother, who has been to Syria not to be on a “humanitarian work” but in fact as an ISIS supporter. Karamat Lone becomes instantly aware of who Aneeka Pasha is as her father, Adil Pasha, has been well-

known to him as a traitor. He also remembers how he has been stressing as the British Secretary on finalising legislations to strip the British nationals of their right of being the British nationals if found collaborating with the enemies of the Great Britain or involved in a terror-related activity in anyway. That is why he is devastated to hear who his son wants to marry as he tells Eamonn that he “will have no more contact with this girl as he sets up “a security detail for” his son and asks his security team to keep an eye on the girl as well (109).

It is also interesting how Parvaiz’s father, Adil Pasha, known to the ISIS as Abu Parvaiz is presented to his son (who knows little or nothing about his father) as a gallant martyr in order to lure him to join his father’s path of fighting against the ‘injustices’ by Farooq, an ISIS recruiter, and Ahmed, one of his friends. They tell him the concocted stories of his father’s bravery and valiant fight against the ‘forces of evil’ (128). During one of his meetings with the ISIS recruiters, a friend of Farooq tells Parvaiz that his father had fought along with Abu Parvaiz in Raqqa, Syria, during which Parvaiz’s father had told his father that he always regretted that his son would never know who his father was in reality. Listening to the heroic stories of his father has been a pleasing revelation for Parvaiz as until now he has always lived knowing that his father has been a matter of shame for him and the family. But, now for the first time he has started feeling that he had never really known who his father really was as his eyes get wet (125). That is when Parvaiz has had the realisation that later leads to his radicalization. For that purpose, Farooq and his friends once even get him kidnapped and humiliated by tying his hands and dunking his head into the dirty water of the kitchen sink in order to make him feel the humiliation and pain his father had suffered in Bagram at the hands of the Americans where, as they explain to Parvaiz, he was tortured and insulted. That is how Parvaiz is indoctrinated before getting

recruited for the *Caliphate*, as he becomes radicalised and pledges avenging his father's death. Which again shows how the author creates melodramatic situation out of Parvaiz's recruitment as an ISIS soldier. It is also interesting how Farooq pits Parvaiz against his sisters as he tells him that in Islam women have a subordinate position and that he, being the man of the family, should assert his authority. Soon after Parvaiz's argumentations with Isma, his elder sister and caretaker, during discussion of selling out the family house is indicative of that, as Farooq asks him to go and "[t]ell her it is written in the Quran, 'Men are in charge of women because Allah has made one of them to excel the other'" and that according to the law of Allah he, not his women, have the right to decide matter related to property (130). Parvaiz especially picks up the phrase 'your woman' and although he has never been a practicing Muslim, yet the social concept of Islam seems to have become quite convincing to him then, as Farooq introduces him to an "emasculated version of Islam, bankrolled in mosques by the British government, which wants to keep us all compliant" (131). He quickly starts buying the conspiracy stories put forth by his ISIS friends as he tells Isma that the American have given her scholarship only because she fits into "their 'inclusive' and 'diverse' boxes" (132).

As Parvaiz's absence becomes more and more frequent and as his outlook gets more religious Aneeka confronts him by asking if he has been meeting a girl, but what is more important is her question regarding the type of girl he is presumably dating as she hopes "she's not from one of those crazy honour-killing type families" (142). This shows how the author creates a situation in which a Muslimness is objectified even by the British Muslims themselves. It is more interesting that in this particular case a Muslim girl is being stereotyped by Aneeka who herself is religious as she wears a *hijab*. While Parvaiz dismisses her question saying, "You're just a girl. You don't

understand [things]" (142). It is important to underscore that Aneeka does not particularly like wearing *hijab*, yet she wears it as her *hijab* is meant more to disguise while meeting Eamonn rather than for the religious reasons' which is similar to what Nadia explains as regards her *hijab* to Saeed, her boyfriend; that she wears *hijab* just to avoid harassment (Hamid 14). That clearly shows how Shamsie creates controversies both religious and gendered by concocting dialogues and inventing political controversies and events. Shamsie's use of gendered language and *hijab* politics is important here as regards my study of the "author-function" as it relates the idea of fictional conditioning.

The author also seems to comment on the change of socio-economic priorities of the British government as she shows how Britain has been transforming from a welfare state into a rather ruthless capitalist one as the narrator tells us that the state funding for the public libraries and national healthcare as well as the welfare benefits has been dwindling over the years as the priorities of the government change. That is why community has to raise funds to keep running a public library in the area where Parvaiz's family lives. Farooq tells Parvaiz that Britain used to be a great country but that it is no more the case. Also, he talks about the way migrants are being turned away while talking about the times when they were welcome with open hearts as he fears that Britain would be hard country particularly for the immigrants (144). Later, Farooq uses the same argument to invite Parvaiz to go with him to a utopian welfare state (ISIS) which he believes is far more just and fairer in its treatment of people and where migrants are welcomed and treated fairly (144). Besides, Farooq tells Parvaiz stories in order to create a fantastic image of the *Caliphate* just to impress Parvaiz as he persuades him to follow the footsteps of his father to fight for righteousness. He asks Parvaiz if he would believe him or the ones "who said Iraq had weapons of mass

destruction” and had tortured his father to the death “in the name of freedom” (145). That is when Farooq tells him that he is talking about the *Caliphate* (ISIS) from where he has just returned and to prove that he shows him a concocted video of a prosperous town filled with life and happiness (146). The illustration of the *Caliphate* as a perfect heaven inspires Parvaiz even more when Farooq then Parvaiz a brutalised body of a girl named Laila who, he explains, had been brutally tortured before she was killed, by the Kurds, who, in his view, are the “heroes of the West”. The *Caliphate*, as shown in the video, arrests the perpetrators and hangs them to death to deliver absolute justice (146). Farooq also tells him that the western ideals of enlightenment, liberalism and democracy derived from the French Revolution that are considered to have made the West superior to the rest of the world are only ideals and that their so-called values of liberty, equality and fraternity are protected with the blood of other nations that seem to threaten their utopia and that the *Caliphate* has emerged as a movement to bring about a “new revolution” to wipe out all the injustices and to deliver a perfect system. He also brings evidence to corroborate that the British government was involved in the killing of Parvaiz’s father as he tells him that the “MI15 officers were present at Bagram” and that the British government “that took taxes from [his] family and claimed to represent the people, knew what was going on” (148). He laments on how Parvaiz and his sisters have in fact been colluding against their father and thousands of other Muslim men who have laid down their lives fighting against the hegemony of America/West by virtue of living in the UK/West. He then tells Parvaiz stories of the “tortured bodies” as a result of the “enhanced interrogation techniques” and that of “dogs raping the prisoners at Bagram”, while questioning if after having known all that he can still live in Britain as he incites him asking what kind of man and son he is (148). Farooq tells him that acquiescence is no

more an option for him as he gets ready for the real action. Farooq's strategy of radicalising him becomes successful as Parvaiz gets transformed from inside, that is why when he sees a video of a white man being slaughtered by the *Caliphate* soldiers he does not feel the type of disgust and anguish against that barbarity that he had felt when he had first seen that video with a message from the *Caliphate* saying, "What you do to ours we will do to yours" (149). This indicates how the author uses Farooq's character to describe in detail how young Muslims are brainwashed by the jihadi recruiters.

Parvaiz flies to Istanbul, soon after that, from where he is taken to Syria as planned by Farooq but before he leaves he lies to his sisters that he will move to Pakistan through Istanbul after joining Aneeka (who plans to come over during the Easter holidays to visit some tourist points in Pakistan). Aneeka asks him to shave his beard lest the officers at Heathrow "mistake what is fashionista for fundo and decide not to let [him] board the plane to Pakistan" especially because he is flying via Istanbul that can cause a "jihadi alert" (152). This indicates how the widespread discourses around the Muslim radicalisation and extremism are employed in the novel by the author in order to dramatise the narrative and politicize the issues in the context of the rise of Islamophobic environment in the West particularly in the wake of the incidents such as the 9/11 in the US and 7/7 in the UK. The narrator then explains that when Parvaiz does go to the *Caliphate* in Raqqa, Syria, he sees the truth with his own eyes as he gets totally disillusioned from the Islamists and their regime. As the author brings Parvaiz back in the narrative, he shows his will to come back home but at the same time he expresses his fear of the retribution from the British government, as he confides his to Aneeka, his younger sister. That is when Aneeka decides to defy the new laws of nationality enforced by Karamat Lone, the British home secretary, while

playing the role of Antigone of *Antigone* by Sophocles in the prevalent political backdrop of the post-9/11 milieu of Islamophobia in the West.

As Parvaiz reaches Raqqa he sees bearded men carrying weapons, soldiers of the Hisba or the morality police patrolling, “heads of enemy soldiers mounted on spiked railings” (156). He meets men from all over the world as they introduce them as Scottish, American, British, their pseudonyms, while Parvaiz introduces himself as Mohammad bin Bagram, the name Farooq had chosen for him as it “was both a reminder of what his father had suffered and an acknowledgment that this new Parvaiz was born out of vengeance and justice” (158). In the context of this study, even the title of the novel, ‘*Home Fire*’, seems to have been chosen to politicise the issue of radicalization at home (i.e., in Britain and elsewhere) as there have been numerous reports of the young men and women (from many European and other Western countries) joining the *Caliphate* in Syria and Iraq. On arrival at Raqqa, Parvaiz’s passport is taken from him as Farooq tells him that he is “*now a citizen of al-Dawla—the State*” (158). As he joins the camera crew of the Caliphate, his colleagues argue about who amongst the different sections of is doing a better job in serving the *Caliphate* when one of the friends said that he is “mostly away fighting the kafir bastards so that they could be safe in their airconditioned studios, while the American said that their job was more sacred as they are paid more; however, the Scotsman interferences saying, “Alhamdulillah, we all play our part in the way of Allah. Who’s better or worse is judged only by the quality of his faith” (159). This brings to the fore two the important aspects of the *Caliphate*: First, the role of economics and the power struggle within the ranks of the jihadi organization and the justification of the economic inequality based on “the quality of faith” as given, and second, the rhetoric of otherness and hatred that is reflected by phrases like, “fighting the kafir bastards”.

Through the conversation between the men, we come to know about the marriage bureau of the *Caliphate*, who is responsible to recruit women as brides for its soldiers as one of the warriors announces proudly that he has been given a wife and that the highly paid men were still waiting as their requests have not yet been “approved by the marriage bureau” (159). Parvaiz is also told that he will go to their training camp as every new recruit has to undergo a training in military and *Shariah* matters for six weeks and ten days, respectively, and an additional training of one month about media before he joins their media wing after which he would be entitled to have a salary, a portion of a house and a request for a wife to the bureau. The American suggests him to “try and find a European girl online [to be his bride]. They know how to do more things than the Arabs” (160); which severs in creating humour but also showing the objectification of women under the *Caliphate*. The description of the *Shariah* training reveals the mind-set of the *Caliphate*, especially with their concept of *jihad* and treatment of women. As we are told that in the so-called *Shariah* classes Parvaiz had “learned that everyone he loved was either an infidel or an apostate, and that both categories deserved to die, and that it was against Allah’s will to wear T-shirts with slogans on them, or to give anyone the wrong directions, or to allow your women to sit down in public” (167).

When Parvaiz is busy in Raqqa while receiving training, he calls home to inform Aneeka that he has reached Istanbul and has been busy in sightseeing. But soon his sisters as well as the metropolitan police of London have come to know that Parvaiz has actually gone to Raqqa with Farooq to join the *Caliphate*. As the drama intensifies he calls Aneeka once when the Metropolitan police are searching for their house. She asks him to talk to one of the police officers to explain wherever he has been doing. He talks to the Met officer to tell him that his sisters have nothing to do

with his choices, but before he hangs up, Farooq snatches the phone off his hand and tells the Met officer that he “will plant the flag of the *caliphate* on Buckingham Palace” himself, before shutting the call. Interestingly, later, Farooq regrets that instead of Buckingham Palace he had better name Downing Street (163). This indicates how the author juxtaposes humour and drama to create a political melodrama and to spice the narrative. After completing the training Parvaiz joins the media wing of the *Caliphate* with reluctance though, as he by then has already started feeling homesick and blaming himself for not having been able to do for his sisters what he was expected of as a brother. He remembers Isma’s words as she once told him that she had sacrificed her life for them and that it was now his turn to take the responsibility (165). He had quickly realized “the nature of the joyless, heartless, unforgiving hellhole for which he’d left his life, he believed he had survived the worst” (167) despite having got a position in the media wing and a studio flat. Once he goes to assist in filming an execution with Abu Raees, his senior, who asks him to watch live the operation of beheading the infidels, which turns out to be an utter horror that leaves Parvaiz in nausea as he vomits. The entire process of beheading is filmed in vivid details in the text by the author to create horrific drama. During the following days Parvaiz “works in the studio on the sound effects of beheadings, crucifixions, [and] whipping” as a test as well as a punishment for having shown weakness in the face of horror, which is unlike of a *mujahid* as, Abu Raees, tells him while asking to pray for the forgiveness, which he pretends to do (169-170). When once he wants to help rescue a girl (who happens to be from London) while her house is in flames following an airstrike, Parvaiz is instructed not to involve himself in helping the girls because she seemingly has defied the *Shariah* law by not covering herself. Parvaiz tries to explain to the commanding man that she might have removed

her face veil just to respire better as it has been quite suffocating to breathe after the raid, but the man suggests that to preserve her modesty from the gazes of strangers she had better let herself to the flames of the fire rather than removing her veil (172-173). That is when Parvaiz becomes totally disillusioned with the way of the *Caliphate*. It is also interesting how people get to a side in fear when Parvaiz and his friends (soldiers of *Caliphate*) walk in the streets as Parvaiz wonders “[w]hat was in his face that made the men on the street corner back away, frightened? At nineteen he was terrifying to grown men. He was the State” (174). The author uses the omniscient narrator again to comment that “[t]he language of violence, spoken by the powerful of all nations, erased the distinctions beneath the surface” (164). This is indicative of how the selected authors oftentimes employ various characters as well as narrators to instruct readers even if the narrative becomes overtly political in doing so. This reveals how the author exploits the fictional narratives in order to include ghastly details for the purpose of creating a horror-filled narrative as they philosophise socio-political issues.

In the end, although reluctantly, Parvaiz calls Aneeka to tell her that he has had enough with the *Caliphate* and that he just wants to come back home (174). Aneeka asks him to just leave Raqqa and somehow get to the British consulate in Istanbul, where she will help him get a new passport to travel back home. But he is afraid of retribution as he tells Aneeka that he has become an enemy of the UK, while Aneeka assures him that his story of Raqqa will remain a secret (174-175). But awhile after Parvaiz is reported to have been killed by Farooq’s associates when he tries to escape the *Caliphate*. The news that breaks on the British media indicate that Pasha, a Pakistani-British man, has been killed involving a shooting outside the British Consulate in Istanbul. It also says that “Pervys Pasha, [is] the latest name in the string

of Muslims from Britain who have joined ISIS” (188). The British home secretary, Karamat Lone (who also happens to be of a Pakistani descent), while condemning Parvaiz’s action, declares that since Parvaiz is a dual national his corpse will be repatriated to Pakistan as he explains, “the day I assumed office I revoked the citizenship of all dual nationals who have left Britain to join our enemies. No. We will not let those who turn against the soil of Britain in their lifetime sully that very soil in death” (188). The narrative shows that the home secretary’s press talk makes him a hero as the hashtag ‘#WOLFPACK’ starts trending. Wolf, being his second nick name was in fact given to him by the far-right British voters for his radical stance against the British homegrown terrorists and their repatriation. The narrator says that no mourners have turned up even though all arrangements for their food have been made in the family house of Parvaiz because of the fear that has been created due to the terror-related death of Parvaiz. Only few migrants have been around but as soon as they come to know the slogans being raised against the Pasha family around the corner they too leave quickly. Later, when Aneeka comes to know that Isma, her elder sister who has been like a mother to the twins, had actually informed the law enforcement agencies about Parvaiz’s disappearance, she gets devastated and accuses her sister of betraying his brother in anguish. Isma tries to explain to her that she had to do that because she loves her and that if she did not inform the police their own loyalties for Britain would become questionable (194-196). After a while, Isma also goes on air to make a joint statement by the sisters in which they condemn Parvaiz actions declaring him an enemy of the state of Britain and that they will not attend his funeral services in Pakistan. The statement also mentions that the sisters had informed the “Counter Terrorism Command immediately, [after they came to know about Parvaiz’s going to Syria] as Commissioner Janet Stephens has already said” (197).

The situation gets even more melodramatic when Aneeka decides to challenge the home secretary by launching a campaign to bring his brother's body back home and bury him alongside their late mother in Britain. The media reports that come out after Parvaiz's killing are also important in the sense that Shamsie uses those in order to bring to the fore the conflict that arises in the British society amid the incident of Parvaiz's radicalisation and killing, which is seen in the larger context of the issue of radicalization of the British young Muslims. The first report encapsulates the concerns regarding the recruitment of *jihadis* from Britain including the 'jihadi brides' for the *Caliphate*, the stance of the British home secretary regarding his emphasis on introducing legislation against the homegrown terrorists and the response from other sections of the society including the civil right campaigners apart from covering the statement of Isma (198). The second media report carries the caption, "HOW MANY PARVAIZ PASHAS WILL IT TAKE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO WAKE UP?" It reveals the failure of the state to connect the dots to understand the growing threat posed by the increasing number of cases of domestic radicalization in the Great Britain linked to the *Caliphate* in Syria and other troubled regions in the world. It raises "a cause of profound concern that the children of *jihadis*, many of them British-born, are not closely watched by the state" (201). Aneeka gets further upset with Isma when she watches her statement read out on media as she condemns Isma for her shameful act of "playing the good citizen" even after their brother has been denied the right to be buried in Britain and his body is being flown to Pakistan. She gets even more angry to hear that Isma has also implicated her name in condemning what Parvaiz had done while announcing that they were not going to attend his funeral as he had done a crime by turning against his own country and thus has become an enemy of the Great Britain (199). In another media report Aneeka's relationship with

Eamonn is exposed in the way that makes Aneeka appear an accomplice in what Parvaiz had done, while at the same time, the report portrays Karamat Lone, the British home secretary, as a brave man for having taken a strong stance against the terrorists even though it puts his own life on risk (204). Yet another report captions as, “*INSIDE: Daughter and sister of Muslim terrorists, with history of secret sex life—the exclusive story of “Knickers” Pasha*” (204). The citing of media reports to cover Parvaiz’s killing earlier and then Aneeka’s confession about having had sex with Eamonn, the home secretary’s son, in order to use his father’s influence to fetch back his brother from Syria and the coverage of the crowd of media persons outside Aneeka’s family house—all indicate how Shamsie creates a dramatic situation—in order to make it look more like a thrilling Hollywood movie than a novel. In this regard, it is also interesting how the author creates drama out of Parvaiz’s death, as Pasha’s relatives are shown commenting on their Pakistani background as they “point to the sisters’ hijabs as proof that British Pakistanis were “caught in the past” then point to their jeans to prove they were “mixed up” (202). Aneeka’s cousin, who receives her at Karachi’s airport suggests that she should take off her *hijab*. He also asks her if the Pakistanis living in the West have ever thought about the Pakistanis who spend their entire lives under the fears as to not give anyone a reason that may lead to the rejection of their visa application as their passport looks “like toilet paper to the rest of the world” (208-209). That is how the implied author twists the narrative in order to politicise fictional narrative; which is actually what I mean by the political “overdetermination” and hence objectification of the fiction on the part of the author.

It is also interesting how Aneeka secretly arranges her flight to Karachi to attend the funeral of her brother with the help of Abdul, one of Aneeka’s relatives. When she asks Abdul why he is helping her, he tells her that that is a secret to which

she tells him that she has known from the beginning that he is a gay, but Abdul says that that is not the case while admitting that he is indeed a gay, but that in fact he is helping her because he had once told Farooq's cousin who Parvaiz's father actually was that must have made Farooq come after Parvaiz. He then says that if he meets Farooq he would kill him to which Aneeka says, ““No, don't kill him. Take his skin off with the world's smallest scalpel, remove his eyes with an ice cream scoop, drip slow-working acid on his tongue” (206). This reference indicates the way Shamsie uses violence as a means to create drama in the text, that we have frequently seen all over in this novel. It also reveals how Shamsie (like Hamid; for instance, in *Broken Verses*) makes use of the sexual orientations of his characters wilfully in order to represent the third gender. Likewise, Hamid has also made such inclusions in *Exit West*. The story continues and soon after Aneeka leaves for Karachi with the help of Eamonn who promises to join her in Karachi later. Although Aneeka expects interrogation at the airport but her journey to Karachi remains quite smooth one, except for a few questions by a couple of the journalists while she enters the waiting lounge of the airport. When they ask her as to why she is to Pakistan, she says, “For justice” (207), to which Lone comments that “This nation, which has decided to cast her as a romantic heroine, is the same one that wants her flogged” (228). In this regard, the narrator reports a parliamentary debate in which Lone's opponents call his action of stripping people of their nationalities as a clear example of an “increase in draconian powers” while he defends saying that they have “to determine someone's fitness for citizenship based on actions, not accidents of birth” (214). That is how the author creates a political drama in order to include the prevalent socio-political and religio-cultural issues within the narrative particularly in light of the so-called cultural clash between the conservative Muslims and Western values, which again indicates

how politics gets overplayed in the novel. Later, to everybody's surprise, Aneeka decides to launch a protest against the British Home Secretary's rather inhuman policy of repatriating Parvaiz's body to Pakistan by sitting with Parvaiz's coffin in a graveyard of Karachi where he is to be buried. Soon Aneeka's sit-in in the Karachi graveyard attracts a lot of media attention as the news channels, both local as well as international, start telecasting it live on their screens (220). Karamat Lone gets upset to know the new development as he contemplates stripping Aneeka of her British citizenship as well, but he is advised against that, because it would create a lot of fuss as it also involves Eamonn, as their relationship has already become known to the British media. Lone then wonders if Aneeka is wearing a suicide jacket under her *hijab* (221) while Aneeka appeals to the British prime minister for justice (224-225). That is how the implied author manipulates the narrative to narrate how during the British prime minister's question (which it says is "usually an embarrassment") Karamat Lone gets a unanimous vote of acknowledgement from across the aisles of the parliament's floor for having stood firm against the enemies of the country despite the fears of personal attacks and risks (226). The narrator then explains how the domestic politics and blame game become intense in England as they get played around the decision of Karamat Lone to send Parvaiz's body back to Pakistan as his supporters, from the right-wing, admire him for taking a brave stand against the immigrant terrorists and are even seeing him as a potential candidate for the slot of the Prime Minister of Great Britain—which is described ironical—as after all he is a grandson of one of its colonies, while his opponents, largely from the left-wing question the power of the state to suspend the fundamental right of its citizens, even if they are criminals like Parvaiz (214). Karamat Lone, however, stands firm on his stance as he defends his decision while declaring that nobody should be allowed to

enjoy the privileges of being the British citizen and at the same time betray Britain and that his action would send across a message to those joining the “death cult” including the girls who want to join the *Caliphate* as “so-called jihadi brides” as he explains (while responding to a question that if he hates Islam and Muslim) that he hates “the Muslims who make people hate Muslims” (231).

When Isma goes to meet Karamat Lone to ask him for the favour to let Aneeka take Parvaiz’s body back home he dismisses that possibility bluntly. That is when Isma tells him that Eamonn, his son, has more character than his father (236). This again indicates how Eamonn is presented by the author as a liberal force in the world that is poisoned by prejudice. The conversation between Karamat Lone and Isma becomes interesting, as when Lone asks her why she has opted to study sociology, she tells him that she wants to know why the world is so unfair to some, to which Lone, while considering Isma’s veil and background, asks her sarcastically why her God should give her answers to those questions (237). This is another example of how the author exploits the narrative while highlighting the Muslimness/religiousness of Isma as it gets played in order to bring to light the conflicting views about religion, which is evident on a number of occasions like this as I have drawn attention to. Similarly, Eamonn’s character is employed by the author in order to challenge myopic national and/or global narratives that are often built around “war on terror” through his story/truth of falling in love with Aneeka that he issues to the media in the form of a video statement. Eamonn problematises the authenticity of popular narratives as he says, “Hateful expression, something so egocentric in it. And something so cynical, also, about all those absolute truths in the world” (243). Eamonn also sends his statement to his father before he leaves for Pakistan to join Aneeka. It is interesting how the author presents Eamonn’s personal life in direct collision with the

professional life of his father, Karamat Lone, who happens to be Home Secretary of Britain, as Eamonn underlines in his statement. That is how Shamsie exploits the conflicts in the novel to create drama. Similarly, Aneeka's portrayal as a heroic woman character, who is shown standing against the injustices in the society (as Eamonn puts it) while going through "terrible trials, [and] whose country, whose government, and whose fiancée turned away from her at a moment of profound personal loss" (245), is of much significance with respect to the way implied author (or what I call the authorial agency) conditions Aneeka's character to expose the stereotyping of the Muslim subjects in Great Britain and West. Eamonn also calls his father's decision to repatriate Parvaiz's body to Pakistan based on "personal animus" while challenging his father about Aneeka who, he thinks, has been wrongly condemned just because she is courageous enough to dare to "love while covering her head, [has been] vilified for believing that she had the right to want a life with someone whose history is at odds with hers, denounced for wanting to bury her brother beside her mother, reviled for her completely legal protests against a decision by the home secretary that suggests personal animus" (245). He explains that she is the one who had convinced her brother "to return home; now [that] he's dead it's [sic] turned to convincing the government to return his body home" as he says, "Is Britain really a nation that turns people into figures of hate because they love unconditionally" (245)? After Eamonn's statement goes viral, the situation becomes even more dramatic as the narrator explains that by the morning "Britain woke up to a chorus of tweets, hastily written online columns, and morning TV interviews all placing the home secretary on trial. "Personal animus" the phrase they all picked up on, which one wit turned into #PersonalEnemas" (248). Lone's political opponents are shown using his son's words against him, while the "Asian family drama [gets]

dragged into [the British] Parliament” (246). Then, comes the news speculation that even Eamonn, the home secretary’s son may also attend Parvaiz’s funeral in Pakistan, to which even an “anonymous cabinet member reflected on the irreversible damage to the home secretary if his son had been seen attending the funeral of a terrorist” (247). It is also interesting how the same media that had called him a wolf for his bravery and impartiality the other day are now being used to spread propaganda to defame him (247). Whereas the newspaper that supported his party are twisting the headlines while questioning whether it is the “NATIONAL INTEREST OR PERSONAL ANIMUS” (246) of Karamat Lone to go hard on the issue of domestic terror connections. In this sense, it is also interesting how the author introduces a letter from Terry, Lone’s wife, in order to spice up the drama, because the letter contains Terry’s warning that Lone must get home or the following news headline will carry his name with the story of how his wife is “moving out to a hotel” (249). This is important with respect to how the author incorporates feminist elements in the text. The narrator also reports how Terry rejects Lone’s hunger for power while telling him plainly that he must not talk to her like she is his housewife who will bring him slippers at the end of his tiring day (252).

The narrator then explains in detail how Karamat Lone, the British home secretary, gets locked up inside a safe room in his own house along with his family in light of an intelligence report that suspects “an imminent attack” on the home secretary’s life, allegedly, by the Islamic terrorists (256). The newspapers describe Eamonn (Lone’s son) as “a British citizen who had turned his back on his nation in favour of a place of crucifixions, beheadings, floggings, heads on spikes, child soldiers, slavery, and rape” (249). Terry Lone once suspects that the racists propagating against Lone might be from “within the party enemies rather than rivals”

because, she says that many still think “That brown skin isn’t made of Teflon” (253), as the narrator describes Karamat Lone’s personal struggle against racism (258). In the end, when Eamonn arrives in Pakistan to join Aneeka, both the lovers are killed in a targeted suicide attack outside the Karachi airport in a dramatic event as Aneeka tries to save Eamonn from the bomber who by then blows himself turning them into ashes. The tragic end of the novel involving a bomb blast that kills the two lovers is again indicative of the way the author makes sure that the political drama that has been going on for a while culminates on a highly dramatic note. This is a clear example of the fictional objectification or even vulturing on the part of the author. It becomes even more pronounced in case of Aslam’s fiction (that has been discussed in detail in the following chapter).

Apart from these, Shamsie’s other novels are also indicative how her implied author objectifies fiction in view of the national and international political conflicts. For example, in *Broken Verses* (2006) the role of the implied author with respect to situating the novel in the charged national and global political context(s) is evident. As the novel begins we are informed that the poet is expected to have been murdered by the henchmen of Zia’s regime because of his revolutionary and anti-government poetry. The plot also incorporates the political dilemma of the Pakistani state of either becoming a US ally in Afghanistan or remaining neutral in the American-led “war against terror” in Afghanistan following the incident of 9/11—in which ultimately Pakistan becomes a part and a so-called ally of the US, albeit, under the US pressure. There are a number of brave and resourceful woman characters many of whom are quite independent and in some cases fearless activists such as Samina Akram and Shehnaz Saeed; that I think appear to have been cast by the author in order to show women’s struggle and resistance especially during the martial law era of General Zia-

ul-Haq. After having lived a carefree and hurtful life after her mother disappears, Aasmaani starts opening her heart to Ed, son of Shehnaz Saeed, who happens to be her new colleague at Save the Date Studio. That is when she starts getting clues in the form of encrypted hand-written letters that point to her long-lived hope that her mother and the revolutionary poet, who we know as the poet, may still be alive. The suspense is created when Aasmaani starts receiving enigmatic letters written in a coded language, which was, in fact, developed by the revolutionaries like the poet and Samina in the wake of the martial law of General Zia-ul-Haq to keep secrecy while communicating sensitive literature and was not known to anyone else except Aasmaani. The rest of the plot, interestingly, revolves around this mystery. It is highly dramatic, sensational, and politicised as the way the author functions in juxtaposing the political events in the 1980s under Zia's regime—that includes his project of Islamization, struggle for woman emancipation and Afghan *jihad*. It is also interesting how the political choices of Pakistani state are exposed in the post-9/11 political context by the author as she brings to the fore the issues of Islamophobia and religious objectification. Likewise, in *A God in Every Stone* (2014)—that deals with the old and new histories of Pashtun people and the political conflicts during the time of colonial India—the implied author of Shamsie connects historical backgrounds to contemporary socio-political issues amid the growing cultural wars in the world while showing the impacts of wars and chaos on the ordinary people as well as the civilisational loss and demise of global common (human) heritage.

CHAPTER 4

APPROPRIATION OF POST-9/11 POLITICS AND SOCIO-CULTURAL PRAXIS IN (THE SELECTED) NOVELS OF HAMID AND NAQVI

In this chapter I have analysed how the selected Pakistani anglophone authors (i.e., novelists) have marshalled the so-called postcolonial narratives while objectifying fiction, in order to appropriate the socio-cultural and political praxis as well as the related and relevant grand political incidents, both national and international/global. It offers analyses of the selected novels that have especially been produced in response to the incident of 9/11 and its political and cultural reverberation and the latest political upheavals in the Middle East and elsewhere, as they have resulted in the proliferation of a wide range of cultural, cinematic, and literary productions and promotion of what I call the politicised fictional narratives. The post-9/11 fiction, I contend, has often been determined in a way to promote certain popular discourses or to twist the political narratives in response to the global politics and international conflicts. This, I argue has resulted in the objectification of the fictional narratives as they get conditioned within the global political contexts and are determined by the dominant/popular discourses that spring from those. This chapter, thus, takes into account how the selected authors have exploited their narratives and conditioned characters in order to situate their narratives within the global context of “war on terror” and its aftermath in the West, particularly the US, while also analysing how the post-9/11 war in Afghanistan and recent political turmoil in the Middle East and their aftermath gets politicised and portrayed in some of these narratives. The chapter offers a detailed analysis of Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) and *Exit West* (2017) and Naqvi’s *Home Boy* (2009).

Huggan suggests examining the so-called postcolonial literature, especially novels, as “postcolonial exoticism”—which refers to the politics of the periphery. He has examined how the exoticist postcolonial discourses have given rise to the so-called postcolonial market/literature (Huggan 2-4). While employing Huggan’s idea, I have analysed how the implied authors of Hamid and Naqvi domesticise as so-called postcolonial novelists for situating their writings in the popular political/cultural divide for their Western/global audience. The fictional narratives with regard to this category of fiction (that is also often called post-9/11 fiction) are often determined in view of the so-called postcolonial political debates following the incident of 9/11 and its cultural repercussions. Waterman believes that in the wake of 9/11 the religious identity becomes the only basis of the formation one’s identity, that he calls description identity, both at individual and national level as all other affiliations and identity markers get suspended. The description representation is, therefore, problematic which in his view has resulted in the partitioning of the world along religious/cultural lines (143-144). While discussing Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Naqvi’s *Home Boy* in the changing socio-political context of US society in the aftermath of 9/11 and its impact on the Muslims living in the US, Kanwal thinks that the “novels successfully capture [the] changing notions about Muslims in the UK and the US” which, in her view, “have had a crucial role in constructing the “post-9/11 Muslim identities” (54). Waterman believes the September 11 and its aftermath provided reinforcement of the ‘clash of civilization’ and, hence, a clash of constituencies which has added to the suspicion and fear among the Muslim communities all over the world but especially those living in the West even (rather especially) in a cosmopolitan city like New York (144-145). The analyses

in this section have drawn from Huggan's idea of "postcolonial exotic" as well as Ahmad's "cultural politics"/"cultural fetish".

4.1 *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007)

The Reluctant Fundamentalist is perhaps one of the finest examples of how an intended first person-narrative is structured with a clear political consciousness to tell a one-sided story of a self-proclaimed Pakistani victim of 9/11. The title as well as the cover-page of the novel are indicative of the political nature and setting of the novel and its narrative but, most of all, it is the narrative form that has hardly ever been used in fictional narratives, which in my view seems to serve the intended political motive of the implied author through this rather politicised narrative. In this regard, the cover-image of the first publication of the novel by Oxford University Press clearly illustrates the cultural and religious objectification of the main character, Changez, in order to create a religio-cultural and political conflict in the wake of 9/11 and the subsequent rise of the events of Islamophobia in the US society that have then been politicized and/or dramatised in the novel. Langah believes that Islamization at home and Islamophobia abroad have contributed toward stereotyping of Muslims and stigmatisation of Islam (79). It would be interesting for future studies to analyse the role of polemical fiction in that.

4.1.1 Post-9/11 Political Determinism in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

In this section I have analysed how the post-9/11 cultural conflict gets reflected in Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* in such a way as to appropriate and politicize the popular political narrative of the time mainly Islamophobia. Clements considers the timing of the novel important because of way the US society in large was characterized by racial profiling, surveillance, and interrogation of Muslim communities in order to identify the potential suspects in the wake of the incident of September 11, 2001 (Clements 63). Clements claims that it is "the best known and

most unsettling literary intervention into the discourses around the South Asian Islamic extremism that were produced after the attacks of 9/11” (73). I, however, take an exception to this view—that contemporary Pakistani fiction in English, including Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, provides a rebuttal to the Western notions about Islam and Muslims because when I look at in totality, I find the statement quite debatable. I contend that the novel plays with the popular conflict-ridden narrative. This, I think, has consciously been done on the part of the selected authors with a view to create dramatic plots and politicised narrative around the global political conflicts in order to achieve marketability of their writings and to grab themselves a space in the literary circles. This is also reflected in the non-fictional works by some of these writers including Hamid, Shamsie and others. Thus, Hamid is no exception when it comes to playing with the popular assumptions with respect to the American war in Afghanistan and Pakistan’s involvement in it as an American ally. That is why he attempts to rewrite the history of Pakistan-US relationship by introducing Changez, his lone interlocutor, while making unnamed the American sit and listen—which in itself is a distortion of the history—if it were to be taken as a historical/biographical narrative. But that has been perhaps well intended by the writers as he wants to create a stir by introducing an alternative narrative to the political tale for the Western audience while at the same time pleasing his Pakistani readers. I have discussed that with regard to this and *Exit West* in one of the following chapters. While quoting Anshuman Mondal and Peter Morey, Clements explains how Hamid’s portrayal of Changez reveals “a tendency amongst [some] Western commentators and even governments to assume that highly authored individual accounts of encounters with Islamic extremism can provide ‘illuminating’ and ‘instructive’ insights into young male Muslim minds which may contribute to[wards their inclination to

radicalization]” (74-75). Thus, the response the novel creates among the Western audience is just a reflection of what fiction can potentially do in making a public opinion and hence reinforcing the divisive correlation, which is what I foreground in this study. In this regard the role of author becomes rather that of the creator as well as controller of discourses as readers are often led to choose a side and have a political position with respect to the conflict, which is not always true because there is always a possibility of a neutral position. Hence, I suggest that the texts by the contemporary anglophone fiction writers are more of readerly nature with less or in many cases no aporias. That is why I say that *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and other novels written in the context of East-West and Islam-West divide create a melodrama while insinuating the political conflicts in order to make their fiction politically correct and relevant while keeping the narrative descriptive, which, I believe, is often not the case with great works of fiction.

The novel begins with Changez, the protagonist, who self-invites himself to join an unnamed American on a café table in a busy street of Lahore. Changez introduces himself by asking the American not to be “frightened by [his] beard” for he is “a lover of America” (Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* 1). The very first sentence that Changez utters relates to his beard as it is considered important by the author to symbolise the cultural clash at the outset in order to make an impression in the context of the “war on terror”—because symbolism associated to the Taliban or so-called Muslim extremists such as beard have often been taken as cultural deviations in the Western civilization, particularly in the post-9/11 socio-cultural and political contexts within which they have been painted as being new forms of threat to the Western civilization and freedom. Also, the way Changez describes the American seems ominous to begin with as he says, “in fact you seem to be on a mission, and

since I am both a native of this city and a speaker of your language, I thought I might offer you my services” (1). The American is described by Changez as a well-built man, who seems to be on a mission, is well-travelled and equipped (with arms), carries a satellite phone, remains alert all the time while sitting with wall on his back, etc. We can infer from Changez’s description of the American that the latter is likely an intelligence agent having background of the military services. The story is told in one-sided conversational style where Changez describes everything including the reactions of the American except for a few occasions, when the narrative becomes fictional. The American sits quiet all those hours and keeps listening to Changez’s story without getting tired or bored. In her analysis of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Cilano indicates that the novel collaborates migrancy and absence to bring to the fore the affective attachment of Changez to Pakistan as against to the US, particularly in the socio-political context in the aftermath of the 9/11 (Cilano 208). The exposition of both the characters (Changez and the (unnamed) American) is quite significant in the context of the basic premise of this study: Changez’s appearance—that is characterized by a beard—and the American’s appearance defined by his bearing as Changez tells the American that “it was [his] bearing that allowed [Changez] to identify” him as an American (3). We are not told anything about the American, the quiet interlocutor, except what is described of him by Changez himself. That is why we can say that it is all in all Hamid’s personal narrative told through Changez’s perspective. The whole narrative is twisted in a way so as to manufacture a novel that brings to the fore most of the issues that surround the event and the aftermath of what came to be known as the 9/11. Changez tells the American that his “experience [of living in America] is substantial [as he] spent four and a half years [there]”. He “worked in New York, and before that attended [Princeton University] in New Jersey”

(2). The novel has strong autobiographical undertones. In her analysis of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Clements examines decoding of the author's autobiographical elements which generate "the prejudicial and psychological misreading" of his texts and the way he plays with the expectations and the assumptions of the readers. Thus, the novel reveals the "stereotypical images of a Pakistani Muslim nation still framed by fears about Islamist affiliations in the English-speaking world" (Clements 61).

Changez's description of Princeton is also indicative of his self-proclaimed superiority of his so-called civilization to that of the West or the US for that matter. He says, "When I first arrived, I looked around me at the Gothic buildings—younger, I later learned, than many of the mosques of this city [of Lahore], but made through acid treatment and ingenious stonemasonry to look older" (2), while in the same breath he says that coming to Princeton was a dream come true for him as "Princeton inspired in [him] the feeling that [his] life was a film in which [he] was the star and everything was possible" (2). As the university made possible his access to the "professors who [were] titans in their fields and fellow students who [were] philosopher kings in the making" (2). His prejudice against the American system of which he has himself been a beneficiary is again reflected in his view of the fellow American students when he tells that "the non-Americans [including him] ...tended on average to do better than the Americans" (2). He also brags about reaching his "senior year without having received a single B" (2). Thus, it seems that when Changez speaks of America and his stay in New York City his tone tends to be rather politically sarcastic, as the narrative reflects:

Students like me were given visas and scholarships, complete financial aid, mind you, and invited into the ranks of the meritocracy. In return, we were

expected to contribute our talents to your society, the society we were joining.

And for the most part, we were happy to do so. (2-3)

What is more important here with respect to my study of the “author-function” relates to the way the narrative gets politicised as Changez explains everything. Thus, the narrative, for the most part, is descriptive and even prescriptive. The mode of narrative may be descriptive, but I feel there is a lot more telling than showing and that is well intended on the part of the implied author. That is, it is entirely based on the selected experiences of Changez’s life in the US that concern the incident of 9/11 and its aftermath especially the repercussions for the Muslims living in the US. For this purpose, the author not only manipulates the narrative but also constructs the characters such as Changez by presenting them as victim of Islamophobia. That is what I mean by the objectification of fiction. We can clearly see how the author seems to control the narrative in order to situate it within the political context of 9/11. Even if it is not for the purpose of propagating certain political agenda, the development of the plot and/or characters does not seem to happen in a natural way. We do not see the characters of Changez developing rather all we hear is his reaction to what happens to him in the aftermath of the hard and cold “war on terror”. That is how the plot gets manipulated in order to tell what the author wants to reproduce. That is why while reading the novel, one feels that it is not just the American who is deprived of his voice but that the readers are also disadvantaged to make an opinion about the things that happen in the novel, because everything has been explicitly told and explained by the narrator himself.

Changez’s interview in the valuation firm named Underwood Samson & Company is noteworthy in the sense that Changez describes the whole process from the so-called postcolonial perspective. He tells Jim that he “was from Lahore, the

second largest city of Pakistan, ancient capital of the Punjab, home to nearly as many people as New York, layered like a sedimentary plain with the accreted history of invaders from the Aryans to the Mongols to the British” (4). This, in my view, is considered important by the author in order to highlight the divisive politics which is a characteristic of Hamid’s writing. In the next section, I have discussed that with regard to his second novel, *Exit West*, that is built around the issues of migrants and race in the wake of presumably the Syrian political crisis. The narrative also suggests that Changez is selected by Jim on merit, but he does consider his hunger and vulnerabilities which proves to be true as he does perform better than everyone else in Underwood Samson. Here, again we can see how the author explains everything himself (i.e., through Changez, his mouthpiece) rather than letting the readers decide and interpret things on their own. For example, when asked about his finances to afford education in Princeton, Changez loses his temper but confesses that he was really happy to get a job in a reputed firm in Manhattan (5).

When it comes to women of Changez’s family, he proudly tells Jim that they have been quite independent and are still proactive members of society as they work along with men as professionals in a number of fields—which he links to the social status that his family still enjoys despite their deteriorating financial position because as he explains the status “declines more slowly than wealth” in a traditional class-conscious society like his (6). Thus, his family retains the membership of elitist clubs and are still invited to the parties, weddings and functions of the elites of the city, but they “look with a mixture of disdain and envy upon the rising class of entrepreneurs—owners of businesses legal and illegal—who power through the streets in their BMW SUVs” (6). This indicates how the implied author has exploited the narrative in order to appropriate the socio-political condition of the Pakistani society at the time.

Then, he goes back to how Princeton that “made everything possible for [him]. But it did not, [and] could not, make [him] forget such things as” enjoying a full-cream cup of tea on one of those cafés in Lahore, the city of his birth (9). The nostalgia of the past (Pakistan) and the muddles of the present (America), that are apparently in contrast to one another have been sharply linked here by Hamid to create a dramatic effect for the readers. The same conflict or contradiction is employed again in the very next page when he compares “th[e] girls in jeans speckled with paint” with the ladies of a family sitting at the table beside theirs, in their traditional dress (10). This is not happening naturally but rather as a result of the author’s scheme to bring to the fore the cultural differences as Changez says that the American might wonder “how different they [the girls in jeans] look from the women of that family [wearing traditional dress of *shalwar Kameez*]” (10) which continues for a while as the girls in jeans, who are presumably from the NCA, an arts college in Lahore, are shown roaming around the streets Liberty for quite a while purposefully. Then he moves to show a man, “with the beard far longer than [his]”, who seems to be from outside Lahore, keeps staring at the girls much like the American himself (13): which in my view is to show that the people with beards have the same human instincts as those without beards and that in certain ways all people are the same whether American or Pakistanis, religious or secular. Changez talks about his nervousness when he sees Erica, his American beloved, naked for the first time while she bares “her breasts to the sun” (14) inviting him for a swim together. His nervousness comes partly from his Pakistani background and partly because of the fact that Erica is an American white girl while he happens to be a Pakistani brown man. But he overcomes that soon as he needs Erica more than she needs him in order to integrate into the American society. In this regard, it is quite interesting to interpret

the narratives in the context of the general tendency/desire amongst the people of the Third World (including the anglophone authors) to assimilate in the First World societies. That is also true in case of the Pakistani immigrants to become American or British citizen. That is why the desire to get the status of a bona fide citizen (as we have seen in case of Changez despite his strong affiliation with his native Lahore) is quite recurrent in most of the novels selected for this study. This desire, I think, comes from the writers' own desire of becoming part of the Western societies as we have seen in case of Hamid's *Exit West*, Shamsie's *Home Fire*, and others.

Another manifestation of the way the author brings the cultural clash into play is reflected in the narrator's remarks about the sensitivity and insensitivity towards the female body in Pakistani and American culture, respectively. He says "[i]t is remarkable, I must say, how being in Pakistan heightens one's sensitivity to the sight of a woman's body" (15). Then, he goes to explain that the "bearded man—who even now...continues from time to time to attract [their] wary gaze—is himself unable to stop glancing over his shoulder at those girls, fifty yards away from him" (16). Despite that the girls "are exposing only the flesh of the neck, the face, and the lower three-quarters of the arm! It is the effect of scarcity; one's rules of propriety make one thirst for the improper" (16). This, in the first place, is explained by the author with the view to highlight the difference of cultural differences between the Pakistani and American societies. But it also reflects on Hamid's own contradiction as presented through this and numerous other examples from the text. That is, apparently it is Changez speaking to the American, but in fact it relates to the cultural differences as well as the similarities of the Pakistani society vis-à-vis American insofar as gender is concerned. When Changez meets Erica at a café, we are told that when she orders a beer Changez does the same in order perhaps to prove his integration into the

American society. The very first thing Erica asks him is about Pakistan. He tells her that “Pakistan was many things, from seaside to desert to farmland stretched between rivers and canals” and that he “had driven with [his] parents and [his] brother to China on the Karakoram Highway, passing along the bottoms of valleys higher than the tops of the Alps” (16); which, in my view is reflective of his apologetic view about his country as the events he chooses are indicative of that. He then tells her that “alcohol was illegal for Muslims to buy and so [he] had a Christian bootlegger who delivered booze to [his] house in a Suzuki pickup” (16). Here again, Changez becomes the agent of ideology as the writer tries to complicate the otherwise uncomplicated cultural differences by philosophising his concept of effects of scarcity on human psychology, contradictions of the Pakistani society like the banning of wine for the Muslims, etc. In fact, what Hamid is trying to do through this, and other depictions is to problematize the homogeneity of Pakistani societies despite its cultural diversity. His purpose in so doing is to create certain effects and drama and to place his novel in the midst of the global religious and political conflict in the wake of the “war on terror” as I have explained.

It is interesting how the implied author uses Changez’s scars and beard as metaphors in the novel. For example, when the novel begins Changez mentions his beard as he assures the American that there is no need to be offended by his beard as he loves the United States of America. Similarly, Changez’s assumption that the American might think of the scar on his forearm as a mark of being trained at some (*jihadi*) training camp (28) as well as the doubt about whether the glint of metal from the American’s pocket a gun or a business card (111)—are indicative of how everything in the novel is deliberately linked to the “war on terror” and the related issues. Changez, while beginning his American saga, assures the American that he

should not be threatened and must not draw conclusions just because of his appearance that is characterized especially by his “lustrous beard” (45). That is also reflected through his description of his last days in the US, when Changez has been going through a severe anxiety owing to the dilemma of either staying in or leaving the US. He is described to have often gone out in the public in frenzy “flaunting [his] beard as a provocation, craving conflict with anyone foolhardy enough to antagonize [him]” (101). Again, we can see how Hamid uses beard as a metaphor to create a melodramatic situation in the novel. This is interesting as, I think, it is quite intentional on the part of the implied author to situate the narrative in the so-called political and religious contexts in the wake of the post-9/11 context, which is what this study intends to unveil while tracing the underlying ideologies of the texts by relating to certain textual clues or symbols. That is why this study intends to demonstrate how otherwise seemingly straight or normal textual construction can be analysed symbolically to disentangle the ideological make-up of the text, that is in fact made possible by authorial agency, hence the role of the author as an ideological figure becomes important—as it not only relates to digging the ways certain political agenda are propagated—but also understanding how political and cultural controversies and conflicts are used to sell the fiction by sensationalizing the narrative. Thus, the metaphoric significance of the religious symbols such as beard, *hijab*, alcohol and so on provides an interesting insight into the political and ideological role of the implied authors in relation to the contemporary Pakistani anglophonic novels. Changez clarifies to the American in the very beginning that he was not having a beard when he went to the US and that that is a later development as he explains. He also briefs the American that many Pakistanis drink despite the illegality of alcohol and that they are not necessarily Western-educated as, he explains

to him that Pakistani “poetry and folk songs intoxication occupies a recurring role as a facilitator of love and spiritual enlightenment” (32). Changez’s beard once again becomes a concern later in the novel when he clarifies to the American that he started keeping the beard while he was in Underwood Samson, perhaps as a response to the discrimination he started facing after the 9/11 as a brown Pakistani Muslim. He explains to the American that he had kept the beard because “[it] was, perhaps, a form of protest on [his] part, a symbol of [his] identity, or perhaps [he] sought to remind [himself] of the reality [he] had just left behind” (78). That was, as he says, despite the fear of facing harassment in the public for being a brown bearded Muslim which turned out to be true as he does start facing stares and “verbal abuses by the complete strangers in the subways and pathways. Although his boss, Jim, does not consider that as a noticeable change, his own colleagues at Underwood Samson and Company start keeping distance from him. His closest collage and friend at the firm, Wainwright “tries to offer [him] some friendly advice” to make his appearance aligned with the accepted norms of the society but Changez does not listen to his advice as he keeps the beard despite the hostile attention he started getting (78).

When Changez compares what he calls his civilization to the Western it becomes apparent how he creates and makes use of the conflicts between the two. He admires the architect of the city of New York as a modern-day wonder that humans were able to construct. He says, “while he had previously flown in airplanes and visited the Himalayas, nothing had prepared me for the drama, the power of the view [of New York City] from their lobby” and that that “was another world [far advanced] from Pakistan” (20). While in the US Changez is shown to have troubles with such comparisons as he has always had a very good opinion of the Western civilization and American development but when he comes back to Pakistan dejected the same

comparisons start making sense because then he rather seems to have started taking pride in the fact his city of Lahore and Pakistan have been a part of much older and richer civilization than New York and the US which is reflected from what he tells the American. He says, “[f]our thousand years ago, the people of the Indus River basin, had cities that were laid out on grids and boasted underground sewers, while the ancestors of those who would invade and colonize America were illiterate barbarians” (20). He tells the American that his country/civilisation has been thriving once and that they were “not always burdened by debt, dependent on foreign aid and handouts; in the stories we tell of ourselves we were not the crazed and destitute radicals you see on your television channels but rather saints and poets and—yes—conquering kings” (61). He also brags of having a rich culture heritage that had “built the Royal Mosque and the Shalimar Gardens in [his] city, and the Lahore Fort with its mighty walls and wide ramp for [the] battle-elephants” (61) and that they “did these things when [the American’s] country was still a collection of thirteen small colonies, gnawing away at the edge of a continent” (61). This reflects how the author plays with the so-called postcolonial ideas and cultural politics to place the novel in the post-9/11 cultural and civilizational clash—wherein Changez is shown as a representative of Pakistan and its society/civilization and its glorious past, while the American is portrayed as a representative of the American society/civilization and its hegemony. But after a while when he talks of the present-day, he instantly turns a native informant as he tells the American that at present the “cities [of his country] were largely unplanned, unsanitary affairs, and America had universities with individual endowments greater than [their] national budget for education” (20). He admits that “[t]o be reminded of this vast disparity was, for [him], to be ashamed” (20). We can clearly see here how the two civilizations have been pitted against one another by the author to create an

ideological and cultural divide in the narrative which, in my view has provided the political basis of writing the novel in the first place as reflected from the title of the novel. Those were the reluctances that led Changez to move between the two worlds in the wake of 9/11 tragedy. Hamid seems to have played with this in his narrative perhaps in an effort to make his narrative in line with the popular discourses built around this divide. Also, when Erica asks Changez about his experiences of living in Pakistan including “the nature of sex and relationships for teenagers in Pakistan”, he tells her that he “had had next to nothing in the way of sex before coming to America, and relationships hardly amounted to much” (54). That is again a comparison of Pakistani and American society that highlights the stark cultural differences between the two which is a prominent theme in this, and the other novels selected for this study. The narrative as a whole seems to be more of a personal historical account of an alienated individual in the aftermath of the incident of 9/11 than a fictional narrative as the story is, after all, based on a history. That is what I mean by the objectification of fiction and politicisation of narrative. The author controls the narrative in a way so as to deliver the political agendas through the novel and subsume political discourses within the texts, rather than letting the story grow naturally following the cause-and-effect principle, while also instructing the readers along the way to ensure that the narrative serves the purpose of propagating the political agendas of the text as per the whims of the implied author.

Later, while travelling to Lahore during the Christmas holidays Changez observes that the flight was full of young “fittest and brightest” Pakistanis who are either studying or working in the US to ensure that it remains an economic superpower. That is when he realizes that he is one of those “janissaries” who have been working for the prosperity of the US and by extension exploitation of poor

countries like Pakistan as he gets “filled with contempt for [him]self” (77). That is why upon reaching Lahore his realisation about the extreme poverty of his country in everything he comes across becomes even more intense. He explains that “there are adjustments one must make if one comes [to Pakistan] from America; a different way of observing is required” (74). Although he calls it Americanness of his gaze that looks everyone and everything down upon, yet he does get “struck at first by how shabby [his] house appeared, with cracks running through its ceilings and dry bubbles of paint flaking off where dampness had entered its walls” (74). In fact, his frayed house reflects upon the socio-economic state in which Pakistanis live day in and day out as he mentions the power breakdowns, tattered places, gloomy atmosphere, etc. which makes him saddened and ashamed, as he remembers his background and the place he belongs as he starts feeling extremely inferior (74-75). This indicates how the author presents a sorrowful picture of Pakistan and its society vis-à-vis American prosperity by contrasting the socio-economic conditions of Pakistan and the US. These comparisons are in fact meant to bring to the fore the conflicting economic conditions, but they are also important in the sense that through these Changez realizes the economic exploitation of the weaker countries by the powerful ones, which becomes evident later when Changez goes to Chile on a business trip and meets Juan-Bautista, a pious man who shakes his conscience for being a part and an agent of the American empire. This shows how the author’s function operates in within the text in managing plot as well as manipulating narrative in a way that the global politics gets linked with economics hegemony and, for that matter, exploitation. That might seem dramatic or philosophic on the part of the author, but as a matter of fact the art of novel gets compromised in so doing as the narrative becomes discreetly political and discursive, thus, the focus of the novel shifts to the political issues rather

than showing the development of characters. The experimental nature of the novel's narrative is undeniable novelistic; however, this study explores how the subtlety of art gets twisted by the implied author in a way to make it rather prescriptive in order to appropriate socio-cultural and political issues. Although the readers interpret the novel in their own contexts, it is often based on their understanding of the narrative as it is especially in case of readerly texts; which is true in case of most of the selected novel for this study. That is how the implied authors instruct and/or direct the readers to buy their ideas as the fiction becomes objectified.

In this regard, Erica's portrayal is important in the sense that her nostalgia prevents her from entering into a real relationship with Changez but at the same time she cannot resist him for the reasons that Changez has been quite decent gentle and kind fellow who offers her with a chance to go back to the normalcy of life. I think that Erica's character is developed as complex and nostalgic by the author in order to personify through her the confusions and paranoia of the US state as the author intends to reflect on the confusing American Empire as it finds herself in particularly in the context of her relationships with Pakistan, a so-called ally as depicted in the novel. When Changez comes to Erica's to meet her family, he senses something unusually hollow in her persona as he meets "her eyes, and for the first time [he] perceive[s] that there [is] something broken behind them, like a tiny crack in a diamond that becomes visible only when viewed through a magnifying lens; normally it is hidden by the brilliance of the stone" (31) and although he truly wants to know the nature of that melancholy, he doesn't ask her anything because, he thinks, that would be presumptuous of him. However, he does try to make her know of his desire to understand her predicaments through his expression (31). That is when Changez comes to know about Chris, Erica's ex-boyfriend who had earlier died, but for Erica

he is still alive, rather, she has disconnected herself from the rest of the world including her family and friends to remain connected with Chris. I think, the author conditions the narrative by making Changez fall in love with Nostalgic Erica in a way so as to ensure that their relationship does not develop naturally. In this regard, it is worthwhile to mention that Erica has been identified as representing Am-erica (the US), and her lost boyfriend, Chris, the United States' troubled and nostalgic relationship with Christianity and/or with Pakistan (Hartnell, Anna 337-340; Donnelly 2-4; Woltmann; Jajja 85-86). Cilano explains how Changez takes advantage of his exotic Pakistani background to enter into the social circle of New York City until he starts working for Underwood Samson. That is when, according to Cilano, he knowingly starts appropriating himself as an American or a New Yorker by making his Pakistaniness invisible (Cilano 212). But soon Changez becomes nostalgic of his national identity as he confronts the American paranoia and nationalism. That is how the implied author objectifies the characters and their development by situating them into the political crises. Both Changez and Erica have been consciously conceived in a way to complement for the things they lack in each other's lives. That is, Changez is in want of an American girlfriend while Erica needs a gentleman sympathiser. Thus, their relationship from the beginning has been that of convenience and companionship than anything else. That is why when they try to consume their relationship physically it does not seem to work initially mainly because of Erica's coldness; but when Changez submits by pretending to be Chris, her ex-boyfriend, she gradually opens herself to him so they make love for the first time. This reflects Changez's desperation to have an American girl in his life. That is why he compromises on even his personal identity to be win Erica's love; because he sees Erica as a passport for him to be integrated in the American society and become a bona fide New Yorker/American to

achieve his American dream, for which he had left his homeland in the first place while abandoning everything behind in Pakistan. Interestingly, that is the only physical relationship they have had as afterwards Erica goes into self-isolation at home while Erica's mother does not seem to be welcoming when Changez visits her once. However, he meets Erica later in a medical clinic, where she gets admitted for treatment as he gets shocked to see her reduced to a skeleton—which in a way reflects on how paranoia and parochialism of the US, as the author seems to suggest, has eaten it from inside while reducing it into a hollow state. In this regard, Cilano postulates that Hamid makes a conscious effort to extricate the set of identities that influence Changez's affective attachment with Pakistan that ultimate leads to his decision of leaving the America (Cilano 213). That is why, after he experiences prejudice, appalling conditions of the Muslim migrants and violence on the name of nationalism in the US society following the 9/11, Changez tries to construe an "alternative political position, one that facilitates his valuing of place outside the terms set by dominant nationalism" (215).

It is also important how Changez and Wainwright who happen to be the only non-white colleagues in Underwood Samson are shown to be hungry for their success and thus the realization of their American dream as they show the best performances in the firm. That too indicates how the author has been conscious about the cultural divide that reinforces the idea of narrative conditioning. Changez then narrates how he gets a special treatment at Underwood Samson mainly because of his English accent that refers to the inherent culture of elitism (colonial legacy) associated with English language in the American society. In this regard, Changez says, "America is, after all, a former English colony, and it stands to reason, therefore, that an Anglicized accent may in [America] continue to be associated with wealth and power, just as it is in

[Pakistan]” (25). It is also interesting that while going to meet Erica’s family Changez takes “advantage of the ethnic exception clause that is written into every code of etiquette and wore a starched white kurta of delicately worked cotton over a pair of jeans” (29)—which according to him is symbolic of the open-mindedness and multiculturalism that has been characteristic of the city of New York until the 9/11 as he feels “completely comfortable on the subway in th[at] attire” (29).

Changez’s recounting of his landing at the New York airport on returning from a business trip to Milan soon after the incident of September 11, 2001 is of much importance with respect to how the implied author situates the narrative amid the post-9/11 political scenario while the narrative becomes typical of the airport interrogation, surveillance, and harassment of Muslim immigrants in the US, which involves a lot of dramatization and fictional objectification of the political and religious issues. As soon as Changez arrives at New York airport the US seems to have been transformed from an open-minded, forward-looking, and convivial society into a rather claustrophobic one as he sees “America [getting] gripped by a growing and self-righteous rage in those weeks of September and October” (56). At that time, he feels that being a New Yorker has become irrelevant as all the American seem to chant with one voice of nationalism as he feels the fury and anguish based on the idea that an attack on New York has been an attack on the US:

They all seemed to proclaim: We are America—not New York, which, in my opinion, means something quite different—the mightiest civilization the world has ever known; you have slighted us; beware our wrath. Gazing up at the soaring towers of the city, I wondered what manner of host would sally forth from so grand a castle. (47)

This is symptomatic of inherent self-re-Orientalism in the narrative as it suggest how the USA (beacon of light) could even become provincial; which can be taken as a reference to parochialism of the Third World. Later, when Changez meets Erica, he finds her extremely fragile, paler, and older than her age, which personifies the wounded American in a way as the author conceives. As Erica becomes more nostalgic with every passing day with little hope of returning to normalcy (which reflects on the condition of the US during the weeks and months following the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York), Changez becomes sceptical American, while the US gets entrenched into a stifling war against its so-called enemies:

...America, too, was increasingly giving itself over to a dangerous nostalgia at that time. There was something undeniably retro about the flags and uniforms, about generals addressing cameras in war rooms and newspaper headlines featuring such words as duty and honour. (69)

It is also important to underscore how certain characters particularly that of Changez and Erica have been conditioned by the author in order to personify America, which, in my view, provides a good example of the idea of the objectification of fiction including the narrative and characters with the purpose of politicizing the global political issues, that this study seeks to underscore. Likewise, Changez's exit from the US is deliberately made to look dramatic by the author as he gets arrested on suspicions of terror links and is abused on a number of occasions in the public just because of his skin colour that give the impression of him being a Muslim. After he arrives at an airport in New York from a business trip to Chile, he is shown to be confronted with the dilemma of leaving America, which he had already virtually decided except for the formalities of a goodbye call at Underwood Samson. His predicament, however, becomes more intense as the thought of leaving the land of

opportunities behind him after having made a wonderful career strikes him hard because for him it is not just leaving the US and going back to have a wonderful life in in his home country given the socio-economic conditions in Pakistan that he explains during his trip to Pakistan earlier. That is why for a while, he reflects on all the good things he will lose as he contemplates:

I was hit by the enormity of what I was giving up. Where else could I—without money and family contacts, and at so young an age—hope to attain such an impressive income? Would I not miss this city of possibility, with its magical vibrancy and sense of excitement? What about my duty to Erica, or rather the duty to myself that was born of my desire for her? And how would I face Jim? (95)

Changez's farewell visit of his office in Manhattan becomes dramatic as the meeting with Jim is rather short and formal after which he is marched out by the escorts because of, as he says, the suspicions he has created amongst his colleagues lately (96). It is also meaningful how only Wainwright comes along to shake hands with him while the rest of his colleagues just ignore him as if he were a convict of a murder plot against them. Even, "[t]he guards did not leave [him] until [he] was outside the building" (97). He walks around his flat in the centre of Manhattan for a while before he goes to the flat to pour himself "a glass of whisky" (97). He then calls his brother to announce his decision of returning to Pakistan which comes as a surprise for his family as his brother tells him that people were leaving Pakistan owing to the tense situation on the border with India. That itself explain how drama is being created by Hamid to bring Changez back to Pakistan. We can see here how cultural differences between the two societies (i.e., Pakistani, and American) are dramatised by the author. Likewise, when it comes to the payment of the bill at the

café in Lahore after Changez and the American decide to leave, the author once again exploits Changez's character to highlight further the socio-cultural differences between the two societies as he tells the American that in Pakistan one either pays the full amount or does not pay at all. That is when Changez remembers his disapproval of the American individualism and the concept of splitting a bill as he realizes that he has been brought up in a culture where mutual generosity matters more than monetary calculations (97-98). Also, when Changez leaves behind his jacket as a token of farewell for the US and "a wish of warmth for Erica" in the airport lounge before departing for Pakistan it creates a drama again as he observes that he "had caused a security alert" (102). That also explains how the author creates drama out of every situation while twisting the narrative as he deems fit. It is just one of the many ways of how the authors of the selected novels play with settings, actions, situations, and characters in order to create drama and humour—which at times looks outlandish as described in this example.

We are then told that after leaving the US Changez gets settled in Lahore, Pakistan, where he starts lecturing in a university and makes "it [his] mission on campus to advocate a disengagement [of his country] from [the US]" (108). He becomes popular particularly among his students and often organizes protests against the American policies using "the practical value of [his] ex-janissary's skills" for which he is labelled as anti-American (108) and remains under surveillance. He also tells the American that he has received official warnings for speaking plainly against the American interests in his region and that even his life is in danger (109). All of which seems in line with the political dramatization of the plot as the author wants to convey how sometimes cultural alienation leads to religious radicalization that is reflected through Changez's beard.

In the end Changez tells the American that he “should not imagine that...Pakistanis are all potential terrorists, just as [Pakistanis] should not imagine that you Americans are all undercover assassins” (111). That relates to the main agenda of the text, which, I think, is about the mutual trust and respect despite the cultural, national, and religious affiliations. That is reflected through what Changez tells the American—that is—that his journey to the US has convinced him that the cultural boundaries cannot be restored once “they have been blurred and made permeable by a relationship” and that “we cannot reconstitute ourselves as the autonomous beings we previously imagined ourselves to be. Something of us is now outside, and something of the outside is now within us” (105). That, I think, is a reference to the author’s idea of globalism (which is recurrent in most of the selected texts). That is also true in case of Shamsie’s selected texts, as I have explained. The novel offers an alternative story of the US-Pakistan relationship as well as the US foreign policy. However, what is more interesting is the fact that Changez seems to lecture the American about his country’s deviation from the ideals of freedom, equality, and pursuit of happiness. Even in the last sentence of the novel the author does not miss dramatizing the last goodwill gesture of greeting as when Changez moves to handshake with the American the latter reaches into his jacket while Changez suspects if he is reaching for his weapon as he detects “a glint of metal” but then he suspends that though as he thinks that it might be a folder of his business cards (111). That is how the drama ends on a drama.

4.1.2 Objectification of Characters in View the Post-9/11 Cultural Divide

In view of my study of “author-function” in the objectification of fiction it is also important to analyse how certain authors of the selected novels construct and manipulate characterization in order to politicize issues and philosophize situations in their narrative for whatever reasons. In this regard, it is also interesting how otherwise

ordinary characters often tend to philosophize the global political issues as if they were analysts. That is because sometimes the implied authors exploit the characters and narrators to voice their own political views and agendas. Other times, other strategies are employed. In that sense, Changez's character (who I think has been constructed in view of the post-9/11 political context in the US society) offers a good example of politicisation of characters with respect to my study of the "author-function" in relation to the contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction. That is where the role of the author as an ideological figure becomes quite interesting as I have explained repeatedly. Here, the name 'Changez's is itself important as it is quite unusual and significant in the socio-political context of the novel. The author seems to have selected this name because of his intention of using Changez as his agent-character. I am using the term agent-character for the purpose of understanding how the implied author exploits a character in the novel in order to propagate certain agenda in the text. That is how the implied author uses Changez's character to create a dramatic condition by situating him in the midst of the political conflicts arising from the incident of 9/11 and then making him react to that. That happens on a number of occasions in the novel, rather it will not be wrong if I say that Changez's character gets conditioned with the sole purpose of highlighting the Islamophobic atmosphere in the US after the political upheaval of created by the 9/11. That is, Changez and other characters in the novel are exploited and objectified by the author to politicize the fragile political environment in the wake of 9/11 in order to create a drama and situate the narrative in the midst of all that. There are a number of textual inklings and examples to substantiate this argument. For example, while on a tour with his friends (when they are turn-taking to explain what they would like to be) Changez says that "he hope[s] one day to be the dictator of an Islamic republic with nuclear capability"

(17). The reaction of his friends (except Erica) shows disapproval even after he explains to them that he is just joking. The author often underlines how Changez is treated differently because of being an immigrant of Pakistani descent and his Muslim background. It begins with his job interview in Underwood Samson and Co. as Jim, his interviewer, takes a particular notice of his Pakistani background assuming that he must be on a scholarship (as Pakistan is a poor country) and therefore hungry to succeed in the US—that turns out to be true as Changez himself admits that (8). Similarly, when Changez meets Erica's father the conversation leads to his Pakistani and Muslim background. The very first question that Erica's father asks him when they sit on the table for their first meeting relates to whether he drinks because, Erica's father explains, he once had an employee from Pakistani who never drank (32). Changez, however, tells him that he drinks, indeed. This indicates how his Pakistani background gets highlighted in order to serve the purpose of foregrounding the cultural conflicts in the narrative. Erica's father asks Changez about Pakistan's socio-economic issues in a rather discerning tone, as he says that the economy of Pakistan is crumbling because of the corruption of elite and military dictatorship, and that the rich live like princes while at the same time the populace is poverty stricken. He then explains that he likes Pakistan and that its people are hardworking but that the elite has "raped that place well and good...And fundamentalism. You guys have got some serious problems with fundamentalism" (33). Changez does not like that description of his homeland as he thinks that it is mainly based on the media images of Pakistan circulated on *The Wall Street Journal* and others. He explains that although most of what Erica's father has to say may be true, yet he does not like his tone which he calls a "typically American undercurrent of condescension—[that] struck a negative chord" (33). Thus, while remaining polite and calm he responds to

Erica's father that although there are several socio-economic challenges that his country is grappling with, yet the situation on the ground is not as grim as is often portrayed (33). Thus, the author situates and develops his characters in such a way to encompass the larger cultural and political clashes and issues in the context of the environment involving Islamophobia in the wake of the American-led "war on terror" in a rather descriptive style. This indicates how various characters are cast and controlled by the implied authors to politicize the socio-political and cross-cultural issues by introducing diverse perspectives. The entire plot is built in a way to bring to the fore the dilemma of Changez about his homeland and homelessness.

Similarly, the novels' narrative also seems to be objectified along the lines of bringing to the fore the cliché of the clash of civilization consciously in order to reinforce and politicize the socio-political issues. That, I think, has been instrumental in getting acclaims and accolades for the novel as by politicizing the political and religious issues of the global relevance it became a part of the political debates rather than being concerned about the artistic aspects of the novel. The title of the novel, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, is indicative of the politicization of global religio-political issues and the fictional objectification that I have been refereeing to. But interestingly, when analysed from the perspective of the idea of the self-/re-Orientalism, it becomes obvious how the selected anglophone authors have consciously or unconsciously been contributing to promote the agenda of the 'clash of civilization' as their writings are essentially about the religious and cultural conflicts between the modern Western and Islamic civilizations, so to say—which is in line with Huntington's idea that the "great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural" as he believes that the "[n]ation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and

groups of different civilizations” and that the “clash of civilizations will dominate global politics” (*Clash of Civilization* 22).

It is also interesting how Erica reinforces Changez’s idea of home. If Erica is sentimental of her past with Chris, Changez also becomes nostalgic of his Pakistani background, though gradually, which often gets reflected in his thoughts of Pakistan and Lahore. Erica understands Changez’s strong sense of attachment to his “home and origin” that is why she often talk to him about his home, homeland, family, and the things he is touchy about (Waterman 34-35). Changez boasts about his affluent background in Lahore, which he calls the city of history and culture. Once, while in Erica’s home when Changez notices a fine pencil sketch made by Christ hanging on a wall, he is reminded of the “miniature paintings, of the sort one would find if one ventured around the corner to the Lahore Museum or the National College of Arts [in Lahore]” (31-32). Also, he often visits Pak-Punjab Deli Restaurant that is owned by a Pakistani to cherish the local Pakistani food. There is a paradox insofar as Changez’s nostalgia is concerned. That is, although Changez often becomes nostalgic about his homeland in Pakistan especially Lahore; that is why whenever something significant happens in his life (while in the US) he is reminded of his life in Lahore, he prefers keeping his Pakistaniness suspended in order to become a bona fide American or a New Yorker. That is why he wants to feel to be an American and often introduces himself as a New Yorker rather than a Pakistani-American. When, for example, he gets asked in Manila about his whereabouts he responds that he is “from New York” (38). That is what creates the dilemma that ultimately leaves him confused as to where he belongs, which, in my view, is in accordance with the author’s plan of creating Changez as a confused character that would later result into an alienation and the return of the native to his nativity. Everything Changez does is in accordance with that

plan—which reflects how the implied author makes Changez an instrument of conveying his political views while it also shows how “author-function” in this case determines the type of character Changez would be rather than letting his character grow and develop naturally.

Similarly, the title of the novel, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, is quite obvious and suggestive as is the cover photo. In this regard, it is also important to analyse how the author twists various events in order to show Changez’s growing sense of alienation in the US and process of radicalisation. For example, in one of such incidents that takes place at the parking lot of Underwood Samson a bunch of white American men threaten Changez while shouting at him and calling him a “Fucking Arab” to which he “felt, at that moment, fully capable of wielding it with sufficient violence to shatter the bones of his skull” (70). I think this incident is included (purposely) by the implied author to show how Changez becomes an angry (and a violent) young man as gets alienated and develops hatred towards America and its policies that, in his view, have fuelled the racial hatred at home against the Muslim immigrants and destruction in Changez’s region (i.e., Pakistan and Afghanistan). Thus, Changez has been developed by the author as somebody who ultimately becomes an American enemy. For that purpose, he is put into a situation that ensures his initial fascination and ultimate disillusionment with the American dream. That is why the literary foils such as Chris, Jim, and Erica’s father have been raised, while Wainwrights, Changez’s only colleague, who shows humane attitude towards him happens to be a non-American as if all American were/are devoid of any emotional affiliation with the non-Americans, especially Muslims, which in my view seems demonising and conspiratorial. Erica is a stark example of that who despite being emotionally and physically involved with Changez just cannot get herself into

accepting Changez as a life partner mainly because of Chris but also because of his being a stranger. That is why when Chilean saintly figure, Juan-Bautista, introduces Changez to what he calls American capitalist hegemony and exploitation of the weaker nations and makes him realise that Changez's role has been more like that of a janissary, he transforms eternally and stops concentrating on his assignment which leads to his exit subsequently.

The dramatic incident of 9/11 gets reported in the novel from the gaze of Changez who at the time is in a hotel room in Milan while on a business trip to Philippines. His first reaction, as he narrates, is surprisingly that of a sheer pleasure as he admits that the news brings a smile on his face (43)—that he later explains was in fact based on his acrimony with the American Empire and its power while he is shown mourning the death of the innocent Americans and others in the attacks. He says that then he “was caught up in the symbolism of it all, the fact that someone had so visibly brought America to her knees” (44). He, however, hides his true feeling from his colleagues. At the airport in Manila, he “was escorted by armed guards into a room where [he] was made to strip” (44) to his boxer shorts while on his arrival at the New York airport Changez is separated from his American colleagues, quarantined, and made to undergo an interrogation that makes him feel like a suspect of terror. That is how the author describe the graphic details of the interrogation Changez is subjected to in a such a way to reveal the xenophobia American state has been going through in the wake of 9/11:

“What is the purpose of your trip to the United States?” she asked me. “I live here,” I replied. “That is not what I asked you, sir,” she said. “What is the purpose of your trip to the United States?” Our exchange continued in much this fashion for several minutes. In the end I was dispatched for a secondary

inspection in a room where I sat on a metal bench next to a tattooed man in handcuffs. My team did not wait for me; by the time I entered the customs hall they had already collected their suitcases and left. As a consequence, I rode to Manhattan that evening very much alone. (44)

I think that the exhaustive reportage of the incident of Changez's interrogation on the part of the implied author is meant to make the airport interrogation story look more dramatic. Changez, at times, also becomes reactionary while talking to the American which is indicated by his sudden series of questions (he asks the American interlocutor) about the purpose of his visit and stay in his country just to perhaps remind him of the harassment he had faced while being in the US (44-47)—which indicates how the author politicises the narrative scheme. Consequently, he shows that for “being of a suspect race [Changez] was quarantined and subjected to additional inspection” (95) once more at the airport in New York upon his arrival from Chile. However, this time he does not feel as bad as that because he takes harassment as normal treatment, given the cultural paranoia of the American society and perhaps because he does not expect anything good from the Americans as he transforms into a reluctant fundamentalist, particularly after he meets Juan-Bautista in Chile who introduces him to the ways of American hegemony and economic exploitation of poor countries like theirs and Changez's role of a janissary in that—that is why—he soon decides to quit his job while his assignment is still incomplete and despite the clear directions from Jim, his boss, who otherwise has been very kind and fair towards him all along. That becomes even more evident when after he is subjected to discriminatory treatment at the airport he thanks Juan-Bautista (95). The implied author constructs Changez in a way to be disillusioned of the American society first and abandon his pursuit of the American dream before returning to Pakistan and

becoming an advocate of the disengagement with American policies. This explains how the novelistic form gets objectified by the implied author to comment on the xenophobic American attitude towards the Muslim immigrants in the wake of the attack of the September 11. This is evident of how Hamid constructs an environment that ultimately forces Changez to abandon his pursuit of the American dream.

Then the narrator (Changez) is made to report the incidences of violence against the Muslim immigrants in the US as he “overheard at the Pak-Punjab Deli [that the] Pakistani cabdrivers were being beaten to within an inch of their lives; the FBI was raiding mosques, shops, and even people’s houses; Muslim men were disappearing, perhaps into shadowy detention centres for questioning or worse” (56). Although he tries to explain away the stories of persecution of the Muslim immigrants in the US as few and far between that could have happened anywhere given the post-9/11 atmospheres, and despite that such incidences would not affect him much because of his class defined by being a one of the “Princeton graduates earning eighty thousand dollars a year” as he explains, yet he is shown changing from inside as he starts suspecting the prospects of his American dream (57). The purpose of bringing these events into the narrative seems consistent with the larger scheme of the author to prepare the ground for Changez’s exit from America as I have explained. The American attack on Afghanistan that Changez watches on TV with a heavy heart makes him upset as he feels bad about American occupation of a neighbouring brotherly country of his homeland (59-60). Similarly, he says that even at Underwood Samson where profit mattered everything, he “could not entirely escape the growing importance of tribe” (70). The parking lot incident where a white American man calls him “Fucking Arab” to which he gets infuriated, that I have described earlier, is also important in this regard. Changez also reports that the socio-economic changes in the

wake of 9/11 have had far more negative repercussions for the Muslim employees and businesses than others as the Muslim workers have been fired and denied jobs. That indicates how the author portrays the growing ethnic provincialisation and religious hatred towards Muslims in the US in particular and West in general. That too contributes to defining Changez's perception of the American society and suspension of his pursuit of the American dream as he hears more and more "tales of the discrimination Muslims were beginning to experience in the business world—stories of rescinded job offer and groundless dismissals" (72). These and several other international and domestic issues relevant to the interests of Changez are being played out by the writer to justify his decision of not just leaving the US ultimately but also becoming an anti-American, insofar as its foreign policy of unilateralism is concerned, which in my view is what Hamid wants to underscore in the novel.

Changez's role in his relationship with Erica has been that of a passive partner in the sense that she is the one who seems to have been in control of their relationship right from the start. That is evident from a number of instances, such as: The relationship begins when Erica invites him to go swimming while in Greece. It is interesting how throughout their relationship, it is Erica who decides how their relationship will progress despite living in the past or may be because of that as Chris, her ex-boyfriend, had just died. It is mainly because of Chris who Changez thinks he cannot compete insofar as Erica's love is concerned. That is why Changez cannot do anything to save Erica when he decides to take her life by drowning into Hudson as he does not have any control over their relationship. At the end when Changez visits her in the clinic, where she is admitted after her schizophrenia gets worse, she tells him that she does not want him to be with her. That is in fact her way of telling Changez that she is not attainable for him and that their relationship is just over as she had by

then decided to leave to be with Chris. And that is why perhaps Changez feels ashamed after they are finally able to consume their relationship by having sex—because—that happens only when Changez pretends to be Chris while negating his own self. He admits his shame as he explains that he “felt at once both *satiated* and *ashamed*” (63) as he submits to her and Chris. That, I think, comes from his personal realisation of the fact that he had to compromise on his identity in order to become intimate with Erica as he explains that because of taking on the role and persona of Chris, “he had diminished [his] self in [his] own eyes; perhaps [he] was humiliated by the continuing dominance, in the strange romantic triangle of which [he] found [him]self a part” (63-64). After a while when Changez visits Erica in his family house he is in a way conveyed flatly both by Erica and her mother that he is not welcomed (67). It adds to Changez’s growing disillusionment with the life in the US because even Erica (as the last hope for his life in the US) shuts her doors upon him. That is why on that day roams around aimlessly as he realizes the extreme sense of cultural alienation in the US. The implied author of Hamid connects the various events in Changez’s life following the 9/11, including: getting abused in the parking lot, going through the interrogation at the airport, receiving a differential treatment by his own colleagues in the office, listening of the stories of the persecution of Muslims at Delhi Pak-Punjab shop and now hearing the news of Erica’s disappearance into her own nostalgia and so on, that complicate things for him in the US as he ultimately reaches to his decision of leaving the US despite its opportunities and shine. Waterman suggests that Changez’s sense of alienation with the American dream has a lot to do with the activation of his original identity as a Pakistani; that becomes political in wake of the events of September 11, 2001, and because of the alienated treatment he receives after having been identified as an enemy of the US (just because of his name

and the Pakistani origin). Thus, the 9/11, in provided with the catalyst that required for Changez to strip his pursuit of American dream (Waterman 30-33).

Later, while returning to the present, when Changez notices that the American has been keenly observing one of the waiters at the café who seems to be from the Northwest Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa or KP) of Pakistan, he suggests the American that if he feels that the waiter does not like him he had better ignore it, because, as he explains, “his tribe merely spans both sides of [the] border with neighbouring Afghanistan, and has suffered during [the] offensives conducted” by the American army (66). This again shows how even petty details are picked and politicized in the novel to provide a political context in the wake of the war in Afghanistan. Likewise, it is also interesting how the selected novels pick on the characters and how often ordinary people who have least or nothing to do with the “war on terror” or the international politics happen to be conditioned in such way that they become involved in the global politics and international disputes. Similarly, the way common people are portrayed as well-informed and opinionated is quite interesting and appealing as it provides another important aspect that relates to the idea of the objectification of the fictional narrative and characterisation in the selected texts as I have been explaining.

Changez has also been keeping in touch with the escalating tensions between Pakistan and India in the wake of a terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament in which many innocent people are murdered as he is “confronting the possibility that soon” Pakistan and India might get into another war (72-73). That is why during a visit to Pakistan he intensely feels that America, being the sole superpower, has not been using its pressure on India to prevent it from attacking Pakistan which happens to be an ally of America in Afghanistan (86). This not only shows how the political events

have been incorporated into the narrative to reflect upon the socio-political situation of the time but also how often the narrative becomes objectified within the global and international political contexts rather than being personal. Changez and a number of other characters in the selected novels have been portrayed as politically well-informed despite being not related to the politics as such. It is also important how the international politics influences the lives and relationships of the people in different parts of the world, as shown in the novel—which in my view serves the intended purpose on the part of the implied author to situate the narrative and develop the characters amid the political events that have been triggered by the global politics. That is how the narrative gets controlled and the novel becomes conditioned, which I refer to as the objectification of the fiction and that I have been exploring in this study in relation to the contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction/novel.

4.2 *Exit West* (2017)

Hamid's *Exit West*, as the title denotes, tells the tale of a number of excruciating experiences of the civil-war refugees from un-named nationalities while exiting and entering various countries around the globe following a looming danger to their lives presumably in the wake of the recent Middle Eastern conflict. The central plot of the novel involves the lifelong story of Saeed and Nadia, the two lovers, whose relationship and lives become precarious as they are faced with the existential predicament amid the ensuing violence that engulfs their city mainly when the civil war takes hold of an unnamed presumably Middle Eastern country (i.e., most probably Syria). While analysing how Hamid goes beyond the nation state to describe the state of refugees in *Exit West*, Chambers suggests that the critics of Pakistani anglophone fiction should understand the international and transcultural nature of literature in the present time (*Making Sense of Contemporary British Muslim Novels*

240). That is true, but we also need to analyse the need and pressure under which the authors make such choices and what role the implied author plays in that.

4.2.1 Politicisation of the Clash of Globalism Vis-a-vis Nationalism in *Exit West*

The novel begins with a political conflict where an unnamed city (of Saeed and Nadia) in an unnamed country is described as “swollen” by refugees amid the looming chaos. Then we are introduced to Saeed and Nadia whose description is characterized by their Muslimness: Saeed is described as bearded young man while Nadia as a girl “always clad from the tips of her toes to the bottom of her jugular notch in a flowing black robe” (Hamid, *Exit West* 1). The narrator then tells us that there was a time when people would wear whatever they wanted; the city is described as a relatively peaceful where only minor fighting happens: “just some shootings and the odd car bombing” as if that are normal happenings compared to what is about to come. This indicates from the beginning that the narrative will involve major fights and conflicts around the popular issues as described above. Saeed invites Nadia for a coffee in the “cafeteria” of their university and not in some upscale club, because of her conservative appearance which is how Nadia’s character has been conceptualized at least in the beginning. But Nadia rather than saying “yes please” or “no thank you” asks him if he offers the evening prayers to which Saeed says “Not always. Sadly”. Her expressions do not change because, later, she tells him that she does not pray either as she leaves saying “[m]ay be another time” as she declines his offer while Saeed is shown surprised when he sees her straddling her motorcycle and riding off as in that society one does not expect a girl in total *hijab* riding a motorbike (3). This indicates the socio-cultural conflicts and frictions that the novel is replete with, that I have highlighted in the following. In that sense, I think that the author has developed Nadia’s character with the view to counter the stereotypical notions about Muslim

girls particularly in the West, as she is shown wearing *hijab* while at the same time riding a heavy bicycle, smoking cigarettes, and even drinking occasionally. Chambers's study of *Exit West* is also important with respect to the way she has theorized the affiliation of the two main characters i.e., Nadia and Saeed who, in her view, represent West and East respectively, because, she argues, "[t]o some extent Nadia aligns with generalizations about the global north and Saeed the global south, since the male protagonist is more community-and family-oriented than his independent girlfriend" (216). It becomes even more evident as I move to analyse the ideological construction of her character in view of the tropes of globalism and nationalism.

The physical description of Saeed and Nadia including the choice of their dress, beard and *hijab* while living in the city that is shown filled with refugees in the imminent chaos (1-2) is meaningful. It is also important, given the perspective of this study as to how the author introduces Saeed and Nadia as they come closer while problematising the popular notions about the Muslimness. Nadia's description as a girl in *hijab* who does not offer her prayers and rides a motorcycle, lives alone, and exercises her individual freedom is quite appealing, because the plot is being structured around the issues that happen to be popular at the time of the writing of the novel. The issues related to *beard*, *hijab*, car bomb blast, a city "swollen" by refugees, sluggish economy etc. are all characteristics of the politicisation of fiction as it is essentially based on the prevalent political, social, and religious issues and popular discourses that are constructed around those in order to create drama and excitement in the narrative. That is why from the very onset we can see how narrative is being objectified by situating it in the context of the global political context in currency such as: the refugee crisis, choices of dress, religious divide, and preferences, and so on.

Similarly, the graphic sexual details of Saeed's parents in the beginning of the novel including the impotence of his father and voracious sexual craving of his mother as well as Nadia's own choice of covering herself in *hijab* but at the same time getting involved in sexual and drug indulgences is indicative of how the implied author exploits the narrative to challenge the assumptions of the readers he is addressing, particularly, in the West about Muslims in general. In this sense, it is interesting to interpret the portrayal of Saeed's parents' relationship as an example of how their marriage succeeds despite not having a very good sexual life together. This also demonstrates how Hamid has used the strong roles of Saeed's mother and Nadia to castigate the notion regarding manliness and dominance of males in the Muslim societies when it comes to sexual appetite and control as both the woman characters are shown to be more willing to have sex than their male counterparts. Saeed's mother, for example, is shown to be more active in sex than Saeed's father, as we are told that although they "did not have sex until their wedding night. Of the two, Saeed's mother found it more uncomfortable" and that "she was voracious in bed" while Saeed's father "was obliging" (12). Similarly, Nadia is presented as more willing and sensual as compared to Saeed, who happens to be quite passive and religious. For example, when Nadia offers Saeed to have sex, he declines saying that they have to wait until they are married to which Nadia says if he is joking while Saeed explains that he really means that. The point is that this part of the narrative has consciously been included by the author to manifest the normalcy of sexual roles and in order to counter the popular notions about the Muslims in the world which in a way conditions the narratives, nonetheless. Nadia's dress has been at the focus throughout the novel which is often described as a pair of jeans and T-shirt covered by a "black robe" which indicates Hamid's own sense of modernity of the tradition that is in fact

based on his generalization of the Muslim society. If the novel seems to have challenged certain notions about the Muslim people and Islamic traditions, it also creates several stereotypes about Muslim culture as the 'other'. In this regard, Chambers considers the representations by these authors as "counter-discourse against hegemonic portrayals of Muslims" (xxv)—which I contest in the present study. And, it is not just about Islam or Muslims, the author also politicises the narrative by incorporating the issue of other religious and racial conservatism (as barriers to the growth of global harmony and world peace) vis-à-vis the modern democratic values. I think there cannot be a typical Western thinking or for that matter a Muslim cultural type. Thus, the very idea of creating and normalizing such cultural divides between the West and Islam is problematic particularly the way it is marketed in the cultural, social, and literary productions in the wake of the 'clash of civilization'—which I argue—is in accordance with Huntington's idea of the 'clash of civilization'. Huntington believes that the world has been moving towards what he calls civilizational divide that, he says, has created a "civilizational identity". Thus, he concludes that the threat has become "magnified and enhanced by the resources of a major civilization" as the "local wars get "redefined as a war of religions, a clash of civilizations, fraught with consequences for huge segments of humankind" (270-274).

In this regard, the politicisation of the popular issues in the light of the cultural cliché and popular discourses and its relationship with the production and selling of fiction as products of propaganda can also be linked. In case of Hamid, who I think has been responsible along with others in setting a tradition of political fiction writing in the wake of 9/11 incident, it is an obvious choice of plot and setting as we have already seen in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. I consider it important to underline once again that my critique is not about the fact that the selected fiction for my study

is political but the way the narratives are politicized by these authors to give rise to their fictional dramatization while objectifying their writings in a way to cater to the demands of the publishing industry and the readership as theorised by Huggan, the British literary theorists. I have found that on numerous occasions in the novel the implied author makes use of either the omniscient narrator or characters to comment about the socio-political and economic conditions and issues of the world as well as the countries wherever Saeed and Nadia go, that is, rather than showing there is a lot of telling. For example, while giving a description of Saeed's parents who happen to be academicians, the narrator explains that they have not been happy to have given away their lives to a profession that has neither given them status nor money.

Saeed's parents, the better part of a lifetime ago, had chosen respectable professions in a country that would wind up doing rather badly by its respectable professionals. Security and status were to be found only in other, quite different pursuits. (8)

The narrator describes in detail the social and cultural conditions of the society before its radicalization happens at the hands of the so-called Muslim extremists as we are told that “[b]ack then people continued to enjoy the luxury of wearing more or less what they wanted to wear” but that the change was coming fast as people started becoming more and more conservative in their choices of dress and outings and that “the economy was sluggish from mounting unrest” (4). Although the “city had yet to experience any major fighting, just some shootings and the odd car bombing” (2) had been happening yet the social changes are impending under the influence of the radicalization of the society as the “cinema where Saeed's parents met was long gone by the time their son met Nadia, as were the bookshops they favoured and most of their beloved restaurants and cafés” (11). The cinema, the bookshops and continental

food chains as well as the way Saeed's parents had met while smoking together characterize a free and relatively liberal way of life vis-à-vis what happens after the radical transformation of the society. That is how the authorial agency works in the backdrop of the socio-political conditions of the time as the narrative gets moved around to encompass the issues of political significance. This also indicates how the author as an ideological figure works in the construction of the narrative and objectification of fiction—which is what makes this study interesting. It is not just about one novel but the way it goes on in setting up of a literary tradition of the production and promotion of formulaic plots and stereotypical fiction along the lines.

When Saeed and Nadia meet the following week of their first encounter on the café he asks her about her conservative outlook and that why she does not consider it important to offer her prayers to which Nadia replies, “So men don't fuck with me” (15-16). We also get to know that during her childhood Nadia has been interested in fine arts but choosing arts as an academic pursuit has never been an option for her because, we are told, “art in Nadia's childhood home consisted of religious verses and photos of holy sites, framed and mounted on walls” only and that being quiet and blind follower of the religion was considered a virtue, yet she turns out to be quite nonconformist, though within the limits. We are also told that her “constant questioning and growing irreverence in matters of faith upset and frightened” her parents (17-18): that is why after finishing the university education Nadia tells her parents to move out of their house to live alone and face the life herself, which comes as an utter horror to her parents and the only sister, but she does go ahead with her plan and starts living alone. In the beginning for a while, she does feel vulnerable as living alone as a single woman has always been dangerous anywhere let alone in a volatile Muslim society, but she becomes determined to survive as she sticks to living

alone in her studio flat and starts doing a job in an insurance company (18-19). After their first meeting Nadia invites Saeed to her flat but makes sure to explain plainly to him that it is not an invitation for romance/sex (22). This indicates how the author first portrays a society where a young woman can live alone and have an independent life as well as the courage to invite a young boy over to her house while also clarifying that it was not an invitation for sex. And, then shows the metamorphosis of the society after their city is taken by the so-called extremists as women are forbidden to move around in the city let alone live alone and have an independent life.

As the so-called extremists start taking hold of certain areas in the city there are new security posts installed on the roads alongside the refugees' tents that have grown up in several unused parts of the city as well as along the roadside and pathways (23). The narrator is made to comment that during "the time of violence there is always that first acquaintance or intimate of ours, who, when they are touched, makes what had seemed like a bad dream suddenly, evisceratingly real" which is quite descriptive and true of Nadia as she realises the horror of civil unrest when she loses her cousin to the growing violence "who, along with eighty-five others, was blown by a truck bomb to bits, literally to bits, the largest of which, in Nadia's cousin's case, were a head and two-thirds of an arm" (28-29). The narrator also relates that Nadia once had a boyfriend, a musician, who she had met during a concert and to whom she had lost her virginity without much fuss (30-31). The war between the government forces and extremists is reported in graphic details as the sky gets filled with gunship helicopters while the city starts thundering with the bullet shots that leaves the residents "stranded in their homes" (37). Saeed and Nadia "watched bombs falling, women exercising, men copulating, clouds gathering, waves tugging", children were going to sleep unfed while on the other parts of the world

people were having fun and lavish parties involving lots of food wastage (37). That is quite unusual when it comes to fictional narratives as it feels more of journalistic description. The narrator also tells us that online there has been a lot of glamour and sex going on while on the road a man tells her when she denies his advances that “only a whore would drive a motorcycle” (39). The militants have been gaining control as they move to occupy “the city’s stock exchange” and the military while considering that “any risk to hostages was less than the risk to national security” has been bombarding the city (40). Saeed disguises into a woman by wearing a gown to go out in order to meet Nadia and when they take off their robes “both were [shown] wearing jeans” to which they laugh (42), that is when, after a while, they have had their first kiss (44). The war continues and soon a curfew has been imposed as the militants grow in confidence after they storm the local stock exchange change their strategy from an all-out war with the military to carrying out bomb blasts and occupying and holding areas across the city (48-49). After the curfew is lifted Saeed goes to offer the Friday prayers with his father. The preacher is shown being careful in asking the people “to pray for the righteous to emerge victorious in the war but carefully refrained from specifying on which side of the conflict he thought the righteous to be” (49). Saeed’s father while walking back home after the Friday prayer is shown repenting that he should have worked towards earning money rather than taking on the selfless mission of educating his nation so that he could send his son to live a decent life somewhere else in the world (49).

Soon after the curfew is lifted, Saeed and Nadia re-join their jobs and start meeting up at a burger shop during the lunch while keeping the distance in view of the danger being posed by the presence of extremists. Saeed feels that he has fallen in love with Nadia while Nadia also feels the strength of their relationship though she is

still not sure if it is love. The curfews come and go, and Saeed and Nadia somehow remain connected and during a visit that Saeed pays by wearing her gown they get intimate when Nadia asks him if he has a condom to which he tells her that they should not have sex until they are married to which she replies if he is “fucking joking” (53). The curfew is imposed again in the wake of news that the government forces are gaining back the control with all the communication networks shut that forces people imprisoned at their home with no knowledge of the outside world as it is announced as a tactic on the part of the government to disrupt the communication network of the militants (55). Saeed and Nadia lose connection for a while as their evening classes are over and the offices shut. One day when curfew is relaxed Nadia goes out where “she was groped from behind, [[as] someone [in the crowd] push[d] his hand down her buttocks and between her legs [while] trying to penetrate her with his finger” after which “some bearded men separated the mob into two halves, male and female” (59-60). She then goes straight to her bank and takes as much money as the bank allows. After a while Saeed comes to meet her, and they smoke together while listening to the music. Nadia tries again to have Saeed have sex with her but once again he declines as he tells her to marry first. Nadia asks him what if they do not live to marry while Saeed tells her plainly that having sex without getting married is against his beliefs (61). This seems to be in accordance with the agenda of the author who has to prove the point (with reference to Nadia’s character) that Muslim girls are normal human beings (and are as sensual as anybody else). It is constructed in such a way so as to counter the popular stereotypical views about Muslim girls, particularly in the West, (as I have explained); that is why Nadia is presented as a nonconformist girl like her mother. Interestingly, it makes a good comparison with

Shamsie' *Broken Verses*—in which—Aasmaani and her mother, Samina Akram, are presented as quite liberated and empowered women.

When the area of the city where Saeed and Nadia live is ultimately overtaken by the militants, people start disappearing mysteriously, as they are picked up based on their denominations and turned into missing persons (66). Nadia's family house is demolished by a bomb while her parents and sister have gone missing at least for her. Most of the works are on halt as the offices are closed and all the employees fired (67). That is how the author portrays the transformation of the society in the wake of the takeover of the extremists in an unnamed city/country of Saeed and Nadia which is entirely based on the images of a city torn down by the civil war chaos in a Muslim country, most probably somewhere in the Middle East. As Saeed and Nadia come to know about the rumours of some mysterious doors through which people are moving to faraway places, it creates a lot of curiosity among Saeed, Nadia and others who have been pushed to the wall (69). Hamid, it is believed, has used magical techniques to depict the humanitarian question of refugees in today's world, especially, in the wake of the recent international political conflicts and chaos around the world (Gheorghiu 80, 88-89). I think that the idea of magical doors is an attempt on the part of the author to employ magical realism, which is in consistent with the use of long sentences in many parts of the novel, and the sporadic episodes that have little or nothing to do with Nadia and Saeed. However, I feel that it does not seem go well as the novel does not offer anything to that effect. I think the author has made use of magic to express the desire of people living in the war-torn countries to move out and away to more peaceful and prosperous parts of the world. But even that turns out to be an illusion as the novel reveals that the distant lands are not as peaceful and prosperous as they look from far, certainly not for refugees. The narrator then

describes the international media reports according to which the war “was going badly indeed, adding to an unprecedented flow of migrants that was hitting the rich countries, who were building walls and fences and strengthening their borders” (71). The building of walls and putting restrictions and the treatment of the refugees (as we see later) seem to be the main themes of the novel as it narrates the upsetting stories of the refugees especially in the European countries where they have been facing persecution from the natives/locals. That is how the author brings to the fore the issue of migration and plight of the refugees in the wake of the civil war in the Middle East (particularly Syria) during the time the novel was published.

As the situation gets worse Saeed’s mother is killed by a stray round of bullets that smashes apart her head while they are travelling in the family car. The narrator reports that her funeral is rather short as the funerals are getting smaller have become “more rushed affairs in those days” because reaching a graveyard has become difficult and that new burial grounds are being made in the aftermath of the tragedies that are striking the city on daily basis (73). Nadia stays in Saeed’s home as she agrees with Saeed to move from her flat to live with Saeed and his father in his home as it is getting more dangerous for a young girl to live alone amid the conflict. She is seen by everyone moving “around the apartment in her black robe, serving tea and biscuits and water, and not praying, though not ostentatiously praying” while Saeed and other pray for the departed soul of her mother (74). This is interesting as we can see how the author highlights Nadia’s robe and the carelessness when it comes to offering prayer. When Nadia, after the mourning of Saeed’s mother is over, visits her flat again to grab her things she had left behind including the cash and her beloved music player, she gets devastated to see her place destroyed to the extent that it is no more identifiable for her. She, however, does find her beloved music player and the cash

but she makes sure to keep the music player hidden in Saeed's room even after the mourning period for his mother has been well over as the militants have forbidden music. One day some people who look more like foreigners start gathering in their street searching for the people belonging to a particular sect as they look at the IDs of the people to check their names (79). This seems to be a clue that the war has a sectarian aspect to it too. This is reflective of how the author has exploited the racial, religious, sectarian, and political divides/issues in the context of the recent Middle Eastern conflicts, especially the one in Syria, in order to ensure that his novel remains politically relevant just like *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*.

Saeed and Nadia ultimately consummate their relationship one night after their city has fallen to the militants though it brings a lot of shame and horror to Saeed afterwards. They have done that mainly, as the narrator explains, in protest against "the fact that unmarried lovers such as they were now being made examples of and punished by death created a semi-terrified urgency and edge to each coupling that sometimes bordered on a strange sort of ecstasy" (80). After that, Saeed and Nadia start thinking about escaping and moving to a place where they could live a peaceful life as lovers, so they go on exploring ways to migrate. Once they were asked to stop on the way as "their ID cards were checked and it was pointed out that her card did not list him as her husband" so they had to lead "the questioners home and presented the forgery that was supposedly their marriage certificate" (83-84). Saeed's father once sees some young extremists playing football but not "with a ball but with the severed head of a goat, and he thought, barbarians, but then it dawned upon him that this was the head not of a goat but of a human being, with hair and a beard" (82). That is when the magical doors start making sense to them, so they go out asking people about those doors and finally are able to find an agent who after getting paid issues

them the tickets to move through the doors (84-86). As Saeed and Nadia set out to find their way to the magical doors they see the dead bodies hanging in the air that makes them even more conscious of their dress and not being seen but at the same time they have to be conscious of not being conscious (83).

The narrator also describes in detail the hopeless situations as Saeed and Nadia move along the main road of their city, which now has come under the control of militants: “they saw an emaciated man lying on the street who had recently expired, either from hunger or illness, for he did not appear wounded” (85). The author creates a pathetic scene out of the departure of Saeed and Nadia as they leave behind Saeed’s old father. The narrative turns pitiful and dramatic when Saeed’s father lets them go while thinking “of the future, even though he did not say this to Saeed, for he feared that if he said this to his son that his son might not go” (92). The episode becomes even more moving as Saeed’s father speaks to Nadia about Saeed as he expresses his love for Saeed and asks Nadia to promise that she would remain with her son through thick and thin “until Saeed was out of danger” while Nadia says that “she would promise only if Saeed’s father came with them, and he said again that he could not, but that they must go, he said it softly, like a prayer, and she sat there with him in silence and the minutes passed, and in the end she promised, and it was an easy promise to make” (93) but still very difficult as Nadia explains that while doing that in fact “she was in a sense killing him, but that is the way of things, for when we migrate, we murder from our lives those we leave behind” (94). The purpose of incorporating such details in the narrative which has been done quite consciously on the part of the author is, in my view, based on the idea to create drama and thematic relevance for the audience particularly in the West for whom the novel has mainly been written. But it also relates to the culture of showing the brutality to depict the

plight of the refugees while describing the inhuman conditions from which they have been running. The same idea can be related to how the author creates a situation that involves tremendous grief when Saeed's father has to bid adieu to his son because he thinks that he had better face the plight of being a refugee than to live under the conditions that have been around since their city is lost to the terrorist.

The pathos continues in the narrative as before he leaves his father's house "Saeed ran his fingertips over the apartment's furniture and the telescope and the bottle containing the clipper ship, and he also carefully folded a photograph of his parents to keep hidden inside his clothing, along with a memory stick containing his family album, and twice he prayed" (96). It is interesting how the author exploits the narrative in order to make the condition of the migrants and those they have to leave behind pathetic and pitiable which is what I mean by the objectification of the fictional narrative by the implied authors. It is important to underline here how the author not only creates the pathetic conditions but also plays with the sentiments and general psyche of compassion and apathy of his readers so as to relate to them the excruciating experiences of the common people caught in the crossfire of the wars, they have nothing to do with.

Later on, their agent guides Saeed and Nadia to glide through a magical door which otherwise looks quite a common door that leads them into a tunnel and when they come out of that they find themselves on Mykonos, an island in Greece. They quickly find that there is a city of tents set up for the refugees where "everyone was foreign, and so, in a sense, no one was" foreign (100). As they buy things to make a tent home for themselves in one corner of the refugee camp Nadia senses a strange bitterness in Saeed that she has never noticed before even when his mother passed away (102). That is the first time when they realize that escaping to another country is

not as easy and as fantastic as they had dreamt after they get confronted with the inhuman living conditions of the refugees, which in a way appears not much different from what they had seen in their own city in the wake of the civil war destruction. After a while they try to contact Saeed's father while following the social media, but nothing seems to work as they hear the news of "the tumult in the world, the state of their country, the various routes and destinations migrants were taking and recommending to each other, the tricks one could gainfully employ, the dangers one needed at all costs to avoid" (103). The narrative becomes even more melodramatic as Saeed and Nadia hear the news that a large number of refugees have infiltrated into Vienna including the militants from their own country and that "the city had witnessed massacres in the streets, the militants shooting unarmed people and then disappearing, an afternoon of carnage unlike anything Vienna had ever seen" after the World Wars (104). The narrator gives the details of the civil war situation that has been created in Vienna in the wake of the militant takeover of the streets and their bloody clashes with the natives (i.e., anti-migrants) as we are told that "the militants had perhaps hoped to provoke a reaction against migrants from their own part of the world, who had been pouring into Vienna" which led to a fight between the migrants and the anti-migrants (104). In this regard, the account of a young woman who has been trying to shield the migrants from the anti-migrants is quite appealing as it is employed by the author to reflect that despite all the hatred that has spread across borders, the basic human compassion and apathy remain alive in the good hearts everywhere. But it also shows how the same feelings of sympathy and empathy get turned into hatred and even massacre in the wake of the large inflow of the refugees into the European countries that gets fuelled because of the fight between the locals and refugees especially after the militants attack the local communities:

One day Saeed meets an acquaintance on the island of Mykonos who tells the lovers about a similar magical gate (that had transported them to their present city) through which, according to the man, they could move to more peaceful and prosperous European countries like Germany and Britain. Saeed and Nadia like the idea as their savings have been dwindling and the threat of anti-migrant attacks is imminent as Vienna is not far from Mykonos. One day when Saeed and Nadia are out fishing some men chase them as they flee which makes them even more scared. During their stay on Mykonos Nadia befriends a girl into a rather intimate relationship (that seems more of emotional than physical though as Nadia would often spend time talking with her). The girl soon takes them to a gate (where she leaves them in tears while hugging Nadia with unusual worth) through which they are channelled into the suburb of London. As they reach London, they find themselves in a big house filled with refugees who look terrified, as there is a rumour circulating that the police might raid the area of the refugees any time. Hence, the plight of Saeed and Nadia and thousands of other refugees continues. Saeed and Nadia get settled there for a while before the police arrive to vacate the house as the refugees from several countries come out to protest against the police but thankfully there has not been any physical clash, but Saeed and Nadia have come to know sooner than expected that they will have to leave London as well as it is not different from what they had experienced on the Greek island of Mykonos as their hopelessness grows into despair. When they hear a call for prayer in the morning “Nadia was alarmed, waking from a dream and thinking for a second that she was back home in their own city, with the militants, before recalling where she really was, and then she watched, a bit surprised, as Saeed got out of bed and prayed” (125-126). As the refugees continue pouring and filling the empty places in London, “it was now said that between Westminster and

Hammersmith [, the] legal residents were in a minority, and native-born ones vanishingly few, with local newspapers referring to the area as the worst of the black holes in the fabric of the nation” (126). The narrator explains that when a street of immigrants is attacked by the so-called angry nativist mob that results into “riots across their part of London only three lives were lost, not many by the recent standards of where they had come from” (131-132). Following the riots, another rumour starts circulating through the television debates that the option of an all-out military operation against the refugees “to reclaim Britain for Britain” is under consideration as the “nativist extremists were forming their own legions” (132). Saeed and Nadia are once again forced to decide either to stay or leave and if to leave where to go as on “other desirable cities in other desirable countries similar scenes must be unfolding, scenes of nativist backlash” (134). But at the same time there are people amongst the natives who have been risking their lives to help the migrants, as the narrative recounts the tales of the “volunteers delivering food and medicine to the area, and aid agencies at work” (135).

In the midst of the struggle for survival the relationship between Saeed and Nadia has apparently changed because the warmth of their feelings for each other seems fading as the stress of escaping takes its toll on their bondage. Consequently, they “would on occasion hold hands, and on occasion kiss, and once in a while feel the rekindling of an otherwise diminished fire and go to their bed and torment each other’s bodies, never having sex, but never needing to, not anymore” (139). It is also interesting how the author presents a picture of the inhuman living conditions of the refugees while showing their marginalisation in the host countries, as he portrays the issue of refugees in gruesome details. In this regard, the stark contrast between the two parts of London: the part where natives live is shiny and prosperous, while the

one where refugees are dumped happens to be dark, where living condition is quite appealing with constant fear of attacks from the nativists (142, 150-152). That is how the author highlights the marginalisation of the refugees and the inhuman living conditions they are left to endure in the so-called developed European and other civilised countries as the author presents them as the children of lesser God.

As Saeed wants to move from the room they have been occupying to a place that is inhabited predominantly by people from his country but Nadia on the other hand thinks that they should stick to their place as they have got a separate room. She asks, "What makes them our kind?" "They're from our country", Saeed tells her. "We've left that place", says Nadia. "That doesn't mean we have no connection", Saeed replies (149). This conversation between Saeed and Nadia that otherwise seems quite insignificant becomes meaningful given the way authorial agency functions in revealing Saeed's nostalgia of his lost homeland, that is why he remains connected to his people and land despite all the suffering while Nadia thinks that they have had enough of nationalism as in her view it often turns destructive as they had seen in case of their own country as well as throughout their arduous journey. Hence, her concept of home has changed into more of an international one as we have seen in case of Hiroko in *Burnt Shadows*, earlier. During a meeting of the council of the elders of the migrants (that is also attended by Saeed and Nadia among others) it is decided that the migrants will avoid using force against the government and nativists. Nadia, however, disagrees to the approach because she had seen the way militants overtook her city of origin because of the lack of resistance on the part of the locals and the relaxations the government had been offering. However, most of the elders "agreed that the most important thing was to manage the impetuosity of the youngsters, for armed resistance would likely lead to a slaughter, and nonviolence was surely their most

potent response, shaming their attackers into civility” (151). Apart from the nativists-migrants conflicts the author also shows how the migrants have had racial and nationalist divisions within themselves. The Nigerian migrants, for instance, have been trying to maintain their dominance in the migrants’ locality by threatening other nationalities including Saeed, which is why he wants to move to the proximity of the people from his area. At that point, it seems that the narrative becomes quite descriptive as the author philosophises the issues related to the migration and nationalism:

The news in those days was full of war and migrants and nativists, and it was full of fracturing too, of regions pulling away from nations, and cities pulling away from hinterlands, and it seemed that as everyone was coming together everyone was also moving apart. Without borders nations appeared to be becoming somewhat illusory, and people were questioning what role they had to play. (155)

This indicates how the author exploits the popular ideas of xenophobia and parochialism as he shows how that fuel conflicts between the native migrant as well as among the migrants themselves as he comments on the issues of multiculturalism, nationalism, and internationalism. It also shows that the nativists are as pitiless in using force against the migrants as have been some of the militants (particularly the extremist elements among the migrants, as we have seen in case of the conflicts earlier reported from Vienna) who believe that the migrants must be driven out of their countries and communities as if they are a curse. That is how the implied author brings into the texts the issue of migrants and the rise of the nationalism in the wake of the global political discourses (arising from the Brexit and the election of the US President Donald Trump in 2016). This is how the implied author seems to present the

case of globalism for it can be taken as a thesis against the divisions created in the name of nationalism, religion, race, ethnicity and so on. That is when Saeed and Nadia start realizing that their entire struggle of fleeing away has been a futile exercise as the basic reality/predicament has not changed much for them and that the peaceful heaven they had set out to find remains an illusion as violence based on racial hatred and provincialism seem to have taken hold of the entire world, as Nadia contemplates “[t]he fury of those nativists advocating wholesale slaughter was what struck Nadia most, and it struck her because it seemed so familiar, so much like the fury of the militants in her own city” (156). Thus, it is quite interesting to analyse how the global narratives and issues are appropriated by the implied authors.

When the tension increases particularly after the reports of the killing of many British nationals in a cinema fire that is believed to have been set by the migrants and a shooting in the Hyde Park of London allegedly by the migrant extremists, rumours start circulating about a full-scale military operation. As, “Saeed wondered aloud once again if the natives would really kill them, and Nadia said once again that the natives were so frightened that they could do anything” (161-162). The government forces stop the military operation soon after it starts as the narrator tells us that “[p]erhaps they had grasped that the doors could not be closed, and new doors would continue to open, and they had understood that the denial of coexistence would have required one party to cease to exist” which is a price they would not like to pay not just for the brutality of it but also because they would be ashamed of it in front of their own following generations (164). As result of the negotiations between the government and the migrant elders a settlement has been struck according to which the migrants would be allowed to live and work in a specified area in the suburb of London. The migrants start working mostly as manual workers/labourers in the area alongside the

native who are often employed as foreman, supervisors, and heavy machinery operators as the attacks by the nativist continue sporadically that often “disabled machinery or destroyed dwelling units nearing completion or resulted in the severe beating of some workers who had strayed too far from camp” (175). Saeed and Nadia also start working in different departments while living together but their relationship has become more of the living partners than a couple as they do not have the physical intimacy they once had or that a couple is supposed to have, even though they hope that they would be able to reconnect soon. Although Nadia keeps wearing her black robes, but she does not offer prayers and does not speak her native language anymore as she also resumes smoking weed while Saeed becomes more religious abroad as he offers his prayers more regularly and “the farther they moved from the city of their birth, through space and through time, the more he sought to strengthen his connection to it” (187), as Nadia has once said. Saeed knows deep in his heart that his relationship with Nadia is dying, which brings immense agony to him as he considers it yet another demise after that of his mother and father, yet both pretend to be happy with each other as their smile becomes more and more pretentious and filled with sorrow (187-189). Interestingly, I find the story of Saeed and Nadia similar to that of Henry and Catherine as their intimate relationship complicates during the First World War. In that sense, the novel makes a good comparison with Ernest Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms*, albeit in different circumstances. But it is beside the point.

It is also important how the relationship of Saeed and Nadia gradually starts changing and ultimately dies an early death because of their continual struggle for survival. They have never been able to relish their love to the fullest because of being in a constant pursuit of their dreamland that comes out to be an illusion as they have realized now that it has never existed in the first place, perhaps. That is when Saeed

and Nadia leave everything behind once again to move to yet another city and country—this time, Marin, a city on the hills of San Francisco, in the US, where they arrive at a refugee camp that has already been filled with the migrants from all parts of the world just as the other places they have been to. It might have been a desperate effort on their part to rekindle their relationship in that quiet city but that does not seem to happen as soon Saeed starts parting ways with Nadia particularly after he meets a religious girl of a migrant preacher who Saeed is drawn to because of the unanimity of their views regarding the importance of religion, traditions, and nationalism which he could never have with Nadia. Until that moment both Saeed and Nadia have remained sincere, faithful, and honest to each other all along, and even when they are letting go of each other they sincerely wish each other happiness. Nadia has come to know of the preacher's daughter, so she decides to leave after realizing that Saeed is happy and safe with the girl and that she has kept her promise with Saeed's father of being with Saeed until he is safe. Finally, the time comes when they say goodbye to each other as Nadia moves out of their tent-house to a room in the cooperative food where she is working. The author depicts it as a part of the global trend of parting ways:

All over the world people were slipping away from where they had been, from once fertile plains cracking with dryness, from seaside villages gasping beneath tidal surges, from overcrowded cities and murderous battlefields, and slipping away from other people too, people they had in some cases loved, as Nadia was slipping away from Saeed, and Saeed from Nadia. (211)

This is yet another example of how authorial views are included as the narrative gets appropriated to the global political debates particularly the ones surrounding the issues of refugees and parochialism, and to perhaps challenge the idea of

parochialism. The author suggests that the natives, particularly the Americans, are trying to drive people out of their homeland were in fact they had themselves come to inhabit as foreigners not very long ago. The passage sounds quite prescriptive, that is an important aspect of Hamid's fictional writings, which unveils how the authorial agency operates within the text. It also reflects on how the implied author exploits the characters and third-person narrative:

And yet it was not quite true to say there were almost no natives, nativeness being a relative matter, and many others considered themselves native to this country, by which they meant that they or their parents or their grandparents or the grandparents of their grandparents had been born on the strip of land that stretched from the mid-northern-Pacific to the mid-northern-Atlantic, that their existence here did not owe anything to a physical migration that had occurred in their lifetimes. (196)

Like Changez, Saeed's character is often employed by the author to express his political views. For example, the narrator explains that "[i]t seemed to Saeed that the people who advocated this position [of exclusion] most strongly, who claimed the rights of nativeness most forcefully, tended to be drawn from the ranks of those with light skin who looked most like the natives of Britain" (196). These are seemingly Saeed's views about American nationalism but in fact they are the author's views about how globalism has been the driving force behind all the development in the world including the US, rather more so in case of the US, as most of the US citizens have been migrants at some point. That is how authorial agency works within the text to politicise issues and voice political opinions in a rather subtle way. It is also expounded further by the author in the fourth sporadic episode of the novel, as he introduces an old woman who lives alone in the town of Palo Alto, somewhere in

California, USA. She has lived all her life in the same house with her first and then second husband and children who by now have either died or moved out. Although she has stayed there all her life and has never moved out of that, yet she has seen her town changing as people keep coming from around the world and becoming part of the town. She thinks that “everyone migrates, even if we stay in the same houses our whole lives, because we can’t help it. We are all migrants through time” (206-209). This again propagates the author’s views of globalism as he rejects hatred and division on the basis of nationalism and parochialism.

Nadia’s *hijab* once again becomes a cause of concern and a reason of her racial harassment as she is verbally abused by a man carrying a gun at her workplace, in the cooperative food, but, interestingly, her colleagues who had not been friendly with her until then start engaging with her after the incident as they realize that the real threat is perhaps not her *hijab* but rather the nativists’ hatred toward the immigrants (213-214). This indicates how the author tries to politicise the popular issues such as Islamophobia and white supremacy in the text by twisting the narrative and exploiting characters. Nadia is soon accepted into the American society as she integrates and starts loving Marin, which becomes more like a home to her. She also starts dating a cook in the cooperative (215-217) while Saeed and the preacher’s daughter get closer with the passage of time. Although initially they face a little resistance from the preacher’s people who consider Saeed as an outsider, but soon the issue gets settled when they come to know that the preacher’s daughter’s mother was from Saeed’s country herself (217-218). Nationalism has been an important theme in this novel on many levels and remains in the backdrop of the entire story as there has been a lot of description throughout the novel which at times becomes quite personal to the writer. This is important in the context of the debate that have been going on in

the backdrop of the rise of nationalism in the West particularly after the 2016 elections in the US and referendum on Brexit as I have explained. In the end, I deem it important to explain the sporadic episodes that are described on various occasions in the novel (5-8, 45-48, 72-75, 206-209) without having any link to the plot do have a particular socio-cultural significance. I think the episodes have been exploited by the author in order to convey his political position with regard to the global uproar in the wake of refugee crisis, xenophobia, racism, and cultural wars, particularly in the wake of the recent Syrian civil war, the larger Middle Eastern crisis, Afghan conflict, American Election, Brexit, and so on.

4.3 *Home Boy* (2009)

Naqvi's *Home Boy* (that is set New York City during the incident of 9/11) follows the model of *The Reluctant Fundamentals* by Hamid except that it is the story of three friends of Pakistani descent. The friends include Ali Chaudhry or AC (who is a PhD dropout and seems to be more critical of the American foreign policies and xenophobia than others) Jamshed Khan or Jimbo (a young man from New Jersey who is an American national of Pakistani origin) and the narrator Shehzad aka Chuck (who is doing a job in a bank in New York City's financial district after graduating from there but soon gets fired and becomes a cab driver in the wake of 9/11). The novel depicts the metamorphosis of the post-9/11 American society as the three friends become victim of Islamophobia wrought by the American-led "war-on-terror".

4.3.1 Politics of Socio-Cultural Identities in Post-9/11 Melodrama of *Home Boy*

In this section I analyse how the implied author of *Home Boy* sensationalises the story of three Pakistani-Americans by politicising the socio-cultural identities. The author presents that the three friends (who call themselves Metrostanis) have a clear Western secular outlook and ideas as they live a carefree life in New York City where they enjoy the limitless freedom and opportunities. Although the friends are from Pakistan

(i.e., a conservative Muslim society), they have fully adopted the multicultural and cosmopolitan American lifestyle of New York City as they are shown to frequently drink, have girlfriends and go to the night parties regularly (2-3, 5, 8, 70-71). That is how the author establishes that the friends live a normal life in a democratic/free society just like the other New Yorkers until the incident of 9/11 happens—that dramatically changes their lives and outlook of American society—as Shehzad wonders how all of a sudden they became strangers as their city turns a foreign land for them (Naqvi 01). It is also interesting how the author relate that despite that the friends often go to pubs, drink alcohol, and even have American girlfriends, in most cases, they keep that as a secret as their families do not know about their Western lifestyle assimilation of American culture as the narrative shows—which is employed by the author to highlight the double standards of the Pakistani diaspora in the West, who pretend to be ultra-liberal abroad and quite religious while at home. For example, the narrator tells us that “Jimbo’s father doesn’t know his son drinks” and has been dating American girls. That is highlighted by what Duck, Jimbo’s girlfriend, had once said. “I mean, you guys are like one way here, like hardcore, homeboys, whatever, but when you guys go home, you become different, all proper and conservative. You have to decide what you’re about—” (73). This indicates how the author brings to the fore the duplicity of Pakistani immigrants in the US/West for the reasons of being fitted into either society at the same time. Cilano draws parallels between the narratives in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *Home Boy* and the main characters of Changez and Chuck, as well as motifs such as alienation of Muslim community (in the New York City following the 9/11 incident), disillusionment of the characters’ Americanness, absences of the details of 9/11 incident, and so on (Cilano 202). She discusses how these narrative have been “overdetermined by the conflict” which indicate the

narrative insufficiency on the part of the anglophone writers while locating the sites that have been often ignored by scholars, particularly the American, because of the emphasis on the trauma related themes (94-97).

As the Islamophobic feelings rise in the US society in the wake of the incident of 9/11, which soon takes hold of the entire country during the weeks and months following the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York on September 11, 2001, the three friends become victim of the systemic cultural prejudice against Muslims. Like every other Muslim, as the novel shows, they are badly affected by the wave of Islamophobia as they get profiled just because of their names and Muslim origin, despite the fact that they had nothing to do with the attack, rather they have been feeling the same pain and anguish as the rest of the Americans, unlike Changez “whose initial reaction was to be remarkably pleased...[as he] was caught up in the symbolism of it all, the fact that someone had so visibly brought America to her knees” (Hamid 43). The trio, on the other hand, do not seem to have that sort of political or ideological clashes with the US state, except for AC’s reservations about the US’s role in Afghanistan, yet they are suspected as potential terrorists just because of being Muslims (as we see later). Although the incident of 9/11 is not reported in the novel unlike *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, yet the events that follow are triggered mainly by the overall environment of Islamophobia, that follows the horrendous incident of 9/11. Cilano thinks that the narratorial absences such as the real incidence of the 9/11, absence of Chuck’s father and the Shaman, Chuck’s reluctant affiliation with America or (for that matter) Pakistan, his emotional ambivalence when it comes to clear definitions, AC’s indifference to politics, the absence of the exact details of the trio’s arrest by the FBI, and so on are not without a purpose (Contemporary Pakistani Fiction 203-205). The novel also goes back to the

1980s when the US was involved in what came to be known as the Afghan *jihad* in which presumably AC's father was killed. AC blames the US state because of its policy of client warfare in Afghanistan that led to widespread insurgency in the region including Afghanistan and Pakistan after the US pulled out of Afghanistan prematurely—which seems to be in line with the popular narrative in Pakistan.

The author presents that at one point in the narrative Shehzad thinks that if he marries the white American girl from Ipanema he will become a bona fide American (13); which makes an interesting comparison with Changez in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* who likewise thinks that he will have far better prospects of becoming a New Yorker by marrying Erica. In that sense, the pre-9/11 New York is presented as a city of immigrants full of opportunities as no one would ever ask you who you were and what your origin was, hence “you could feel that you were no different than anybody else” (15). The trio are described as free of any commitments, affiliation of bondages. Muhammad Shah or the Shaman, the trio's distant friend, is described as an American success who starts from lowly jobs and becomes part of the Manhattan Corporate World, but, interestingly, he often introduces himself as an affluent Arab Sheikh (21). After the incident of 9/11 when the Shaman goes missing, the three friends decide to travel to his town of Westbrook in Connecticut. That is when AC for once shows his abhorrence with the perpetrator of the 9/11 as he expresses his anger, “I DON'T CARE ABOUT THE FUCKING COLOR SPECTRUM, CHUM! I care about the Shaman! I care about this city.” His thick, wavy locks kept falling over his eyes, and he kept pulling them back. “Those bastards,” he continued, “they've fucked up *my city!* THEY'VE FUCKED UP EVERYTHING!” (23). That shows that they own the city of New York and have nothing to do with the cultural and religious divide. Yet (as it reveals later) they are suspected just because of their names, colour

of their skin and nationalities as one occasion they are insulted by a bunch of local whites and called 'Arabs' just because of their background, which is similar to how Changez is called an "*Fucking Arab*" soon after the incident of 9/11 (Hamid 70; emphasis added) as I have discussed. The metaphor of Arab is used here in the context of the cultural objectification of Muslims in the US that remains a dominant motif in this novel as well. That is when for the first time the trio realize like Changez that they do not belong to America but problem for them as Naqvi presents is that they do not belong anywhere as they are neither Arab, nor Pakistanis and nor American after what they have been facing and seeing the way things were changing in the wake of 9/11. They are categorically told that there is no room for them in the US as it is not theirs (24-25) despite the fact that their pursuit of happiness was purely material and that they wanted to become a part of the American corporate/capitalist world to pursue American dream just like others (28-29) as they explain. Chuck reads a columnist in the *Post* that explains the new American nationalism in the wake of 9/11; that to him sounded more provincial than ever (42). I think, the implied author uses this to present the complexity of the cultural and religious oversimplification; which is also indicated in how Chuck gets fired from his bank job despite being one of the best performing employees (30). This shows how Chuck's cultural and religious affiliation become main markers of his identity. That is why I say that his story has too many similarities with that of Changez.

The trio are representative of multicultural globalism as they listen to "Nusrat, Nina, *Jesus Christ Superstar*" (31). There are some glimpses of nostalgia as well as we see in case of Changez as Chuck meets the Pakistani cab drivers from Karachi (34). Mr. and Mrs. Khan's account of Pakistan is indicative of the diversity of the Pakistani society. Mrs. Khan's story is important in the sense that he represents the

turbulent history of the Subcontinent, the petition, and the precariousness of leaving India and living in the new-born Pakistan. There is a mention of her academic achievements as a woman despite belonging to an area of Pakistan that happens to be more conservative when it comes to educating women, but “her father made sure Begum received a “first-class education” (50). That is why Mr. Khan, her husband, who also hails from a province where girls are not usually supported to pursue education, takes pride in the fact that his late wife had tremendous academic achievements (50). We are told that although Mr. Khan belongs to a traditional Pathan society he does not approve of the new wave of so-called *jihad* as he believes in struggle against one’s own self. He tells Chuck that “the modern connotation of jihad that had entered discourse with a bang: waging war against errant Muslims and non-Muslims alike” (54) is problematic and political. Mr. Khan as we know is a Pathan and when America attacks Afghanistan he cries for his people condemning the destruction from both the sides as he laments the suffering of his ethnic community. “Old Man Khan sympathized with his people even if they contributed to the Taliban. But it wasn’t that he was simply torn between here and there” (57). Amo, Khan’s daughter, does not wear *hijab* to avoid looking like a traditional Muslim. Chuck says that he does not like *hijab* as “Donning the thing was a matter of interpretation, faulty interpretation; Ma, a paragon of virtue and grace and sensibility, never wore one” (54)—which is indicative of how certain Muslim religious practices and dress (*hijab*) become symptoms of cultural objectification employed by the author. That is why it is shown that after the 9/11, however, Amo becomes more American in her dressing as she starts wearing skirts (209), apparently in order to avoid the persecution of being a Muslim in the public. That is how the author politicises the cultural, religious, and

political matters such as the issues of Islamophobia and religious profiling of the Muslims in the US society in the wake of 9/11.

In addition to that, Chuck's views regarding his Muslim origin and the incompatibilities he has been facing while living in the US and his judgmental comments about certain Islamic teaching are quite suggestive. I argue that the author manipulates his role to highlight the inconsistencies between the modern Western society and Islamic values/teachings and the need for a dialogue or negotiation between the two (55). I think it also reflects on how the author has been mindful in choosing the issues that are politically correct for the purpose of making the narrative relevant to the socio-political debates in the context of 9/11 and its aftermath. Similarly, when Chuck is invited by Lawrence, his gay friend, to his home in New York for the Thanksgiving dinner, Lawrence's mother appreciates Chuck's manners, as she says that "[h]e's so well-mannered... "it's because he's *Mooslim*. [while the narrator exclaims] "Those were the days" (55). Likewise, the three friends had once before travelled across the US starting from New York City to Las Vegas on a rented car and nobody had bothered to ask about their identity during the entire road trip. While remembering that Chuck remarks, "Who then could have anticipated that it would soon not be possible for three brown men to drive across America in a rented car, even with a blond in tow" (68-69)? —that is reflective of the rising paranoia and Islamophobia in the post-9/11 US society, because of which every brown man or Muslim is suspected to be a potential terrorist even in the official American discourse, as the narrative presents. That is why while travelling with his friends to the Shaman's in Westbrook, Connecticut, Chuck does not feel as comfortable as before (74). He feels "uneasy, guilty, criminal" even without having done anything bad just because he is made conscious of his identity as a Muslim migrant that itself gets criminalised

in the post-9/11 political context, and, interestingly, his fear turns out to be realistic when Brophy, a police officer, stops them on the way inquiring about their identity as he sees “*a bunch of brown men in a car*” (76). When they are allowed to leave AC says, “*Fuck tha po-lice comin’ straight from the underground / Young nigga got it bad cuz I’m brown ...* [while] Jimbo joins him saying, “*I’m not the other color, so police think/They have the authority to kill a minority*” (78). On reaching the Shaman’s they do not find him at home, so they decide to break in and just wait there for him to come back. But when he does not return until the late evening they decided to stay for the night at his house. During their talk about the politics in the wake of 9/11 AC remains interested as we are told about the US’s official version of the 9/11 through the CNN (89). When Chuck switches the TV to a news channels we hear the news report that a “[t]wenty-four-year-old *Ansar Mahmood, a Pakistan-born permanent resident, who had asked a passer-by to photograph him against the Hudson, was arrested by FBI and being deported for his alleged links with the so-called terrorists*” (91). While the narrator comments that he “*was, quite simply, in the wrong place at the wrong time*” (91). The author includes the whole speech of the US president (93-97) that he delivers in the wake of 9/11 attacks which is quite meaningful from the perspective of this study as it shows how the fictional narrative becomes discreetly politicised. Chuck is shown to dispute the speech saying that every American does not think like the president (94). Even AC watches the speech and at a point when the president says that it is not a war against the peaceful Muslims and Islam he comments that ““*Islam’s not good and peaceful, chum*” as he abuses all religions—“*Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism. Man’s been killing and maiming in the name of God since the dawn of time*” (97). This is one of the many examples where the politics of religion gets played by the author in the backdrop of the political

landscape of the 9/11. The author once again seems to manipulate AC's to voice his anti-nationalist and pro-globalist views, as we often see in the selected novels. Since the entire novel is structured in a way so as to politicise the incident of 9/11, the author makes sure to include every political happening that is connected to it, no matter whether or not it is related to the main plot of the novel as we have seen in case of the news story about Ansar Mahmood and others. This is quite prevalent in most of the novels selected for this study as I have underscored. Likewise, the way the central episode is engineered by the author by involves an FBI investigation and subsequent arrest of the three friends for the petty offence of having broken into the house of their own friend is quite significant with reference to the present study. We are told that the Shaman's neighbours had reported to the local police about the breach, but because the intruders were apparently brown Muslims the local police considered it an issue of national security thus they informed the FBI who arrived on the spot immediately to launch an investigation. That is how such an ordinary situation is dramatised while manipulating the fictional narrative by the author to politicise the issues of global political significance rather than bring to the fore the issues of Islamophobia and prejudice against Muslim minority in the US/West in the wake of 9/11. This, I argue, has, essentially been done by the author in order to situate the narrative in the political context of 9/11 and thus create controversy for the marketability of the novel. As the drama continues, Chuck wonders why the FBI would get involved in this petty thing, but then he remembers that they happen to be three brown Muslims from Pakistan (99), which alone makes them potential terrorists. The dialogue that follows between the three friends and the FBI agents is indicative of the "overdetermination" of politics in the novel as the officers ask them about their personal details and background. When they ask to search the house, AC gets angry and enquires about the

warrants to do that while telling them that he knows his rights enshrined in the constitution of the US by refereeing to the “[a]rticle one section nine, clause two” of the US constitution. The agents, however, do not give any heed to what AC says as they threaten them with dire consequences if the trio will not cooperate (100-101), while informing them that they are in deep trouble and “have got no fucking rights” (107). After that we are told by the narrator that the friends are pressed by the agents to admit that they have been involved in the terrorist activities and that in return the agents would make a plea for the leniency in their punishment (107), which they vehemently deny. In the ensuing events the three friends are arrested by agent Trig and agent Holt on charges of terror related cases. The additional interrogation of Chuck by the FBI agents as reported in the narrative (113-117) suggest how the authorial agency reveals itself in objectifying the fictional narrative in order to create a political drama around this episode. Likewise, Chuck’s interrogation by agent Grizzly, has also been manipulated by the author to expose how Islam-West clash becomes a point of contestation in the novel as he exploits the situation further:

Grizzly: You a terrorist?

Chuck: No, sir.

Grizzly: You a Moslem?

Chuck: Yes, sir.

Grizzly: So, you read the Ko-Ran?

Chuck: I’ve read it.

Grizzly: And pray five times a day to Al-La?”

Chuck: No, sir. I pray several times a year, on special occasions like Eid.

Grizzly: You keep the Ram-a-Dan?

Chuck: Yes, sir, I usually keep about half, sometimes more but mostly less—

Grizzly: D'you eat pork?

Chuck: No sir.

Grizzly: Drink?

Chuck: Liquor? Yes, sir.

Grizzly: Won't Al-La get mad?

Chuck: I don't think it's all that important to Him, sir, you know, whether I drink or not. (113-114)

Then, Grizzly asks him specifically about the Quranic teachings and the 9/11:

Grizzly: I want to know does the Koran sanction terrorism?

Chuck: I've read it. I'm no terrorist.

Grizzly: Then why do Moslems use it to justify terrorism?

Chuck: It's all a matter of interpretation, isn't it? I mean take the Bible. It's interpreted differently by, like, Unitarians and Mormons, Lutherans, Pentecostals—

Grizzly: Okay—

Chuck: Eric Rudolph, Mother Teresa, Jerry Falwell, the Lord's Liberation Army—

Grizzly: I said *okay!* Look. All I want to know is why the hell did they have to blow up the Twin Towers? (116-117)

This is symptomatic of how the implied author deploys the narrative in such a way to politicise certain popular discourses in the wake of 9/11. Here, he seems to bring to light the issue of how Islam often gets equated with terror in the popular discourses that started circulating in the West following the 9/11. It can be taken as an example of how the author tries to dismantle the populist notions about Islam and Muslims, while showing that the terrorist ideologies have nothing to do with Islam or Muslims

and that all Muslims are not necessarily terrorists or even religious such as the trio in this novel. Afterward, we get to know that Chuck and Jimbo are ultimately released one after the other as the cases against them were not proven, however AC, who had been vocal and kept challenging the state's impunity to arrest citizen gets implicated in a fabricated case of possessing illegal drugs and is sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment (193)—which shows the travesty of justice in the post-9/11 US.

The novel also incorporates the political dilemma Pakistan was faced with after the US had demanded the Pakistani military dictator, General Musharraf, to either join with the coalition in their war against the Taliban in Afghanistan or to get ready to face the consequences—as the Pakistani Americans discuss the options for Pakistan at a dinner at Mini aunt's (131-132). The debate about the fragility of Pakistani democracy and military interference in politics becomes tense as the guests' views clash (132). Cilano explains how *Home Boy* critiques Musharraf's illegal rule and usurping of power (*Contemporary Pakistani Fiction* 208). That is how the implied author tracks the political issues related to the 9/11 and its aftermath from the perspective of Pakistani state and society as the plot gets drawn to the events of the political importance in the context; which is what I imply as the objectification of the fiction. Although Chuck is freed from the prison, he feels that he is being followed and that he is actually guilty (121) because after all he happens to be a Muslim. Once, when he is in the subway station, he finds that people have been staring at him because of his Asian/Arab/Muslim appearance. The author presents that Chuck feels guilt not because he has been involved in anything wrong, but, in fact, because of the general environment of fear, conspiracy and harassment of Muslims that develops in the wake of 9/11. He even dreams about that, which plays an important role in the novel in showing how his unconscious gets conditioned because of his overwhelming

thoughts of being guilty just because of being a Pakistani-Muslim immigrant in the US, which ultimately leads to his extreme sense of alienation in the claustrophobic post-9/11 US society just like Changez as he contemplates of leaving the land of opportunities. Waterman explains how AC, Jimbo and Chuck change in the wake of the September 11 as their skin colour, Muslim names and Pakistani origins make them suspected (terrorists) more or less like Changez (in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*) who feels guilty and at times criminal despite having nothing to do with the incident of 9/11 (Waterman 145).

It is also important to mention that because of the same reasons Chuck loses his bank job despite being one of the best-performing employees of the bank and becomes a cab driver before he gets arrested on suspicion of being a terrorist and loses even his cab because it is the same taxi the trio had driven to Shaman's house. All that seems to have been caused by the 9/11 and the political scenario it had triggered with which Chuck and millions of Muslims like him have had nothing to do, yet they become victim of the hatred it had created, which drives Chuck into a severe fit of depression and sense of helplessness as he feels "numb, [and] dead" (200). This shows how the author employs innocent common people to propagate political views by getting them subjected to enormous mental pain and physical loss, which is an important and recurrent theme in the selected novels. After having gone through the episode at the FBI detention centre Chuck thinks of leaving the US and coming back to Pakistan but meanwhile he develops soft feeling for Amo, Mr. Kahn's daughter, and perhaps because of her he decides to stay in the US at least for a while and try his luck as he goes for a job interview. His interviewer, upon knowing that Chuck is from Pakistan, gets excited and asks him about the things in Pakistan to which Chuck

explains the volatile political situation in Pakistan in the wake of the American-led war in Afghanistan (157-158), wherein the religion and politics get politicised again.

The narrator explains how the FBI has still been inquiring about Chuck as Abdul Karim, one of his benefactors, is being interrogated about his relationship with Chuck because the agency considers him a terrorist (184). Interestingly, even Abdul Karim and his wife think that Chuck might have something to do with the terrorists as they ask Chuck to leave their house immediately when he goes to explain them the real story (184-186), mainly because of the prevalent environment of distrust and paranoia that spreads among the Muslims in the US in the wake of 9/11. Soon after that we are told that Chuck also loses his cab after Mr. Karim (who had got him the cab earlier) becomes angry with him and withdraws his guardianship. The author also reveals the overall state of the fear of persecution of Muslims as many Muslim families living in the US are fleeing “across the border, to Canada, to Mexico, with not much more than the clothes on their backs. Many would leave for the home they had left decades ago, never to return” (181) as their hopes of a better life in the land of opportunities get shattered. That is how the author sensationalises popular issues and dramatises situation by highlighting the cynicism and fear that 9/11 and the events that follow had created among the Muslim communities across the US. The narrative in so doing gets politicised; that I refer to as “overdetermination” of politics and objectification of fiction.

The state of fear and distrust makes Chuck quite nostalgic of the pre-9/11 harmony, pluralism, love, peace, and trust that has been characteristic of the city of New York where all communities have connected together in a strong bond (191, 201) of mutual respect and love. The cultural and religious divide that the incident of 9/11 had created has never been heard or thought of, yet it happened that turned the

world upside down for many including the trio. Even though, when Shehzad meets Lawrence, his gay friend, he feels more connected to him and much in common with him (203). That, as the author shows, is mainly because of the nature of their relationship where none of them feels any alienation from the other as they are connected in a bond that goes beyond the usual divides and affiliations of nationhood, culture, and religion. Thus, they are able to connect with each other despite everything that had gone through since they met last. When Shehzad calls Ma later he tells her the news of getting a new job, but this time he does not feel excited as he explains to her when she urges:

What do you want me to tell you, Ma? That life's changed? The city's changed? That there's sadness around every corner? There are cops everywhere? You know, there was a time when a police presence was reassuring, like at a parade or late at night, on the street, in the subway, but now I'm afraid of them. I'm afraid all the time. I feel like a marked man. I feel like an animal. It's no way to live. (206)

This indicates how the author relates the story of the transformation of the US society that Chuck becomes a witness to (just like Changez in the wake of the incident of 9/11). That is when he decides to go back home to Pakistan, his homeland, as he is shown preparing and leaving for the JFK airport (211-213) despite the promising career that the new job offers him and his growing love for Amo. The author also reveals in the end that Shaman had in fact been killed in the attacks on the World Trade Towers (214)—through which the author wants to demonstrate how terrorists attack and kill people indiscriminately and how Muslims have also been the victim of terrorism, who are subjected to the unjustifiable hatred just for being Muslims, even when they have nothing to do with terror or terrorists. It also indicates that the end of

the novel is prototype of the novels written in response to the 9/11 and its aftermath as I have explained with reference to Changez's exit from the US after having faced the racial and religious persecution in the wake of 9/11, even when he had just got a quite lucrative promotion in the illustrious Underwood Samson. This is indicative of how the fictional narratives get built around or in the midst of the international wars and global conflicts, which ultimately determines what kind of story would it be. That is how fiction gets determined and, thus, objectified in view of the political overdetermination/relevance and globalised narratives. In this regard, Chambers explains how "the works of Muslim-identified writers have been especially politicized in the years following the Rushdie affair and 9/11 events which have also influenced the ways these books are absorbed or responded to by the literary canon" (Making Sense xxiv). Apart from these, there are a number of other novels that have been written under the influence of the politicised fiction writings in view of the socio-cultural and political overdetermination in view of the Soviet and American-led wars in Afghanistan and their aftermath. For example, Aslam's *The Wasted Vigil* (2008) is set partly in the war-torn Afghanistan during the Soviet war and in the post-9/11 Afghanistan covering more than thirty years of the Afghan conflict. It feels that the author has deliberately created contrasted characters both among Afghans and Americans to depict the conflicting views about Afghan society. For example, if Casa represents the extremist face of the Afghan society that is characterized by scepticism, obliviousness, superstition, brutality, and intolerance, Dunya represents a more progressive face of the Afghanistan who despite being a woman is fighting against the odds and breaking through the shackles of the internal as well as the external forces. Similarly, if James represents the American colonial empire and its ruthless means of intimidation, torture, and violence, David, on the other hand, is critical of the

American role and interference in fuelling the conflicts in distant lands such as Afghanistan and its impact not just on the locals but also on the Americans themselves. Likewise, Feryal Ali Gohar's *No Space for Further Burials* (2010) is set in Afghanistan during the early 2000s in the wake of the American attack on Afghanistan following the incident of 9/11. The novel records the horror of war and the violence it perpetrates. The title of the novel '*No Space for Further Burials*' is indicative of the descriptive nature of the novel. The novel thus provides a clear example of the authorial construction of the fictional plot in the political dispute to make a political statement as Afghanistan has been an important site of political disputes. In this regard, Muhammad Hanif's recent novel, *Red Bird* (2018), is also indicative of the fictional objectification on the part of the author as the novel tells a satirical story of the repugnance and absurdity of the American-led "war against terror" in the Middle East and its devastating impacts. Hanif has also satirized the state of (political) affairs with regards to the "war on terror" and Afghan crisis. Similarly, many authors from amongst the ones selected for this study have set their other novel in the political conflicts and wars in the Middle East and Afghanistan (as I have discussed with reference to Hamid's *Exit West* Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows*, Aslam's *The Wasted Vigil*, and others).

CHAPTER 5

SOCIO-CULTURAL OBJECTIFICATION AND POLITICS OF RELIGIOUS AND GENDERED IDENTITY IN NADEEM ASLAM'S (SELECTED) NOVELS

This chapter analyses the selected novels by Aslam by exploring the ways the author's function works and how authorial agency operates within the selected texts in manipulation of plot, exploitation of characters and situationalisation of locales in view of the religious, cultural, and gendered identities and related issues through an in-depth "symptomatic reading" of *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004) and *The Golden Legend* (2017). The idea of what I call the cultural objectification with regard to the contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction refers to a number of aspects of fictional politicisation, but this chapter focuses mainly on the engagement of religious and gendered identity issues in view of the global politics and international conflicts, especially the ones in the wake of the post-9/11. Clements explains how the contemporary anglophone novelists such Aslam, Hamid and Shamsie have portrayed the multiplicity of experiences of the ordinary Muslims and their "cosmopolitan contact, co-operation and conflicts" at home and in the diaspora but she also posits that many of these authors tend to dramatise the situations of the South Asian Muslims (10-11, 24). This has been helpful in building my argument of how the selected implied authors have played with the religious and racial conflicts and popular clichés about Islam and Muslims for the Western audience perhaps in their quest of increasing the commercial utility and popularity of their writings. In that sense, Aslam's "narratives' multiplicity of voices takes root across the global landscape, guaranteeing a wide array of characters a place in which to speak but leaving it up to his readers whether or not these disparate perspectives will be heard"

(Miller 341). That's how his narratives become globalised at some level. Nazir emphasises to effectively challenge the stereotypical images of Muslims and a biased representation of Islam in the selected texts by Aslam and others (18-19). While keeping in view the conceptual framework of the study and the literary insight provided by the critical writings as discussed above, this chapter presents detailed analyses of the selected novels by problematising the use of the interplay of cultural/religious and gender identity politics within the texts on the part of the selected authors, especially Aslam. While doing my analysis of how Aslam's implied author objectifies fictional discourse, While analysing the question of Aslam's portrayal of Pakistani Muslims in Britain, I have also considered the question of self/re-Orientalising.

5.1 *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004)

The novel is set in Dasht-e-Tanhaii, a small green town in southwest London, England. The main plot consists of Shamas and Kaukab, a Pakistani-British couple. The major conflict arises from the mysterious disappearance of two lovers (Jugnu, Shamas's brother, and Chanda, the local cleric's daughter) who have been living together out of wedlock and go missing after they return from Pakistan one fine day, as the author creates drama and suspense that continue throughout the novel. There are a number of rumours about the disappearance of the lovers as it becomes an enigma for everyone involved including the British law-enforcement agencies and police, which ultimately resolves at the end, when the local British court pronounces it an honour killing incident of Jugnu and Chanda while declaring Chanda's brother, Barra and Chotta, guilty of killing their sister and Jugnu in cold blood for saving the so-called honour of their family. While analysing Aslam's portrayal of identity issues in *Maps for Lost Lovers*, Clements explores how Aslam's role as an author becomes

“absorbed in a precarious ethical, humanitarian and artistic venture which may be described as “re-culturing” Islam” as it is replete with the images and symbols of Muslimness including *burqa*, beard, and turban (90).

5.1.1 Plot Construction in View of Cultural Objectification in *Maps for Lost*

Lovers

The novel, *Maps for Lost Lovers*, narrates a story of Pakistani immigrants who live in the suburb of London while struggling to cope with the ensuing conflicts between the traditional religious Pakistani background and the so-called modern liberal Western society. The author deploys Shamas and Kaukab to represent the deeply opposing responses and fundamentally conflicting views that have arisen from the interaction between the two worlds (i.e., Pakistani Orthodox Muslim society and the Western Liberal Democratic society): as Shamas seems to have integrated into the Western society leaving everything of the Pakistani origin except for some of the memories of early years in Pakistan, whereas Kaukab has gradually become nostalgic of the religious and traditional life and Islamic values of Pakistani society to the extent of being paranoiac and hence more fanatical, so to say, in her approach towards her family and society at large. The conception of these characters’ formation and their portrayal are important with respect to my study, as Aslam uses the characters to politicise the religio-cultural conflicts that result because of their interaction with the Western society, which Kaukab often calls ‘corrupting’ while Shamas describes as ‘liberating’. Kaukab, thus, represents the disappointment and fear of the religious Muslims while living in the ‘Godless’ British society as she loses all her children one after the other as they drift away from the so-called traditional cultural and religious Pakistani values and become engrossed into secular Western culture for which she blames Shamas, her husband and Britain, the dreary country. Shamas’s history intertwines with that of India/Pakistan. His father “was born a Hindu and had lost his

memory as a ten-year-old boy and drifted into a Muslim life, remembering his true identity only in adulthood, by which time it was too late” (Aslam, *Maps For Lost Lovers* 47) but when he did recognise that he was in fact a Hindu he wanted to die as a Hindu and cremate his body in the local temple which had become a matter of great concern for the family but more so for Kaukab who did everything to ensure that Shamas went back to Pakistan and settled things there in order to hide his father’s true identity from their relatives, which he had to agree to despite having reservations because Kaukab had threatened him of Mah-Jabin’s future, as no one would marry her if they came to know that she was in fact granddaughter of a Hindu (81-82). The author further contextualises the narrative in the socio-political and religious context/history of Pakistan as we are also told that Shamas “had to leave Pakistan for England, fleeing the military coup [in 1958]. The new government began hunting for Communists and he came to England a month after police raided the offices of his publisher and noted down all the names they found there before torching the place” (80). So, his coming to England where he starts “working in the mills and factories around Dasht-e-Tanhai” (80) has been a political act in the first place, which has interesting relevance to the personal life of the author, as Aslam’s father had migrated to Great Britain under the fear of persecution by the martial law government of Zia-ul-Haq in the 1980s. It is interesting how the novel gets set in the South Asian/Pakistani Muslim context—whether it is home or in the British diaspora. In this regard, Clements contends that the selected “South Asian anglophone authors ha[ve] either intensified their focus on the Indian subcontinent, its troubled borderlands and diverse Muslim peoples, in the wake of 9/11, or could be considered to have returned their literary attentions to the region following that moment” and that their affiliation with Pakistani, Indian, British and American cultural settings have important bearing

on their sensibilities and foci as writers. That is why she seeks to draw attention to the ways their novels incorporate the socio-political and geographic issues and the Muslim subjects in order to explore the delicate relationship of such representations on their own ethnic and geographic connections as such (20-21).

The question of cultural and religious objectification refers to the propagation of a number of political issues and popular/dominant discourses within the fictional narrative by the author through the politicisation of issues of cultural and religious significance such as the representation of Islamic traditions and customs/practices, portrayal of Muslim clerics, objectification of Muslim women, depiction of Pakistani society and its religious makeup and social dilemmas and so on. The author seems to link most of the social issues such as honour killing, infantile marriages of girls, child abuse, religious intolerance, fanaticism and so on in the Pakistani diasporic society in *Dasht-e-Tanhaii* to the orthodox Islamic traditions and practices that are being imported from Pakistan as the narrative recounts the longings and misfortunes of the immigrant Muslim community, especially those from Pakistan. Kaukab, wife of Shamas and one of the main characters, represents the helplessness and tribulation of the Muslim immigrants who can see their hold on children and the traditions loosening as they integrate into the British society. Similarly, Aslam also employs certain other characters who have a little or in some cases nothing to do with the main plot of the novel just in order to show how religious fanaticism and other social issues such as discrimination against women arising out of the orthodoxy and decadence in the Pakistani society reach to the UK through migration. For example, the novel involves a troubling story of Suraya, a divorced immigrant, who comes to the UK looking for a temporary marriage arrangement so that she could then get a divorce to go back to re-marry her husband in order to be with her son because her husband had

divorced her while saying *talaq* three times in a fit of rage while he was drunk. That reflects on how Pakistani-British society is shown grappling with the socio-cultural issues arising out of the literal/fanatic religious interpretations while living in the modern Western society. Most of the characters in the novel are presented as the extreme versions of whoever they are. Kaukab, for example, is presented as a religious fanatic as well as a superstitious woman who does not seem to understand logic and science. Shamas's dream of a just and more equal world is based on his hope for a utopian society. Ujala is shown as an anti-religious figure who blames Kaukab's religiousness of every bad thing that has happened in their family including the honour killing of the lovers (i.e., Jugnu and Chanda). Charag is an artist who lives with a British white girl out of the wedlock and gives birth to a son without ever marrying her officially, while Mah-Jabin is married to a cousin in Pakistan at sixteen because of her parents' persistence but ultimately gets divorced and is living an aimless single life. Similarly, the honour killing of Jugnu and Chanda is also indicative of the extremist tendencies in the society of Pakistani immigrants that are mostly inspired by their Pakistani heritage. It becomes the central conflict in the novel around which the narrative revolves as the narrator shows that Chanda's living with Jugnu out of wedlock was not accepted by the Muslim society of Dasht-e-Tanhaii as well as Chanda's family and relatives in Pakistan who considered it a humiliation of the honour of the entire family and their religious traditions. Besides, there are a number of other incidences of the religious and cultural objectifications that are somehow related to this crucial incident of honour killing.

Besides, the negative (if not hateful) portrayal of the Muslim clerics of a local mosque in Dasht-e-Tanhaii and other practising Muslims as well as the lopsided depiction when it comes to the traditions that have cultural and religious significance

(as I explore further) are quite meaningful insofar as the cultural and religious objectification is concerned; because they reflect on how the author plays with the wider religio-cultural issues and conflicts in this and most of his other novels. There are a number of incidents that have been reported in the novel about the moral corruption of the clerics of the mosque and the way mosque, as a religious institution, is used for defending the wrong doings of the Muslim clerics and reinforcing the superstitious culture among the local Muslim community. The representation of the clerics and the issues of gender are often clubbed as we can see in case of Chanda's father who has to leave the mosque as the headman after she starts living with Jugnu out of wedlock as the narrator reports that he has been "unable to do anything about the talk in the mosque about his "immoral," "deviant," and "despicable" daughter, who was nothing less than a wanton whore in most people's eyes—as she was in Allah's—for setting up home with a man she wasn't married to (15). The author seems to prefer Sufi Islam over the orthodox/ideological one because that, in his view, is rather peaceful in its attitude and globalist in approach. His disliking of the orthodox Islamic teachings by the traditional clerics is evident from the stories he concocts to implicate *mullahs* and fanatics, which is also true in case of his other novels (as I have explained later). His fabrication of various historical accounts is reflective of how he creates clash between the so-called parochial religious beliefs and (ostensible) all-encompassing Sufi worldview:

... they [i.e., Sufis] advocated a direct communion with Allah, bypassing the mosques—were denounced by the orthodox clerics, so much so that when the poet Bulleh Shah died the clerics refused to give him a burial, leaving the body out in the blazing sun until hundreds of his enraged admirers pushed the

holy men aside and buried him themselves. Even today the Sufis are referred to as ‘the opposition party of Islam’. (191)

The implied author constructs the Muslim cleric as a superstitious character; that presents a sorrowful portrayal of the Islamic religious institution and practices while generalising the popular notions about Muslims and Islam. I think it is important to clarify here that I am not of the view that such portrayals are entirely unbecoming, for that matter as it does not concern my study. However, I am interested in finding the ways of the cultural and religious objectification of the fictional narrative as well as exploitation of the characters by the implied author so as to highlight the author-function as an agency in determining textual discourses for the propagation of political agendas for whatever reason. That is why I seek to problematise the authors’ function as regards the ways of the cultural and religious objectification and politicisation of the religious dogmas in the larger context of the politics of religion particularly Islam in the West in recent times by exposing the discursive layers of the texts through “symptomatic reading”. It is also important to explore how the author plays with the social and cultural superstitions while associating those with religious beliefs, especially Islam. For example, early in the novel the author employs the narrator to show that one of the clerics had asked a women’s family to perform hysterectomy by hanging the head of an animal in a plastic bag on the branches of certain trees to cure her of the evil influence of a djinn who “was responsible for the widow’s lonely bewilderment” which the family had followed in letter and spirit (15). Afterward, another holy man/cleric is shown beating a woman (who has not been good to her husband) to death during her so-called exorcism (185). These details may appear unimportant, but they do reflect on how the author manipulates the narrative to expose the religious orthodoxy of so-called Islamic practices as well Muslim clerics

and followers. Nazir believes that the emphasis has been exclusively “on rituals and outward conformity” (*Questioning 'Muslim Fictions* 32).

Likewise, the main cleric of the mosque is not named in the novel which is itself meaningful because in most of the novel by Aslam clerics are not named perhaps because he thinks that they are all the same which is actually not true. Interestingly, he happens to be Chanda’s father who is accused of being the collaborator in the killing of the lovers as he is reported to have called it an insult of the family and religion which might have inspired the brothers to kill the lovers that is evident from Chanda’s father’s disapproving comments about Chanda’s act of living with Jugnu out of wedlock. On the other hand, Shamas and Jugnu, his brother, and other family members except Kaukab have been presented quite secular in their worldviews and social lives. That is why the cleric has never liked them and after Chanda starts dating Jugnu and then moves to his house, he is totally shocked. He says that “all the sons of that family like that—defying conventions, doing what they please” and that “it was their mission to corrupt every Pakistani woman they come across” and that “they are still infected with their father's Hinduism” (176-77). We are also told that during Suraya’s childhood when she was studying in a mosque a cleric had once warned her that “the Prophet, peace be upon him, had said there would be more women in Hell than men” just because she was chattering with other girls. She had come home weeping and told her mother that she did not want to be a Muslim (199). The narrator also explains that many “clerics maintain that angels or the spirits of holy figures cannot be seen by women, who are inferior to men” and that the Indian bombs were disabled by the angels on the sacred soil of Pakistan during the war of 1965 as they had been sent against the Indian infidels (333). Similarly, a religious cleric prescribes a powder to Kaukab for Ujala to make him religious, which becomes

a bone of contention between him and her mother as he leaves his home after he discovers that the powder was in fact a medicine to make him docile by decreasing his libido (304). When once Shamas visits the local mosque to consult with the head cleric about Suraya's divorce insofar as the Islamic shariah is concerned, the author twists the narrative as he in fact becomes an eyewitness of a child abuse by a junior cleric inside the mosque (234). After a while, it turns out that "the junior cleric has been to prison for assaults on children at a mosque in the Brick Lane area of London. He had assaulted a seven-year-old girl and the mother had called the police" (245). Interestingly, just before the date of the court proceedings, the parents of the victims decide not "to go through with the court case" as a petition in favour of the cleric (typed on the official head page of the mosque) starts circulating. "*We the undersigned support the respected Imam Amjad and want him to return to his job as soon as possible*" (245). And that they "*have every confidence in his ability as a cleric*" even many "people at the mosque had written to his parents back in Pakistan, asking them to tell him to drop the case against the holy man (245). The narrator explains how Kaukab senses bad intensions in Shamas's efforts for dragging the pious man to the police station and courtroom while he misses his important prayers. She thinks that it is Shamas's "chance to defame and ridicule Islam at last" (240). The author not only uses this incident to highlight the issue of child abuse inside the mosque, but he also underlines how the mosque authorities and the Muslim community at large try to sweep the issue under the carpet in order to save the culprit (as he happens to be a Muslim cleric) and avoid the damage to the institution of mosque from getting defamed, which is characteristic of the popular narratives about religious institutions in general. Likewise, the author dramatises a ludicrous move on the part of a local Muslim cleric, who writes a letter to the US president inviting him

to convert to Islam. The author makes the readers laugh as the narrative reports that the US president does reply to the letter while “politely declining to convert to Islam” while the cleric regrets thinking that “[t]he world's most powerful country was not to be headed by a Muslim anytime soon” (340)! The incidences and action that have been quoted above might seem ordinary and even unimportant, but when we analyse those by employing the “symptomatic reading” they becomes meaningful in how the novel’s plot and narrative get conditioned by the implied author within the broader global issues of socio-cultural and religious identity politics.

The author also seems to demonstrate how religion in general (and Islam in particular) is incompatible with the modern Western democratic society by deliberately painting a rather negative picture of Islam as a religion and a way of life. That is why on a number of occasions Aslam shows mindfully how Islam is in clash with the ways of the modern world particularly the Western democratic values through various ways/characters such as the Islamic customs/practices, Muslim clerics, who are often depicted as the stumbling blocks in the way of the integration of Muslims in the Western society and progression as I have mentioned before as well. In this regard, it is interesting how he shows the contradictions in the verdicts of the cleric of a local mosque in Dasht-e-Tanhaii by narrating the funny yet quite appealing stories of Muslims who call him from around the world for his advice about their religious problems/matters. For instance, somebody calls him from Norway and asks him about drinking alcohol in Scandinavia during the extreme winter to which the cleric says, “Allah was perfectly aware of the climate of Norway when He forbade humans from drinking alcohol; why, the cleric had asked, couldn’t he simply carry a basket of burning maple leaves under his overcoat the way the good Muslims of freezing Kashmir do to keep themselves warm” (9)? While a hopeless Australian

Muslim calls him “to fly immediately to Sydney all-expenses paid and exorcise the djinns that had taken possession of his teenaged daughter soon after an end was put to her love for a white schoolmate, and she was married to a cousin brought hurriedly over from Pakistan” (9-10). It might seem funny but in fact it offers an important insight into the authorial intension projecting Islamic religious orthodoxies and decadent practices. This is indicative of how the author mocks religion especially Islam and its clerics and followers in a way through these stories, but they are also meaningful in the sense that they are intended to project the incongruities of Islam vis-à-vis modern Western society as I have accentuated earlier. This also reveals how the author picks the incidents in order to condition the narrative and form characters for the purpose of exposing the religious orthodoxies and decadent traditions of Muslims in the West while contrasting them against the modern Western democratic values. That is what this study tries to bring out by deconstructing the authorial agency within the text and outside it. In this regard, Aslam also shows the shortcomings in the Islamic *Shariah* law and the way it is lopsided against the women by narrating the story of Suraya, a Pakistani mother (of a young son), who had been divorced by her husband in Pakistan while he was drunk but in order to re-join in marriage with her husband she is sent to England to find such short-term marriage in order to avoid a shameful situation for her husband in Pakistan. The narrator while narrating the incident explains how her “husband got drunk and divorced her, and although he now regrets doing it, she cannot remarry him without first marrying and getting a divorce from someone else” (42). But at the end the author makes the narrator says, “That's Allah's law and who are we to question it (42)? —which is again indicative of the author’s cynicism, that is reflective of how authorial agency situates the narrative in the larger context of socio-cultural and religious politics. Later,

Suraya narrates her sad story to Charag as she tries to convince him to marry her temporarily saying that they “wouldn’t have to be compatible in age. The Prophet, peace be upon him, was nineteen when he married a woman of forty.’ ‘And he was in his sixties when he consummated his marriage with a nine-year-old, thinks Charag” (132). That is another example of how the author tries to expose the use of religion and religious justification for various political purposes which is true in case of several other incidences on a number of occasions in the novel as he creates controversies by twisting the narratives and deploying his characters about Islam and the life of the Prophet (PBUH). The author presents Suraya’s dilemma in such a way to suggest that she has been suffering not because of her divorce but rather because of the *Shariah* law which prevents her to be with her husband and her son (131). After Charag disappoints her as he does not buy her logic, Suraya goes on to seduce Shamas (Charag’s father) who gradually becomes emotionally involved with her mainly because of her physical beauty until she tells him the real story and reason behind her involvement with him in a physical relationship (even though she considers it a sin). Shamas, however, denies the possibility of such marriage and divorce as he explains to Suraya that he cannot marry her formally despite having had physical relationship because he disapproves of her decision to do all that for a man who had divorced her in the first place. This is how the author personifies Shamas’s character to express his personal denunciation of and protest with the so-called gendered Islamic tradition as he puts his words into Shamas’s mouth when he tells Suraya how badly women are treated in Pakistan. He says, “Pakistan is not just a wife-beating country, it’s a wife-murdering one, he could kill you in one of his drunken rages” (226). He continues, “I know of women who have never been allowed near their children. You’ve forgotten what Pakistan is like. I sometimes wonder why

my mother sent me to that country” (228-229). This is just one example of how Pakistan and its society are represented in the novel by the author. However, the author does not seem to appreciate the demographic segmentation, rural-urban divide, and socio-cultural diversity of Pakistani society in this regard. Similarly, when Ujala is born everyone thinks that “he [is] a blessed child destined to be an especially pious Muslim: [as] he [is] one of those rare boys who are born without a foreskin, the Muslims believing that such children have been marked by Allah for an exemplary virtuous existence in the world” (139)—which is again reflective of the stereotypical representation of the so-called conservative Muslim society of Pakistan in the novel.

Similarly, the quarrel between Shamas and Kaukab over the issue that follows when Kaukab denies breastfeeding to the baby Ujala during the day in the holy month of Ramadan (as he was considered a holy child) is also important because it reflects upon how the author creates a dramatic situation out of the religiousness of Kaukab. That is why the narrator is employed by the author to explain what Kaukab explains, that is, since she is fasting the child should also fast which ultimately results in the physical beating of Kaukab by Shamas as he forces her to feed the child (140-142). The novel also shows how the British Muslim parents and local mosque try to brainwash children in order to inculcate into them the Islamic piety and to create abhorrence against the evils of the Western society. In this regard, the incident of the harassment of the native British kids by a seven-year-old Muslim child as reported by a local school headmistress in Dasht-e-Tanhaii is quite significant. The narrator explains that because the child has been “educated, at home and at the mosque, about various sins and their punishments” he starts warning his British classmates that “they were all going to be skinned alive in Hell for eating pork and that their mummies and daddies would be set on fire and made to drink boiling hot water because they drank

alcohol and did not believe in Allah and Muhammad, peace be upon him” (161). One more example of the way religious Muslims in general are stereotyped and certain superstitions about Islamic customs and practices get highlighted is reflected through the incident in which a woman is subjected to exorcism and beaten to death by a holy man from the local mosque. Interestingly, the exorcism is “arranged by the parents of the girl with her husband’s approval [as she had not been behaving well with him]. The holy man reassured the family that if reasonable force were used the girl would not be affected, only the djinn, and that there was no other way to drive out the malevolent spirit than by beating the body it had entered” (185). The author shows that despite the fact the woman is brutally killed, the Muslim community at large does not seem to blame the practice of exorcism but that the holy man was not properly trained as they stress that it “doesn't mean there are no djinns. Allah created them out of fire—it's stated plainly in the Koran. Almost everyone in the neighbourhood believes in such things” (186). That is how the author tries to equate the social superstitions with the religion of Islam while manipulating the fictional narrative and conditioning the characters in the cultural clash between so-called barbaric Islamic customs/practices and the West enlightenment. Likewise, while narrating his personal story when Shamas tells Suraya that his father was born as a Hindu but because of his religion he faced “terrible persecution” in Pakistan, Suraya wonders if “she should tell him that at school she herself had fallen in love with a boy of another religion—a Sikh—and that her mother had taken her out of school” (202). But she feels bad about that because deep in her heart she remains a religious person and pretends to be quite liberal only to win Shamas’s heart so that she could marry him and then get a divorce so that she could go back to Pakistan and marry her ex-husband in order to re-join

with her son. In another such instance of religious objectification, the narrator tells that Kaukab tastes food while keeping her fast because, she explains:

Allah—ever kind, ever compassionate—says that if you are a slave, a servant or a wife, and your master, employer, or husband is a strict man, you are allowed to taste the food you are cooking for him during your Ramadan fast to see that the salt and spices are according to his preference, to prevent a beating or unpleasantness. (261)

It indicates how Aslam's implied author relates the abuse of human right and women marginalisation to the Islamic teachings and practices by either misquoting from Islamic scriptures or ignoring the context (Kanwal 175-178). Similarly, Aslam seems to challenge the Islamic perspective on paradise as he questions "if a pious man will get seventy-two wives in Paradise, how many men will a pious *woman* receive" (266)? To answer that question the author employs Kaukab's voice to further dramatise the issues as she tells Shamas that "a pious woman cannot bear the thought of letting a man other than her husband touch her—so in Paradise, where there is nothing but ease and satisfaction, why would she be put through the torment of being groped and fondled by strange men?...so the pious woman would be happy just to be given an eternal place by her earth-husband's side after Judgement Day" (266-267). She then consoles herself by thinking that in paradise there would be no celibacy and that the pious women like her will be happy with her earthly husbands ever after as there would be no end to pleasure of all sorts as she sighs and says, "Allah is all-wise. The couple will become young again and eternally beautiful and purified. There will be no urine, no faeces, no semen, no menstruation; erections and orgasms will last for decades, and men will often hear their earthly wives say, 'By the power of Allah, I could find nothing in Paradise as beautiful as you'" (267). In this regard, it is

significant in how the implied author makes reference to the religious intolerance, violence, blasphemy, and women persecution in the Muslim world that gets depicted when Shamas glances a local newspaper:

A seventeen-year-old Palestinian girl was beaten to death in the Gaza Strip by her father for having lost her virginity . . . *The Bahamian authorities found 56 Haitian migrants and the body of another on a desolate shore six days after their sailing boat foundered, the US coastguard said yesterday. The survivors said about 130 people were on board when the 30 ft boat left Haiti for Miami ten days ago . . . In Saudi Arabia, a fifteen-year-old boy has been publicly beheaded for changing his religion from Islam to Christianity . . .* (281)

Afterwards, the author makes another move to expose the idiocy of religious Muslims as Kaukab thinks of a Pakistani man who once went to Saudi Arabia for performing *hajj* “and, in feverish delight at being in the holy land, began to kiss the words written on the walls along the road” because being simpleton “he took [them] to be verses from the [Holy] Koran [but it] was actually an advertisement for hair-depilatory cream” (291). Similarly, Ujala questions Kaukab’s admiration for her customs, culture, and religion during a harsh argument with her as he says, “Mother, are you aware that Muslim women cannot marry a non-Muslim? Their testimony in a court of law is worth half that of a man. Non-Muslims living in Muslim countries have inferior status under Islamic law” (321). This is indicative of how the author employs various characters on different occasions to politicize the cultural and religious issues in the novel in order to create a drama and express his personal political views about religion in general and Islam and Muslims in particular. I do think that despite several continuous emancipatory struggles for women rights there are still a number of challenges with respect to gender equality and women empowerment in Pakistani

society which remains patriarchal in some ways just like the rest of the countries in South Asia. However, I find Aslam's portrayal of Pakistani society quite problematic.

5.1.2 Politicisation of Cultural, Religious and Gendered Identities

Waterman has revealed how Aslam creates stereotypes, paradoxes and the cultural compromises while depicting various characters in *Maps for Lost Lovers* especially Kaukab (115-116). This novel is replete with allusions of cultural, religious, and gendered identity issues, especially with respect to the Pakistani-Muslim society—which I consider important with respect to my study of “author-function” in relation to the fictional objectification—as it reflects on the politicisation of the social, cultural, and religious issues in view of the global political context and dominant discourses. Clements shows how Aslam inflects his narratives while compromising on his art for the purpose of using his literary writings to address to the sensibilities of the Western audience by giving examples of his fictional representation of Muslim people such as Kaukab in *Maps for Lost Lovers* (96). There are a number of important allusions in the novel that relate to how politics of culture, religion and marriage/gender gets played by the author while exploiting various characters and manipulating the narrative, some of which I have discussed here. In this regard, the story of poor Chanda and unfortunate Jugnu is quite significant especially with respect to the way author has objectified the characters involved in order to dramatise popular issues so as to co-opt dominant discourses in that way and to voice his political views. In fact, it is one of the tactics of the author that involves employing various instances and occurrences/actions to highlight the issue of the marginalisation of women and oppression against them and the way they are made to suffer in a ruthless patriarchal Pakistani society. Interestingly, most of the social and cultural practices are associated to the Pakistani religious society as they are imported from

Pakistan to the town of Dasht-e-Tanhaii. Likewise, most of the Pakistani-British girls are shown to have been moved to Pakistan to be married to the first cousins. That is why Chanda, like Mah-Jabin (as Kaukab explains later in the novel) is sent to Pakistan to get married to one of her first cousins but she is divorced after a few years. After a while another of her cousins takes pity on her “even though she was no longer a virgin” and marries her but again she is divorced. They then get her married to somebody from Pakistan who is in pursuit of getting British nationality by marrying a British national, so it did not matter to him if the girl was a divorcee, but he too left her and disappears after he gets the legal status of residency in Britain. But, since she has not been divorced officially by her last husband she cannot marry another man as per the Islamic law (54). That is when Jugnu comes into her life as the two lovers start living together despite not being married. The local cleric tells Jugnu categorically that it is not allowed in Islam when the latter consults him but because it is a usual practice in England they keep living together and do not bother much about the legalities of their marital status Islamically (55). But soon it becomes a matter of honour for Chanda’s family, particularly her father (who happens to be a headman in a local mosque) and brothers, as people start laughing at them while calling Chanda a woman of bad character, which is often taken with extreme seriousness in their native Pakistani society as the novel shows. Thus, Chanda’s brother, who are presented as custodians of their sister’s (and hence family’s) honour conspire to kill the sinners to make them an example and to restore the family honour. Soon after the lovers return from Pakistan Barra and Chotta, Chanda’s brothers, at the behest of their father, plan and execute the double murder of Jugnu and Chanda in secret.

Likewise, there is another incident of honour killing in the novel that involves the murder of a Muslim girl by her parents in collaboration with her husband and a

cleric of the local mosque. The narrator explains how the girl is “married off against her will to a cousin brought over from Pakistan, but the couple divorced because she remained distant from him—the cousin moved out as soon as he got his British nationality, no longer having to put up with her” (87). After that she does not get any proposal from the Pakistani community despite being young and beautiful just because she is no more a virgin. Finally, her parents find an old man to be her husband who is already having three wives: of which “one is under the British and also the Islamic law, the other three are under Islamic law only. He wants a son, but they keep producing girls, so he has married again and again” (88). In the end of the novel the narrator reveals that the Hindu boy (who has been wandering to find his beloved) has in fact been in love with this particular girl, who is later “beaten to death whilst she was being cleansed of the djinns” when she fails to perform her marital duties properly (364). This yet again indicates how the author objectifies woman characters in the novel to propagate the issue of oppression against the women in Pakistani society and its diaspora. What is particularly important with regard to my study is how the violence and oppression against the women is portrayed to be more of a cultural practice wherein even woman members of the society are involved. For example, Chanda’s decision to live with Jugnu out of wedlock is vehemently condemned by every woman including her own mother as she calls her “a whore” (64) as I have explained. Similarly, in case of the unnamed girl who has been in love with a Hindu boy, her mother (after she comes to know that her daughter has not consummated the marriage even after spending weeks with her cousin-husband) asks the bridegroom to “rape her” if necessary (88). The author seems to highlight that most of such arranged family marriages are the “organized crime” in which women are directly involved (106), as they are the ones that coordinate with their counterparts

in Pakistan in making matches and getting things decided as girls are either married out to a cousin or someone in Pakistan or a boy/potential husband has to be brought over from Pakistan.

Moreover, in case of Mah-Jabin's marriage to one of her cousins at sixteen, it was primarily Kaukab's decision to send her daughter to Pakistan and get her married to her cousin in order to help the family of Shamas's elder brother whose wife had lately died in Sohni-Dharti, but where life, for Mah-Jabin becomes restricted to wondering between the dark rooms of the house (119-120). Interestingly, the narrator also shows how Mah-Jabin's early life had been confined inside the four-walls of the house because of her mother's orthodox views, as Kaukab has been grooming her daughter in a way to transform her into an obedient religious woman like herself, which has always been her ideal for a Muslim girl, a chaste woman, and thus would not allow her daughter the corrupting freedom of the British/Western society (93, 111). Since Mah-Jabin has internalised her mother's orthodoxy, when she is asked if she will go to Pakistan and marry her cousin to help Kaukab's brother-in-law after the latter's wife dies she complies (119-120). The issue of the first-cousin and infantile marriages is quite appealing particularly from the viewpoint of the Western audience and has been adequately exploited by the implied author to create an exotic picture. A number of cases of the first-cousin and infantile marriages are reported as if they were normal practices in the prevalent patriarchal culture of Pakistani Muslim society. I think, while it does disregard the diverse nature of Pakistani society, it relates to how such damning portrayals conditions the narratives while objectifying the idea of fiction itself. In this regard, it is important to underline the way several women are shown subjected to either the first-cousin marriages or juvenile matrimones. There are a number of women in the novel who are reported to have been either convinced

or pressurised into the forced juvenile first-cousin or other such marriages including Chanda, Mah-Jabin, Suraya, the unnamed girl who is in love with a Hindu boy, and interestingly, all these marriages are shown to have eventually failed miserably as all the women are divorced by their husbands for some odd reason. While discussing Aslam's fiction, Clements highlights how "the British-based writer's preoccupations—'love', 'loneliness', 'grief?'—which also pervade the consciousnesses of his [characters] (94). In that sense, it is interesting how the author makes the narrator describe the part of the town of Dasht-e-Tanhaii where Muslim community lives especially from the perspective of innocent helpless Pakistani British women:

...women— screaming, cooing, reassuring, out of control, in charge, shouting in pain, in pleasure, laughing, sobbing. Charag sometimes feels that to come to this old neighbourhood of Dasht-e-Tanhaii, these Asian streets and lanes of his childhood, is like entering one large labour room, full of the voices of women expressing a spectrum of emotions. It is like being born. (132)

Apart from this, there are numerous other examples of the portrayal of woman oppression, helplessness and marginalisation in home as well as diasporic Pakistani society. For example, Kaukab explains that a women should not eat if the food is scarce so as to spare it for the male members of the family and that is how it has always been in her society, as her mother would do the same (94). The author uses various woman narrators such as Suraya, the unnamed girl, Kaukab, Mah-Jabin and others to report the sexual violence perpetrated against them by their Muslim husbands. It also includes Mah-Jabin's own story of having suffered sexual violence at the hand of her husband who would often call her a "wanton shameless English whore" during the intercourse (96-97). Similarly, it is reported that the husband of a

mother of eight children in Sohni Dharti (Pakistan) refuses to use contraceptives “claiming [that] the use of contraceptives would lead to the unborn children pointing to him on Judgement Day and saying to Allah, "That man is the one who did not allow us to be born and swell the numbers of the faithful!," with the result that once a woman had given birth in the January and December of the same year” (109-110). The author conditions the narrative to show how, in contrast to that, Mah-Jabin aborts her child by taking medicines without even a second thought after she returns from Pakistan carrying a foetus (109). The author also seems to make mockery out of so-called issue of Islamophobia in the West as he dramatises a scuffle between a Muslim immigrant woman and the local US police as Ateeka, a neighbourhood woman, tells Kaukab that police had asked her sister (who lives in the US) to stop “as she walked towards the shops, and even though she explained she was wearing Islamic dress they asked her to uncover her face: when she refused they handcuffed and searched her while she screamed” to which Mah-Jabin says in sarcasm that “the girl could’ve damaged her hymen in the scuffle, [as] Mah-Jabin thinks, with contempt. She had not been allowed to see a gynaecologist when she had hormonal problems at twelve, not even a female one” (107). Sometimes even Kaukab would hint at the ways the patriarchy inherent in the Muslim society has deprived her of fulfilling some of her childhood wishes while talking to her daughter with whom she remains very close despite all the troubles they have gone through because of each other as “Mah-Jabin remembers Kaukab telling her she regretted not having been able to have had an education, that she had wished to own a bicycle as a girl, but it was out of the question even within the confines of the courtyard” (113). Also, Kaukab once tells her that “a woman's life is hard because you have to run the house during the day and listen to your husband's demands in bed at night” (113). Similarly, during a heated

conversation when Kaukab attacks Mah-Jabin with a knife she gets extremely angry at her mother and tells her clearly that she would never do what her mother has been demanding of her, that is, Mah-Jabin must go back to her husband in Pakistan. She also declares her mother and others like her responsible for what had happened to Chanda as she was forcibly married many times which had ended on failure and when she willingly chose to marry and was happy she was allegedly killed. As, she explains, Muslims like Kaukab believe that “if the bitch decides to take matters into her own hands and finds someone herself then raise the fucking knives and cut her to pieces” (114-115). Kaukab explains to her that she does want her daughter to go back because she is still her husband’s lawful wife in Allah’s eyes and that even if she has divorced her according to the British law that does not matter because their “religion is not the British legal system, it’s Islam” (115). While Mah-Jabin tells her mother that it was not the first time she has beaten her and that she beats her because her husband beats her and that she and her brothers and all the family have suffered a lot because of her religiousness (116). That shows how the author determines the narrative in view of forming a problematic portrayal of the status of women in the indigenous as well as diasporic Pakistani-Muslim society and household. That is why I think that together with the cultural and religious objectification it is also important to underscore how the author politicises the gendered representations in the novel while conditioning the narratives and constructing the characters for the purpose of propagating the issue of the marginalisation and oppression of women in the Pakistani Muslim society.

Furthermore, the story of Suraya offers an important example of woman objectification in relation to Pakistani Muslim society by the author. After having been divorced by her drunk husband Suraya is asked to go to England, get married to

someone and then get a divorce and come back so that he could marry her again as per the Islamic law of divorce in that case. He wants her to do that in England because he says he will feel ashamed if she marries someone in Pakistan. But he also advises her not to consummate the marriage with her future husband as he would never like to know that another man has touched her despite that he “know[s] according to Islam she must properly perform her duties and obligations to her new husband before he divorces her” (207). That is how the author shows his male-chauvinist hypocrisy and by extension the hypocrisy of the Pakistani Muslim society as it reveals that Suraya’s husband’s effort to arrange a marriage for her is not based on his attachment with the Islamic principles but that is primarily due to his social reputation. That is when Suraya comes to England to do what her husband has asked her of as “Allah has decreed that a man can marry any woman who is not his close blood relation” (150). The author while narrating Suraya’s story seems to question the logic of the Islamic law of divorce:

Limitless is Allah's kindness towards his creation. *Allah is not being equally compassionate towards the poor woman who is having to go through another marriage through no fault of her own is a thought that has occasionally crossed Suraya's mind, along with It's as though Allah forgot there were women in the world when he made some of his laws, thinking only of men—* but she has banished these thoughts as all good Muslims must. (150)

Similarly, during a talk with Shamas, Kiran, a Sikh girl, tells him how she has had a physical relationship with Chotta, Chanda’s brother that Shamas questions: “How did he view his own illicit and, yes, sinful encounters with Kiran while condemning Chanda and Jugnu for the same thing” (287-288)? While the author shows how Chotta along with Barra kills his sister for the crime of living with a Muslim man out

of wedlock (even though he was himself doing the same with Kiran, a girl who is not even a Muslim). This again indicates how the author creates irony to highlight the hypocrisy of the Muslim diasporic community and the way gender defines one's limitations in that society, that is, if you are a man the society will glorify the illicit relationship but if you happen to be a woman you will be criminalised and punished for the same. That is why Shamas worries about Suraya's safety in England particularly when they are together because he fears somebody from her relatives might suspect her to have physical relationship with him or other men as she is trying hard to find her a husband. He becomes more concerned after he reads a news story in an Urdu newspaper about "a middle-aged woman was found with her neck broken in a village outside Lahore" (163) for the similar suspicions. The author then employs Suraya (as we have seen before in case of Mah-Jabin and even Kaukab) to reveal the inadequacies of the law of divorce in Islam as she bursts in desperation (166). In this regard, it is also important how Suraya's mother-in-law in Pakistan had been torturing her as she would often torment her by saying that she has kept having miscarriages and has not given them a baby boy as if she were doing that deliberately and that they had been spending a lot to keeping her. While Suraya would say that she "wasn't lounging about on the hospital bed just to spite" her son (216). That is another way of politicizing the situation on the part of the author to reveal what is wrong with the Pakistani society. This also indicates how Aslam employs various characters and incidences to first dramatise a situation and then theorizes in order to bring to the fore the issues of gender and dogma and to feed the readers while prescribing the socio-cultural and gendered issues.

In another episode, a bus driver's wife tells Chanda's mother that Chanda's father has told her husband that Chanda is not missing and that he is proud of what his

sons have done to save the family's honour (176), to which, interestingly, Chanda's mother does not show any feeling of shock or surprise that is expected from a mother—which is a reference to the honour killing of the lovers by Chanda's brothers and the collusion of the whole family in the murder. In fact, Chanda's father has deliberately said that in order “to save face in judgemental or belligerent company” of men who look down upon him because his daughter has been living with Jugnu without *nikah* which was matter of shame for him and his entire family especially when he is a leading cleric in the local mosque (176). The novel also highlights how women in Islam “aren't allowed to be present at the burial and must come to the cemetery later” as when the girl in love with a Hindu boy is brutally killed by a so-called holy man her sister is shocked to have been barred from entering for the funeral as “it was her first direct experience of death so she wasn't familiar with the rules that must be observed” (195). Later, it turns out that “she was having her period: so, they informed her that she couldn't go anyway because of that reason, because she was in an unclean state. Forbidden to touch the Koran, enter a mosque, pray, even prepare food according to certain sects—that she was impure and polluted during menstruation” (195). It reveals how the author manipulates the narrative by constructing events and characters with respect to the socio-cultural issues and gender inequality. This explains how authorial agency operates in the propagation of the political ideas and author's ideology within the text through different means of the exploitation of narration and characterisation in the novel.

The author employs Shamas's character to report on the condition of Suraya as we are told that the man Suraya had married to does not seem to have “the intention of divorcing her soon” at least until she gives him a son and that he had not told her about that first because of the fears that she might not marry him then, but that she

“herself has no intention of bearing a child for him—she just wants him to divorce her so that she can marry her original husband again, to be with her son again. But the man has married her solely because he wants her to have a child” (366). Shamas then laments that the man “must be forcing himself on her every night, taking her violently and that she must be going through a lot of pain and anguish” (366). The narrator then reveals that Suraya had in fact become pregnant with Shamas earlier and that “Shamas's child is already saving her, already lessening the amount of pain in this Dasht-e-Tanhaii called the planet Earth” (367). That is how the author manipulates the narrative and conditions the characters as per his intension of bringing to the fore the issues that matter to him. That is why Suraya’s exploitation and helplessness is depicted in a ways that it is mainly wrought by her religious and cultural background of Pakistan. She herself admits that she has to degrade herself with Shamas and other men just because, she says, “In our religion there is no other way for me to be united with my beloved son” (236). This is followed by an authorial commentary through the omniscient narrator which says that “She of course regretted the first thing, not the second: a system conditions people into thinking that it is never to blame, is never to be questioned” (236). That is another example of how the author creates a situation in order to deliver a verdict about the socio-cultural issues that various characters have to face because of their Pakistani Muslim heritage.

The narrator also describes that a number of other cases of child abuse are reported by the mothers of several other children in the days following the incident of the child abuse in which Shamas becomes the main witness, and that when the women of the neighbourhood try to agitate a protest against the issue of child abuse in the mosque, they are “told that the scandal would give Islam and Pakistan a bad name, that the man would be prevented from doing it again, that if the police got involved

and shut down the mosque no one would teach their sons to stay away from the whore-like white girls” (235). That indicates again how the author uses this incident or sets it up to display how Muslim women even in England are treated and ridiculed by their Muslim men as they are asked to leave the area and go back home where they belong while the cleric of the mosque informs the police that “they [women] get excited over everything and are not very intelligent, they don’t know what they are saying” (235). But at the same time through this the author tries to relate the non-serious attitude of the Muslim clerics about the issue of rampant child abuse inside the mosques for the purpose of saving their peers and avoiding bad name for themselves and their religious institution.

Later on, when Kaukab tries to convince Mah-Jabin to go back to her husband in Pakistan, she employs that she has seen the brutality of Pakistani society and that she would like to “try a strange country full of strangers this time” (110). She rebukes Kaukab’s decision to get her tied up in a loveless bond of marriage at sixteen than sending her to university for education. Kaukab defends her decision and tells her daughter that she had thought good for her and asks her what wrong was with Pakistan and that so many “girls from here are sent back to marry and live there, and they are happy there”. She gives her an example of a woman from Dasht-e- Tanhaii “who has been divorced by her Pakistani husband by mistake, and she’s still eager to go back and live with him there. That’s what a good and dignified woman is like” while Mah-Jabin says, “look what happened to you, you fool” (112). This infuriates Kaukab who assaults her daughter with a knife that cuts through her throat albeit a little. Mah-Jabin reproaches her mother over the use of violence as a means of intimidation while implicating her and others in Chanda’s alleged honour killing (114). This is indicative of how the author associates violence with the religious

Muslim characters like Kaukab. Likewise, we are told that whenever Shamas meets Suraya he is worried about her safety even in England because he has heard that a Pakistani man attacked his sister-in-law in broad day light just “because he suspected she was cheating on his brother...This was here in England and, according to the statistics, in one Pakistani province alone, a woman is murdered every thirty-eight hours solely because her virtue is in doubt” (136). Chanda’s father, who is the main cleric in the local mosque, is also quoted saying that “it is a matter of great distress for a parent from the Subcontinent—for the majority of parents on this imperfect and shackled planet, in fact—that their daughter is living with someone out of wedlock” (138-139).

In this regard, the author presents that despite the fact that Kaukab is shown to be a strict religious woman (especially regarding her religion and cultural heritage) she does know the limitations of women in every society and more so in a conservative one like Pakistani as the author employs her character for the purpose of exposing the religious feminism, if you like. We are told that “Kaukab hadn't seen a man up close without there being the gauze of her burqa between him and her since the age of twelve—she had been made to wear it because it was well known that certain men marked out beautiful girl-children and then waited for years for them to grow up” (65-66) and that Shamas was not the man Kaukab wanted to marry as she was in love with someone else so “[s]he cried in secret for the man she wanted” but ultimately like other Pakistani girls having realized the fact “she became resigned to her fate” (68). That is why later when Chanda and Jugnu start living together out of wedlock she tries to explain to Jugnu the consequences of that for Chanda because she knows that her prospects of marriage after people will come to know about their illicit relationship are doomed forever. She says to Jugnu, “You men can do anything you

want but it's different for us women" (61). That is her feminist voice which Aslam exploits to indicate that even women like Kaukab are aware of the gendered nature of the society, the disadvantaged position of women, and the power structures with respect to gender and women. That is also true in case of Kiran's portrayal, who remains single as no one wants to marry her after her relationship with Kaukab's brother becomes known in *Dasht-e-Tanhaii* (7).

In addition, it is also important how the narrator gets exploited by the implied author to state that crimes against women such as honour killing are rampant in Pakistan and that the law of Pakistan is often particularly lenient with the culprits in honour killing. That is why when Chanda's brother goes to Pakistan they boast of killing the sinners while their relatives are shown becoming proud of them for having done what they consider is right, just and correct and when they move about "in their streets and neighbourhoods, their act [gives] them a certain nobility in the eyes of those around them" (347-348). In the end of the novel the judge announces that "the killers had found a cure to their problem through an immoral, indefensible act; a cure, a remedy—and their religion and background took care of the bitter aftertaste. Their *religion and background assured them that, yes, they were murderers but that they had murdered only sinners*" (278; emphasis added). He further said that the lovers' decision to live together was in no way illegal (278). The verdict of the judge also makes mention of the religious motivation of their crime—which is how Aslam links the societal evils with the religious values as the novel shows that the tragic incident of the murder of the lover has had nothing to do with the societal taboos and that it was primarily inspired by Islamic customs, hence he uses the word sin which has a religious connotation. Hence, all in all, *Dasht-e-Tanhaii* represents Pakistan with all its social ills and impoverishments, which is also revealed by what Shamas thinks

“while talking about the neighbourhood, [as he] seemed to shock himself by the desperation of most people's lives here, family life frequently reduced to nothing more than legalized brutality. He counted nineteen mentally ill people in his own street” (210)—which is indicative of how the author uses Shamas’s narrative here to recount a number of devastating family accounts that are mainly inspired by the attachment to the Pakistani customs/traditions and religious values as he narrates various other tales:

[A] mentally ill father has been missing for several years, and [that] the once-proud factory-working mother is now devastated because the young son has walked out of university where he was training to be a doctor and has taken up radical Islam, grown a beard and proclaimed everything from democracy to shaving cream unIslamic. (211)

This is an example of how the implied author exploits religious and cultural dogmas of so-called conservative Pakistani society and how as a result, the narrative becomes lopsided. Likewise, he manipulates the narrative to expose how a woman’s status in the patriarchal Pakistani society is determined by the male member of the household: father and brother when she is not married and husband after she is married, as Kaukab expresses her desire for “Charag to become a doctor so people would say Mah-Jabin is a doctor's sister” (329). But, after she sees, Charag’s picture in a newspaper that showed an “Uncut Self-Portrait is pictured inside too” Kaukab becomes totally disappointed of what her son has become (329) which Aslam contrasts with how Shamas earlier appreciates Charag’s latest paintings when he sees him “maturing as an artist, [and] becoming aware of his responsibilities as an artist” (319). Kaukab confronts Charag by asking if he depicts Islam, the religion, that “has given dignity to millions around the world is barbaric” (321). That is when Ujala stands up to counter Kaukab saying that “Muslim women cannot marry a non-Muslim

[and that] Their testimony in a court of law is worth half that of a man. Non-Muslims living in Muslim countries have inferior status under Islamic law” (321) This indicates how the implied author creates a situation and then uses it to promulgate his religious and political views through Ujala and others. That is how the narrative becomes conditioned and characters objectified. It is further reflected through what an unnamed man says with reference to Chanda’s relationship with Jugnu during a meeting in the local mosque, “Had my sister set up home with someone that shamelessly, I would have dissolved them both in acid ” (340). The contemptuous remarks such as these that Chanda’s brothers have been hearing from their community fuel their rage, as the narrator shows how ‘*sala*’ (the Urdu word for brother-in-law) represents the honour attached to the sisters in the traditional Pakistani Muslim society as he explains its cultural connotations (346-347). The narrative involves a number of horrific accounts of the death and violence to include the element of thrilling violence in the novel. For instance, the dreadful incidence in which Barra breaks her own sister’s neck and kills her in cold blood is reported in graphic details (355-356). This is again indicative of how the implied author spins the narrative and conditions the characters while exploiting the incidences/actions of cultural significance in the novel to make a political statement about the socio-cultural, religious, and gendered issues in view of these barbaric customs/practices. Interestingly, this seems in line with what I call the fictional objectification as I have discussed in relation to other authors and their selected texts in the same tradition. Thus, the politicisation of the social and cultural issues (particularly the ones that have emerged out of the cultural, religious, and gendered identity politics), especially in the wake of the recent clash between the so-called Western civilisation and Islam, characterises the contemporary Pakistani fiction.

5.1.3 Politics of Socio-cultural Representation and Nationalism

This section includes a discussion about how the implied author presents the so-called conservative Pakistani-Muslim society vis-à-vis liberal/modern/democratic British/Western world and its values. I have analysed how the implied author determines that the Pakistani-Muslim cultural heritage of many a character proves to be a hindrance in their successful assimilation in the modern British/Western society. This is manifested by a number of cultural conflicts involving conservative Pakistani-Muslim heritage as it gets pitted against the secular Western civilisation. In this regard, the idea of self/re-Orientalism is also important; which seeks to provide answers to the questions of whether the so-called Pakistani anglophone authors are involved in discursive practices of orientalising the orient. Lau and Mendes have theorised re-Orientalism in the sense of how Orientals “themselves are seen to be perpetrating Orientalisms no less than ‘non-Orientals’ and, moreover, perpetrating certain and selected types of Orientalisms” while drawing from Said’s idea of native-informant (Re-Orientalism and South Asian Identity Politics 1, 2-13). Moreover, Lau and Dwivedi have explored how the idea of re-Orientalism gets reflected in Indian writing in English—which provides a useful perspective to study if (and how) the selected Pakistani anglophone authors have used re-Orientalist discourses while objectifying their fictional narratives. Thus, I consider it important to underscore how the implied author of Aslam deploys various characters such as Kaukab (who represents the fanatic mindset of the so-called conservative Pakistani society) and her literary foils (i.e., Shamas, Jugnu and most of the children) represent a disastrous picture of Pakistani indigenous as well as diasporic Muslim society. This might have something to do with his polemics of religious orthodoxy (especially with respect to Islam and Muslims), oppression/ marginalisation of women in Pakistani and

Pakistani-diasporic societies (especially in the UK), identity crises rising out of the issues of the acculturation of Pakistani immigrants in the UK/West.

In this regard, Kaukab (who happens to be a “cleric’s daughter [and] was born and brought up in a mosque” all her life) is the most objectified person in the novel. She is depicted as a religious fanatic who gradually becomes quite superstitious, extremely depressed, highly paranoid, and virtually mad, so much so that, in the end she even contemplates committing suicide. That is why I think that she is indeed one of most important characters with respect to my study of the cultural and religious objectification as well as the exploitation of characters by the implied author. That is why Kaukab’s portrayal as a fanatic Muslim woman is quite helpful to understand how the authorial agency works within the text to manipulate the textual discourses and politicise religio-cultural issues in the context of the present-day politics. In that sense Kaukab is not just Pakistani-British Muslim woman who is living in a paranoia but what is more important is how Kaukab’s character generalises a certain section of the Muslim women who are totally helpless, inexperienced, and ignorant of the ways of the world and whose religiousness and claustrophobia not only marginalises them in the modern British/Western society but even inside their own home. That is why Kaukab’s helplessness does not just come from her status in the society because of her Muslim background but also from her own home where she is thought of as a religious fanatic and gets the treatment of an alien. The author, thus, exploits Kaukab’s characters to highlight the incompatibility of religion (particularly Islam) with the modern (particularly Western) society. Thus, she is depicted as a superstitious and fanatic Muslim woman on many occasions. For example, when once she gets up at midnight from her dream she “sharply expel[s] air from her nostrils three times, because the Prophet [PBUH] had said, “If any of you wakes up at night,

let him blow his nose three times. For Satan spends the night in a man's nostrils" (22). Kaukab is also presented as a paranoiac Muslim woman who remains under the constant fear that her children may go astray and get disconnected with their Pakistani-Muslim heritage and in order to avoid that she does everything she considers important. For example, when once she spots a bottle of liquor in one of the photos of Jugnu, she makes sure that "all the photographs [are] sent up to the attic, away from the impressionable eyes of the three children in the house" (27). Likewise, she is "full of apprehension concerning the white race and uncomfortable with people of another Subcontinental religion or grouping" (32). That is why all her friends are consisted of the Pakistani-British Muslim women who often hold the same views as her, as they are also apprehensive of the cultural and religious corruption of their children because of the unholy country they have to live in. That is why Kaukab (who is called sister-ji out of reverence) is well-respected among such women.

Kaukab opposes Jugnu's relationship with Chanda that she considers extra-marital because they have not married and cannot do so because of the fact that Chanda is already married and has not been divorced by her husband yet. That, however, does not mean she does not have affectionate feelings for the lovers but in fact she is presented a hardcore fanatic who is incapable of negotiating with her faith that she thinks is indisputable and incompatible with the modern Western secular values. That is why when "she heard the rumour about the pair, she remembers being secretly relieved that Jugnu had chosen a Muslim this time, all his previous women having been white. Jugnu was in his late forties, and Kaukab knew he must marry this girl and settle down" (33). As soon as she comes to know about the true nature of their relationship, Kaukab tries her best to convince Jugnu to leave Chanda alone (as she is already married), but when she does not succeed she stops visiting the couple.

In many ways Kaukab is presented as an exact opposite of the rest of the family (who have fully absorbed in the modern British/Western society) which is why her views and traditions often come in direct clash with her family's so-called secular views and Western lifestyle. It is not just Jugnu, Shamas's brother, who has disappointed her with his marital choices, because Charag, her own son, who was sent to a university in London in order to get better education has come back holding the hand of an English woman, who he has not only been living with but has also given birth to a son out of wedlock (34) which is exactly the opposite of what she has always wanted for her son. That is why if Jugnu's living with an English girl earlier and then marrying Chanda and disappearing torments her, Charag's decision to live and have a son with an infidel devastates her. She often blames Shamas and his father (who had declared himself a Hindu before dying) for sowing the seed of secularism in her family (59). In this regard, I think that the author has consciously employed the third-person narrative to present a detailed account of the drama that unfolds on the day Jugnu brings her English girlfriend for dinner at Kaukab's house. Kaukab's patience is tested hard as she sees that "the white woman's legs were bare below her knee-length skirt". Also, "Kaukab's stomach twist[s] into a knot when Jugnu shamelessly plant[s] a small kiss on the woman's cheek in passing, and she grit[s] her teeth at Shamas's expansive behaviour towards the white woman and towards her own self" (37). During the dinner, the light goes out for a while and when it comes back Shamas drops the bottle of wine in panic when Kaukab notices that all three guests have been drinking wine in the darkness (39). When Kaukab listens to their talk closely she realises that all the time the brothers have been humiliating Islam and the Prophet (PUHM) in front of "the white woman" while comparing Islam vis-à-vis science, she simply gets mad and serves them dahl/curry in her shoes as a sign of protest against the disrespect of her

faith and values (38-40). After that the narrator reports that Kaukab's humiliating reaction towards her guests' profanities in fact leads to Jugnu's separation with the white girl, soon after as she realises that the cultural differences cannot be bridged. This also reflects on how the author manifests the clash of cultures in the British society mainly because of the so-called cultural deviants like Kaukab, whose orthodoxy becomes the basis of her marginalisation in the British society as well as her own home, as the novel suggests. The clash of culture gets even more dramatic when Kaukab thinks of the past and present, purity of her faith and impurity of "the white woman", as the narrator describes the issues of her cultural exclusion and religious fanaticism (39). This indicates how the implied author consciously and consistently portrays Kaukab as religious fundamentalist who does not believe in co-existence and that confrontation is mainly caused because of her rigid religiousness as the novel presents. The author makes sure to underline that it is not just the British society that has turned her into the way she is but that she has a history of confrontations with people who are not as religious as she herself is or she thinks one should be. For example, when she was in Shamas's house in Sohni Dharti, she had never liked the public display of closeness by Shamas's parents because it was not even imaginable in her family as she "was born and bred in a mosque" with strict rules of *purdah* (56). She has always wanted to get her children married either to someone in Pakistan or a good Muslim of Pakistani origin. That is why at her persistence Mah-Jabin is married out at sixteen to one of the cousins in Pakistan who divorces her soon as she comes back to live in England with her mother and is now planning to go to the US which Kaukab cannot approve because America for her is yet another corrupting infidel country. Also, after Charag leaves "the white girl" Kaukab has "had several meetings with the matchmaker with the thought of finding a

girl of Pakistani origin for him” (57). But, soon she is devastated to know that her son has performed vasectomy because he says he does not need another child as he cannot take care of even one after which he is no more a man, and it was almost impossible to find a girl for him in Pakistan after what he has done (57), as she laments saying if the “white girl had done what a woman is supposed to do her son would still be a man” (58). Similarly, during an argument between Shamas and Kaukab about breastfeeding (which Kaukab denies to her son while fasting during the holy month of Ramadan) Shamas gets infuriated and drags her to feed his son. Kaukab says, “It’s my milk. He and I will break our fast at sunset. It’s just a matter of changing the routine: I give him everything he needs during the night” (141). This is symptomatic of how Kaukab’s character is branded as an extremist Muslim women, while Shamas (who abandons the home after that incident) is parented as a victim of her wife’s growing paranoia and fanaticism. The purpose of presenting Kaukab and Shamas as the two opposing characters on the part of the author is in fact meant to depict the contradiction and incompatibilities between the Pakistani Islamic values/practices and Western secular/liberal ideals. This I contend is an example of the fictional dramatization of the cultural conflicts. It also highlights how Islam as a religion is incompatible and even irreconcilable to the Western worldview as are the Muslims in relation to the modern Western values.

The implied author also exploits Kaukab’s situation to introduce conspiracy thinking and even linking it to her Pakistani-Muslim background. For example, she thinks that “vasectomy was a Christian conspiracy to stop the number of Muslims from increasing. Her parents were responsible for marrying her to an infidel. Her in-laws were Godless” (59). Kaukab and many other Muslim parents of Pakistani origin think that the co-function that are often arranged by the English where they also invite

Muslim young people are in fact “a part of “a conspiracy of the white people to get Pakistani children away from their culture, to make them have sex before marriage and every day as though it were a bodily function, and to eventually make them marry white people” (118). Also, the way author keeps dragging Kaukab into various difficult situations is indicative of how he ensures creating a drama and controversy by involving her character, as we have seen in case of Kaukab’s family and elsewhere. For example, when Kaukab is returning from the city centre she has to sit next to an English white woman who had reportedly burnt the Holy Quran of her Muslim husband once. So, in order to avoid any unpleasant situation Kaukab moves to a vacant seat. That is when a woman from Pakistani descent tells her that Jugnu and Chanda are having an affair (61). Kaukab is depicted to have always avoided meeting and even speaking with English people as the narrator tells us that she has not spoken to a white man more than four times in her whole life in England and that when she does speak to a Whiteman she is “wondering whether she should add the word “fuck” into her speech now and then to sound more like a person who belonged to this country” (262). Kaukab wants Stella, Charag’s wife, to wear Muslim dress or at least cover herself when going out in the neighbourhood as once Kaukab explains to Charag that his wife keeps “wearing a skirt, her legs visible below the knees, and Kaukab doesn't want anyone in the neighbourhood to see the exposed skin and comment on it” (317). But, of course that does not change as Stella continues wearing the English dress unlike “many white women [who] do abandon their old way of dressing upon marrying Muslim men” (318). When Kaukab gets angry with Shamas about their children’s Western way of life she often condemns him for planting Satan’s seeds in her stomach while she became pregnant because she thinks that Shams has never recited the prescribed verses of the Holy Quran for Muslim

intercourse and because of which her children have turned against her and her religion. The narrator explains that it is her “belief that Satan shares the sexual intercourse of a husband if he has omitted to read the appropriate Quranic verses before penetration. And the penalty is great if the husband has not read specific verses at the precise moment of ejaculation: Satan's seed enters the woman's womb along with the man's and the resulting child is predisposed to Satanic deeds” (329). Likewise, Kaukab also believes that in the 1965 war of Pakistan with India the angels had caused many Indian bombs to stop from exploding “and several clerics had said that they had personally seen angels appear and intercept the bombs in mid-air and carry them in their arms to gently place them on the Allah-beloved soil of Pakistan” (332). The author, through these details, tries to associate the religious superstitions and falsehood with Kaukab in order to reflect the way Pakistani people including the expatriates make conspiracy stories and make-beliefs for their condolence, which is indicative of the way a religious society like that of Pakistan works. The purpose of including these incidences and examples is to show how authorial agency works inside the text to create, promote, and diffuse certain discourses. In this regard, the end of the novel is important, because after Kaukab realizes how much harm her attachment to her values, religion, traditions, and country has done to herself, her children and family and that how all that has been in vain, she tries committing suicide—which I believe is a conscious effort on the part of the author to reflect on the consequences of being a conservative/religious person in a today's modern society. This is important revelation with respect to my study of “author-function”—which, I believe, has been quite helpful in understanding the ways narratives are built and discourses constructed through fiction as well as exposing how fictional narratives are appropriated and assimilated with in the global cultural contexts in

order to propagate views and politicize issues—which is what has been the focus of this study.

In this regard, it is important to analyse how the author exploits the narratives while deploying characters such as Shamas, Jugnu, Ujala, Kiran, Suraya in this novel, which I intend to do in the following pages. It is evident throughout the novel, but I have focused on only the selected dialogues, monologues, and narrator's comments to expose the authorial agency. For example, during the dinner talk between Shamas, Jugnu and Jugnu's English girlfriend, which Kaukab overhears (that I have explained before as well), Jugnu says that he was born in a Muslim home but that he always objected to the idea that only by virtue of being born into a household of Muslims he becomes a Muslim. He goes on to say, "fact of the matter is that had I lived at the time of Muhammad [PBUH], and he came to me with his heavenly message, I would have walked away . . ." (38). Also, Shamas while agreeing to Jugnu says, "I am still inclined to believe the scientists, because, unlike the prophets, they readily admit that they are working towards an answer, they don't have the final and absolute answer" (38). He continues, "I trust what science says about the universe because I can see the result of scientific methods all around me. I cannot be expected to believe what an illiterate merchant-turned-opportunistic preacher—for he was no systematic theologian—in the seventh-century Arabian desert had to say about the origin of life" (38). This is quite appealing from the perspective of symptomatic textual analysis of the narrative discursive formation, even if it apparently seems to be a frank exchange of views regarding the divine nature of religion and analytical modes of scientific enquiry among a few of the characters in the novel. That is how the author seems to bring forth the cynicism about the divine nature of religion, especially Islam, which is indicative of his personal views as it makes the novel archetypal of his writings. It is

because, generally, Aslam is quite sceptical about the very concept of religion and more so regarding Islam because of his personal experiences while living as a child in Pakistan, which is also highlighted by Kanwal who has provided a useful rebuttal of his shallow understanding of Islamic *Shariah* (177-182).

Apart from the portrayal of the cultural conflicts between the conservative Pakistani-Muslim heritage and so-called civilised Western society and its democratic values, I also consider it important to discuss how Pakistani-Muslim society has been depicted by the author because that quite interesting to unveil the working of the authorial agency within the text. Hence, in this section, I explored the question of whether the author has presented a rather lopsided and thus problematic portrayal of Pakistan and its Muslim society as it seems that the predicaments of most of the characters are in one way or the other rooted in their Pakistani socio-cultural background which often gets reflected in their description of Pakistani society as I have discussed. Right from the beginning until the end the narrators that include several characters in the novel describe Pakistan as a rotten land from where everyone wants to escape—which reflects on his problematic portrayal of Pakistan—that I feel has a lot to do with Aslam's personal and family experiences while living in Pakistan during the regime of General Zia-ul-Haq, the military dictator, in the 1970s and early 1980s who ruled over Pakistan with a heavy hand in the midst of the American war against the Russian invasion of Afghanistan—because of which—his father who was a writer-journalist had to migrate to the UK in the first place. His description and depiction of Pakistan and whatever is Pakistani is indicative of that. For example, in the very beginning Pakistan is portrayed as a terribly unfair country for its people:

Pakistan is a poor country, a harsh and disastrously unjust land, its history a book full of sad stories, and life is a trial if not a punishment for most of the

people born there: millions of its sons and daughters have managed to find footholds all around the globe in their search for livelihood and a semblance of dignity. Roaming the planet looking for solace, they've settled in small towns that make them feel smaller still, and in cities that have tall buildings and even taller loneliness. (9)

Likewise, when Shamas talks to Kiran about his grandchild, Charag's son, he refers to him as "half Pakistani and half . . . er . . . er . . . er . . . human" (10). In that sense, the women's gossips, which are recurrently reported through Kaukab as she has frequent interaction with the women of the Pakistani descent, often reflect on how unhappy they are while living in the godforsaken country (the UK) as it is often referred to by Kaukab and most of her friends from Pakistan. There are numerous examples of such description of the UK or England as a wretched land and Pakistan as land of pure (*Pak Sar Zameen*) in the novel. However, I have just given some examples to make my point. One of Kaukab's friend of Pakistani origin starts realising that she will not be able to go back to his homeland (Pakistan) despite the fact that she wants to be buried in Pakistan. So, she starts paying the monthly instalments to the local mosque to arrange her funeral as she laments that Pakistan is "a country that's poor because the whites stole all its wealth, beginning with the Koh-i-Noor diamond" (45). The matchmaker, a neighbourhood woman, tells Kaukab that "the white police are interested in Pakistanis only when there is a chance to prove that [they] are savages who slaughter [their] sons and daughters, brothers and sisters" (41). Another woman is shown "cursing the inventor of the wheel and ruing the day she came to England, this loathsome country that has stolen her daughter from her, the disobedient girl who doesn't want to go to Pakistan for a visit because males and women are segregated there" (45).

The author also employs Kaukab's wistful thinking to reveal her fantasies and desires. For example, while referring to the sinful life of the lovers (Chanda and Jugnu) in the UK and their visit to Pakistan Kaukab, at one point, contemplates that the pious environment in Pakistan might have turned their hearts around and that they Chanda and Jugnu must have shun the life of debauchery and that they have been hiding because of being ashamed of their dishonesty after coming back to England. She explains that "[t]he decadent and corrupt West had made them forget piety and restraint, but the countless examples in Pakistan had brought home to them the importance and beauty of a life decorously lived according to His rules and injunctions. Pakistan being a country of the pious and the devout, a place where boundaries are respected" (63). She even goes to share that idea with Chanda's family, but they turn her away saying that she must not visit them again to talk such nonsense about their daughter whom her own mother calls a whore and that she had died for her family the day she met Jugnu. That is when she starts blaming England again for all the ills and sufferings of her life as she loses all hopes about the lovers. She mourns again saying that "there's nothing for her out there in Dasht-e-Tanhaii, to notice or be interested in" except for embarrassment (65). Also, while making a comparison between Pakistan and England Kaukab says that "[c]ompared with England, Pakistan is a poor and humble country, but she aches for it, because to be thirsty is to crave a glass of simple water and no amount of rich buttermilk will do" (70). The author, while narrating Shamas's personal account, indicates how young people in Pakistan are often sexually frustrated, as the narrator explains that an "unmarried young man's sexual life, in those days and in a segregated country like Pakistan, began late" and that Shamas's "sexual initiation, exploration, and gratification [started] in the "Diamond Market" district of prostitutes in Lahore" (80).

In this regard, it is also important how the author reveals the experiences of sexual repressions of Charag and Suraya when they meet the first time: (133).

In this regard, it is interesting to compare how various characters view the West/UK. For example, Shamas, his children and Jugnu consider the West/UK as a liberating world/country as they think have got the individual freedom and liberty that they did not have or would not have while living in Pakistan. They have the right of living a free and secular life; where they can drink freely, have girlfriends and (in case of Jugnu and Charag) live out of wedlock with white English woman. On the other hand, for Kaukab and many Pakistani-British (including her friends such as the match maker) the UK has been a cursed land. They always feel that the insurmountable cultural and social differences cannot be bridged because their identity is defined by their being Muslims of Pakistani background. Their disliking of the UK and West becomes intense also after they think they have lost all their children, one after the other, to that God forsaken country and its unbridled freedom and secularism. Thus, for Kaukab England has never been her homeland despite having lived there for more than half of her life; because it has been “a loathsome country” for her in every which way, especially after she loses her children to it, that leads her to extreme paranoia, which is why, she always calls Pakistan her homeland/country. It is, thus, more about cultural assimilation or lack thereof (i.e., alienation) which results into the disputes that arise not just between the so-called Pakistani Muslim background and the British/Western values but also between the two types of Pakistani immigrants themselves (i.e., those who integrate and those who become alienated) such as between Kaukab and the rest of her family. This is how the author brings to fore the cultural conflict between the Pakistani immigrants and the British society as well as between the secular and religious elements from within the diasporic communities

(i.e., those who have assimilated and those who have not) in the novel. But at the same time, I feel that the implied author of has not been neutral in portraying Pakistani society and culture vis-à-vis British. From cultural perspective of the conservative Pakistani community living in the UK the country has never been acceptable as is depicted in the novel. For example, “Shamas and Kaukab [when once get late out become] terrified that the four of them would not make it home in time before the pubs shut and the streets were full of drunk white people” (28). Similarly, when a child goes out the Pakistani women in the neighbourhood make sure to keep an eye on them through a coordinated network because, as one of the women explains, “you have to be careful—every day you hear about depraved white men doing unspeakable things to little children” and then the women says to Kaukab that they “should never have come to this deplorable country” because, she continues, “this [is the] nest of devilry from where God has been exiled. No, not exiled—denied and slain. It’s even worse” (30). This, on the one hand, shows what the immigrant Pakistani Muslims think of England, and on the other hand, it indicates how the author employs dialogues and actions, such as these, to demonstrate how superstitious, undereducated, and conspiratorial Pakistani-Muslim immigrants, especially women, are vis-à-vis the modern democratic British society. Kaukab “often reminds herself that Allah had given Adam his name after the Arabic word *adim*, which means “the surface of the earth”—and therefore the whole of mankind, his descendants—was created from earth taken from different parts of the world. His head was made from the soil of the East, his breast from the soil of the Mecca, his feet from the West” (31). The author employs characters such as Kaukab to reveal the claustrophobia of Pakistani society in general and Pakistani-British community in particular while highlighting the conspiratorial thinking of Pakistanis about the West

at large and that despite that (as the narrator explains) everyone in Pakistan “wants to come to the West” (78). That is indicative of how the author employs the narrative to exposes the affectation and duplicity of Pakistani society and its people.

Kaukab often expresses her dissatisfaction with the life in England which according to her has been not less than a disaster for her as she has not only lost her homeland but also her family: Shamas, and all the children one after the other to that wretched country as she often laments. She says that “the period [she spent] in England was the equivalent of earthly suffering, the return one day to Pakistan entry into Paradise” (96) as she remembers the day she came to the UK where she has got nothing but pains (101), especially the one that has come because of losing his family to the Western way of life. For Kaukab the US is as bad a country as is the UK. That is why she forbids Mah-Jabin to go to the US. She explains to her that it is a “strange country full of strangers” (110) and that Pakistan is a paradise of a country for Muslims as she cherishes her life in Pakistan. In this sense, Suraya’s husband, like Kaukab, has quite negative views about England being a sinful country full of infidels where nothing good happens. That is why he had instantly developed an intense dislike for England during his two years stay there when he had to come to live with Suraya after they got married as he had been feeling extremely lonely in Pakistan (199). Kaukab and other alienated Pakistani Muslim immigrants think of England as an accursed land and that they hate it more than anything else in the world (146) yet they cannot leave England. They think that England is “a dirty country, an unsacred country full of people filthy with disgusting habits and practices, where, for all one knew, unclean dogs and cats, or unwashed people, or people who have not bathed after sexual congress, or drunks and people with invisible dried drops of alcohol on their shirts and trousers, or menstruating women” (267). That is why “Muslim men

and women of the neighbourhood have a few sets of clothing reserved solely for outdoors, taking them off the moment they get home to put on the ones they know to be clean (267). These are some instances of the socio-cultural overdetermination that, I contend, characterise what I refer to the objectification of fiction.

5.2 *The Golden Legend* (2017)

The story is apparently set mainly in the city of Lahore (which is named as Zamana in the novel) along the Grand Trunk Road in Pakistan in the backdrop of the religious divide and communal conflicts. In the beginning of the narrative one of the main characters, Massud (Nargis' husband) is killed by a gunshot involving an American who is arrested and accused of killing three Pakistani men including Massud. This thrilling incident not just creates a drama but also becomes the epicentre of the following events as the State Department (of the US) demands the Pakistan's powerful army to return their so-called diplomat while the government of Pakistan insists that he is an intelligent operative and an accused in the killing of three innocent men as the legal proceedings of the case of triple manslaughter gets underway in the local court of Zamana. The novel also narrates the accounts and plight of Nargis, Lily and Helen, the Christian residents of Zamana, who face extreme religious discrimination and persecution at the hands of the so-called Muslim extremists while depicting the travesty of social inequalities and justice in Pakistan.

5.2.1 Socio-Cultural and Religious Objectification in *The Golden Legend*

While this novel manifests "an idea of otherness that resists stereotypes and sameness, thus rebutting the totalizing claims of the rhetoric of terror" (Monaco 3), the narrative does seem pre-conditioned in the context of socio-cultural, religious, and gendered issues and conflicts in and around Pakistani society. It combines the issue of the religious radicalisation of the Pakistani society and the burgeoning political unrest in the country particularly in the wake of the American-led war in Afghanistan and her

interference in the region. The novel also shows how the Afghan conflict has had a huge impact in defining the Pakistani society as it is overtaken by the fanatic extremist and terrorist mindset. The novel is made up of multiple plot lines and characters but the subject matter is overwhelmingly political as it involves the issues of blasphemy and marginalisation of the religious minorities in Pakistan, excesses of Pakistani military, corruption, American regimes including the “war on terror”, *jihad* or the war of independence in Kashmir and so on. In that sense, it is much more than just the depiction of abysmal treatment with the minorities in Pakistan. I consider the novel quite relevant in the context of my study of “author-function” in the objectification of fiction as it is characteristic of how the implied author plays with the popular political, social and religious issues in the novel rather consciously as I have discussed in his other novels especially *Maps for Lost Lovers*. Many of the characters in the novel represent the brutalities of their respective states. For example, Imran (a character in the novel) is employed by the author to politicise the Kashmir conflict while Massud, Nargis, Helen and Lily are used to reveal how the state of Pakistan has failed its citizen. Besides, the novel recounts detailed description of a mosque that Massud and Nargis had built to unite the Muslims of Pakistan belonging to the various religious sets (Aslam, *The Golden Legend* 1-3). The description of the mosque is rather exotic. Similarly, the transportation of some sacred religious books from an old library to the new along the Grand Trunk Road through a human hand chain is perhaps meant by the author to indicate the extent of orthodoxy of Pakistani Muslim society as they think that sacred books cannot be transported by modern means of transport (9). Likewise, when Massud visits a local shop in the area he observes with dismay the national flags of the USA, France, India, Denmark, and Israel painted on the floor out of disrespect while the shopkeeper boasts of humiliating the infidels.

While Massud tries to show his displeasure, the man warns him not to visit the shop to which Massud has to apologize, lest being branded as *kafir* (14-15)—which, I think, is intended by the author to show the clash between the conservative and liberal elements in Pakistani society in the wake of the “war on terror”. This indicates how a cosmopolitan society is constituted with multiple inter-religious/communal interactions from all sorts of people. This “interconnection with an increased emphasis on physical and spatial reality in a globalized and ever-globalizing world” (Miller 341), takes control of the narrative as the implied author conditions his fiction. Thus, “the narratives stand in for a global network of people and their stories” (342).

Clements believes that the authorial role is determined by the writer, reader and subject and that many of the anglophone writers of Pakistani origin, including Aslam, seem to hold a particular “situated position” which at times seems to universalize their claims and is often used to reinforce their worldviews (94-96). I think, Aslam’s implied author exploits this position to twist the narratives in a number of ways. For example, he holds a clear position in the narrative to depict the conflict among various communities as well as sections of the Pakistani society of Zamana. He exposes the extremist mindset of the Muslim fanatics such as Shakeel and his friends as he associates a number of inhuman practices to them. For example, in one of such instances the narrative shows that Shakeel and his men “spread an Indian flag on the ground and cut the cow’s throat onto it, an ugly gesture of soaking the flag with the blood of the animal that was sacred to Hindus. They had displayed the bloody piece of cloth with delight afterwards, taking photographs, filming the entire incident on a phone, to be made viewable on the internet afterwards” (93). The gruesome incident and its filming show the extreme hatred and prejudice that Shakeel and his companions represent while the cleric is shown as a feeble persona, as he expresses

his helplessness to Aysha when she asks her why he has done nothing: “There was nothing I could have done,’ he said quietly. ‘I know it had to be killed for food, but why the coarseness? Must every possible thing in this life be corrupted?’ And then she saw that her father was in fact afraid of her brother-in-law and his companions. The realisation had shocked her” (93).

In that sense, author also plays with the issue of forcible conversions of the Christians into Islam in Pakistan, which runs through the novel. It feels as if every Muslim of Zamana thinks that the Christians of Badami Bagh must convert to Islam for that is taken as the only option available to them to avoid persecution as minority but also because they think that that is the right thing to do (94). For example, Lily tells Aysha that Shakeel “was a passenger in his rickshaw once and had asked him—more or less immediately upon sitting down—why he hadn’t converted to Islam yet. [While] Aysha’s husband too had thought it his religious duty to speak admonishingly to her father when he saw Christian children looking through the lens of his rosary” (94-95). Thus, the woman characters as well as those belonging to minorities have been presented as victim of oppression by the Muslim men in the Pakistani patriarchal society, which reflects how the implied author has dramatised the narrative and objectified characters. In another example of women’s marginalisation in Pakistani society, the narrator tells the story of a historical mosque in Zamana which was in fact named after a Mughal noblewoman in the dynasty by the Mughal emperor who had built it, but because it was named after a women the mosque became a site of controversy and was often boycotted and ultimately abandoned to animals because nobody offered prayers there especially after a Muslim cleric had doubted the validity of prayers offered in the mosque because of its connection to a woman (359). Through this and other incidents and episodes in the novel Aslam tries to show how the so-

called hardcore Islamic beliefs (that he himself fabricates) are incompatible to the modern democratic movements such as those for the emancipation of women and rights of minority. Likewise, the narrator describes in detail an incident in which a magazine office where Helen works is assaulted by the religious extremists who break in holding automatic weapons as the magazine editor had denied the pressure by the so-called extremists to censor their publications and allocation of a section for their *jihadi* advertisements. They so-called *jihadis* in fact want to appropriate the magazine's publications, incorporate contents of religious propagation and to use it for the condemnation of the blasphemies and the anti-Islam cartoons published and circulated in France and Denmark even if the purpose of the magazine is different as the editor explains to them, while one of the attackers in response says to him that it is a shame that he can print porn and distorted histories but not the religious contents (114). The incident is meaningful because it brings to light the political issues around the conflicts between Islam and the Western civilisation, that the novel seems to involve in order to create drama and controversy by employing the cultural and religious clashes. The man then explains to the editor how Muslims are treated in the West, as he narrates his own story of how his wife was spat on by men on three separate occasions because she wore a burqa (114). The long episode that follows covers several politically relevant questions such as the so-called Westernization, Islamophobia, freedom of expression, and the French and Danish (blasphemous) cartoons as the man justifies his idea of *jihad*. That is how the author exposes the so-called fanatic mindset (seemingly) to the Western audience:

They say they can insult our beloved Prophet, peace be upon him, because they have the right to say what they want. But their right to drink wine does

not mean I have to let them empty their bladders on me an hour later. Does it?’

‘No, it doesn’t.’ ‘What is this thing called freedom of speech?’ (115)

Thus, the conversation between the man and the editor of the magazine reflects on the issue of incompatibilities between the hardcore Muslim narrative and the moderate or enlightened Muslim narrative, so to say. Likewise, the politics of the implied author plays with the sensitive matter of blasphemy law in Pakistan as he manipulates the editor of the magazine for the purpose of advocating his own views regarding Pakistan’s blasphemy laws (116). In the end, it is shown that when the so-called extremists seem to have run short of arguments they make use of the power as the magazine editor is shot dead. This episode shows how the author employs the narrative and exploits characters to politicise the sensitive religious matters and in order to unmask the issue of radicalism in Pakistan and its threat to the society at large. It is interesting to indicate that the author chooses to report the entire incident in the narrative in graphic details. It is not about whether the incident is probable or not but the way the author exploits the narrative in so doing is indicative of the way religious controversies and conflicts are dramatised in the novel. The author manipulates the narrative to include violence and dramatization. In this regard, it is also interesting how the narrative incorporates the authorial voice to support certain opinions and expose opposing views as is represented here by the editor and the attacker, respectively. That is how novel—as a narrative form of ideology—works in creating and promoting discourses but also limiting those at the same time.

The reportage of an incident in the novel in which the so-called militant religious police forcefully shut a coffee house (where often young people gather to have fun, listen to music, and celebrate St. Valentine’s Day) is quite dramatic in this regard. The cleric of the mosque is also forced to condemn the celebration of

Valentine's Day "as a Western custom that promoted lewdness, debauchery and secularism among Pakistanis" (129). Interestingly, the members of the religious police are shown to be quite educated, young people that include graduates of engineering from the Zamana University of Science and Technology, who even threaten and try to kill the coffeehouse owner (129-131)—that is another indication of the radicalization of the young, educated people in the Pakistani society. There are also numerous other reports of the activities of the militant force such as killing of an American academic, attacking the education institutions having co-education, robbing of banks for terror financing and for the purpose of making money for the *jihadists* in Kashmir and so on (130).

Apart from the inter-religious intolerance that overwhelms the narrative, the novel also makes mention of the intra-religious and sectarian problem in Pakistan as the mosque that Massud and Nargis had built to bring the four sects of Islam together in harmony was soon turned into a field of conflict and fights as it lays abandoned ultimately (171). I think, through this the author seems to propagate his idea that religion is the divisive force rather than inclusive as is often claimed by the followers of different religions particularly Islam, and that there is no possibility of co-existence even among the Muslims of various sects let alone among different religious communities in Pakistan. At the same time, he highlights how the conservative Muslims in Pakistan often reject such co-existence and boast about their so-called Muslim rich Islamic heritage and glorious past in order to demean the progress modern Western civilisation and condemn Christian/Jewish duplicity in the past. The narrator shows how, during one of such charged religious gathering a man "with the loudspeaker—standing in an elevated place, on the topmost step in front of a shop—was speaking about the duplicitous nature of Christians and Jews, of the Western

world, of non-Muslims in general. People shouted furiously every time he paused, a wave of noise that advanced and receded (202)—which is indicative of the typical passionate religious rhetoric in Pakistan to infuriate the crowd and fuel hatred against the so-called enemies of Islam and Pakistan.

5.2.2 Characterisation in view of Cultural, Religious and Gendered Objectification

It is important to analyse how the implied author deploys various characters to politicise certain cultural, religious, and gender related issues and manipulate discourse in the context of this study. For example, the author exploits several characters such as Nargis, Helen, Lily, and others in order to voice his personal views about the contemporary socio-political issues and the power struggle within Pakistani society. He seems to relate those issues to the larger national and international conflicts and power struggles. In this regard, the author uses Nargis' character to explain that “[e]verything this land and others like it were going through was about power and influence. All of it. And these struggles of Pakistanis were not just about Pakistan, they were about the survival of the entire human race. They were about the whole planet.” (40). While disclosing the power politics with respect to the American who is accused and is under arrest for having killed three Pakistanis including Massud, the author uses Lily comment that “America is a powerful country...One way or another it'll get what it wants” (42). Similarly, Lily, who is otherwise, not educated, knows the ways how power works. In this regard, it would be interesting to study how the issue of persecution of minorities in Pakistan, especially that of the Christian community, is linked to power structures in the society and economics, as the narrative describes how the Muslim majority exploits the Christian and other minorities in Pakistan economically. For example, Babur, a property owner, disrupts the efforts to start a government school in the Christian area in order to make sure that

the Christians continue doing the dirty cleaning jobs in the local municipality and houses of the rich Muslims as they have always been doing. He once confronts Lily for letting a telecom company install their signal-tower on the rooftop of his house while demanding that Lily does not have the right to have the financial benefits that come with it for being a Christian while accusing Lily's daughter, who he says must have lured the company people away from Babur's houses that are rented to the Christians (47). Then he says to Lily mockingly, "Sweeping and cleaning is too lowly a job for you, Mr. Bigshot Rickshaw Driver" and that he must not think of himself to be an honourable man just because of owing a house and rickshaw, that too has in fact been gifted to him by Massud and Nargis (47). Later on, when Lily is wanted by the police as he is accused of blasphemy because of having an affair with Aysha, the cleric's daughter, and polluting the sanctity of the mosque by entering inside while wearing the Christian cross (which is interpreted as an offence of religious profanity), Babur leads a mob of vigilantes and puts his house of fire in order to burn him alive(139), but when somebody from the mob suggests that all the houses of the Christians should be burnt, Babur objects to that idea purely because of his economic benefits as he is making money from them by getting them little jobs and renting his houses to them. He announces, "Every other Christian in Badami Bagh is decent and law abiding and knows his limits. They are our brothers" and must not be harmed (140). He even quotes a verse of the Holy Quran to this effect, which says that the nearest people to the believers are Christians (140). This is how the author manipulates the narrative to politicise the popular issues of blasphemy and persecution of minorities in Pakistan while unveiling the hypocrisy in the use of religion for the personal benefits and political motives.

Likewise, on another occasion, when Lily finds one day that the murderer of his beloved wife, Grace, is riding as his fare in his Rickshaw he tries to confront him but in a rather passive way and the man while sensing danger says, “Stay away from me or I’ll tell the police you swore at the Prophet” (76)—which is not only interesting but also meaningful given the way author functions in bringing forth the mainstream politico-religious issues, as I have discussed before. In this regard, Clements highlights the trend of portraying the racial profiling of the peoples in the Western societies on the part of the so-called postcolonial anglophone writers, who she thinks have made compromises to make their fiction interesting for the Western audience for whom the novels have primarily been written in the first place (Clements 18). In this sense, Nargis’ character is quite objectified as she happens to be the one who becomes a mouthpiece of the implied author along with Massud, her husband. Nargis happens to be a Christian before she changes her name to pretend to be a Muslim (in order to avoid persecution). Likewise, later Lily’s relationship with Aysha, the cleric’s daughter, becomes quite interesting from the perspective of this study as it indicates the way the narrative gets exploited in order to first create cultural and religious wars between Muslims and Christians and then bring Lily and Aysha into an intimate relationship. It cannot be without a purpose, for in case of Aysha, she is not just another Muslim girl but a daughter of a Muslim cleric and sister of Shakeel (who is presented as an extremist in the novel). The narrative shows how Shakeel sabotages Aysha’s marriage after she becomes a widow because of the killing of her husband in Waziristan at the hands of the Americans. Thus, Lily’s relationship with Aysha is contrasted with the religious intolerance and hatred that pervades their surroundings. Same is true in case of Imran’s relationship with Hele (Lily’s daughter). Imran is a devout Muslim from Kashmir who has been getting a militia training in a training

camp near Zamana but soon he gets completely disillusioned and becomes involved with Helen, daughter of Lily and Grace, rather emotionally, who ultimately elope at the end of the novel, as the narrative indicates. The stories of interfaith marriages and relationships in the novel such as that of Nargis and Massud and Lily and Aysha and then Helen and Imran make a good comparison with the stories of Mina and Nathan and Hayat and Rachel who have had interfaith relationships that leads to the basic controversy in the plot of *American Dervish* (2012) by Ayad Akhtar. Also, in Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers* and Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* interfaith relationships are dramatised as they are employed by the authors to serve the purpose of politicising their view of globalism while creating conflicts (as I have also discussed in the previous chapters).

In that sense, Massud's character is also important as he is portrayed as a moderate Muslim and stanch critic of political power. He marries Nargis who is in fact a Christian but pretends to be a Muslim because of the fear of persecution and maltreatment at the hands the Muslim thugs or so-called extremists (if she were to be known a Christian, a member of minority community). We are told that "[a]ll his life Massud had resisted having anything to do with those who wielded power. She [i.e., Nargis] had never seen him bow to authority, those who demanded respect instead of earning it. It was his blood" (54), as Massud's brother, a brave investigative journalist, who is shown to be daring like Massud, gets picked up by the Pakistani military intelligence when he tries to expose the powerful people who he finds have been involved in selling of the nuclear secrets to other countries to get financial benefits. Soon after that his mutilated dead body is found from a gutter. That is what Major Burhan warns Nargis of when he threatens her of "the same consequence" in case she does not agree to pardon the American who has shot and killed Massud and

two other Pakistanis in *Zamana*. That is how the author situates the narrative in the politico-religious setting while conditioning the characters' development amid the national and global politics. Similarly, the unnamed cleric of the local mosque in Badami Bagh is objectified by the author. Interestingly, he is named as 'the cleric' as if he does not have a name of his own—which is indicative of the objectification of the Muslim cleric—that we see in many of his other novels too. He is shown as a helpless religious man. He cannot and does not confront his extremist son, Shakeel, and his companions for the misuses of religion for the political and personal benefits despite admitting in private that that is bad/wrong. One example of that is his sons do not allow Aysha, the cleric's daughter whose husband gets killed in an American drone attack in Waziristan, to marry again because they think that a martyr's wife becomes a holy woman, which the cleric does not seem to agree to as he tries to get her married and expresses his distress in front of Aysha, yet he cannot do anything about that except saying that Allah will punish them for that (57). Shakeel and his friends later send the cleric to warn Nargis not to pardon the American infidel no matter what while Nargis "could see he was ashamed, that he did not wish to say the things he had been saying" (60). She was upset to see tears coming out of his eyes. Then, the narrator tells us that his misery was also linked to the fact that he has lost control of his mosque to his extremist son and others who were using him and his mosque for the political ends as they also pressurize him to give a sermon on Friday to condemn the American infidel who has killed Massud and others in order to link that to the Crusaders, who have been in war with Islam for ages (59)—which is indicative of Aslam's attempt to show how religious institutions like mosque are used for the purpose of radicalization in Pakistan. This also shows how the cleric is portrayed as a hypocrite. He is always carrying around a book of sins. His physical

description of a meek old man having a black bruise on his forehead “that spoke of his lifelong devotion” also reflects on how his person has been objectified. He is also presented as somebody who believes in superstitions. For example, after Massud’s killing he asks Nargis if she has seen Massud while reading the Holy Quran in her dream because that, he explains, would mean he is in Paradise (56). It is also reported that “when the cleric’s mother had fallen ill she had refused to consult a Western doctor, because successful treatment would have been humiliating to the pride of her fellow Muslims. She had eventually become a martyr to that loyalty” (58). It also shows how the author uses these instances to mock the religious Muslims/people like the cleric and his wife while exposing their conservative views and linking them to the religion of Islam, which is quite typical of his narratives as I have discussed before in relation to the conditioning of Kaukab’s character in *Maps for Lost Lovers*. One of the central mosques in Zamana is often used for spreading religious hatred and inflammation of the society as shown in the novel (101). The mosque was run by a relatively moderate cleric but then it is taken over by the extremists headed by Shakeel, the son of the cleric. The cleric then recedes into an oblivion as he is shown as a docile character who lets things happen while being helpless despite having different views. Similarly, the politics of Muslim *Niqab* or *hijab* is frequently used in this novel too. When Imran visits a local hospital in Zamana where he donates blood for Massud he sees that “One of the doctors was in a niqab and she was taking the pulse of a patient who was also in a niqab” (101). This shows how the narrative gets manipulated by the author to describe the doctor and patient in niqab specifically—just like the way a director/camera shows certain details in a close-up while choosing what is important and what is not. That is how author works from behind to

manipulate the narrative and condition characters to highlight certain things/issues and play down others.

Likewise, the way Lily and Aysha's relationship is announced from the loudspeaker at the top of the mosque's minaret is unusual and significant as far as the author's function is concerned. The announcement does not just reveal the secret of their illicit relationship but also accuses Lily of blasphemy for entering the mosque. It says, "the cleric's daughter Aysha had developed a sinful, immoral and criminal association with Lily Masih, the Christian. And that he had been blasphemously entering the mosque for their night-time trysts" (135). The emphasis seems to be more on Lily's stepping in the mosque which is considered a bigger crime than having an illicit relationship with the cleric's daughter particularly "in a country where Christians were in prison for drinking water from a Muslim's glass" (137). This and other examples indicate how religious objectification is employed by the author to appeal controversies. In this regard, the story of Imran, a boy from Kashmir, who was a student of biology and was aspiring to become a doctor (132) is forced to become a freedom fighter because of the brutal persecution of the Kashmiri Muslims including his family members at the hand of the Indian military is quite meaningful. That is when Imran decides to join a militant camp near Zamana in Pakistan to receive militia training to become a *jihadi* in Kashmir but when he realizes that the militants have other motives including terrorism and financial benefits and that the state is not fair in its treatment with people of minorities gets totally disillusioned and leaves the camp. After the smoke dissolves into the thin air the horror of the Badami Bagh incident comes to light and by then it has turned into a massacre as seven Christians have been burnt to death, and about a hundred are injured; that include women and children. And above all else, Lily has eventually been declared guilty of the murder of

all these people (156) without trial, while the nationalist rhetoric continues as usual “We Muslims are being murdered and insulted and persecuted everywhere, in Kashmir, Burma, Palestine, Chechnya...” (157). The narrative also shows how Imran gets disillusioned while also exposing the pretence of the Pakistani state (158). During this incident, while Imran is shown stunned to see how Pakistan treats its minorities, the author employs his character to observe and report the persecution of minorities and discrimination against them in Pakistani society through graphic details while exposing the contradictions in Pakistan’s stance about the abuses of rights of the Kashmiris by the Indian state vis-à-vis Pakistan’s treatment of its citizen, particularly minorities. For example, the television news reports that Imran comes across at a teashop are also indicative of the religious discrimination as Imran sees a TV attached to a wall telecasting the news of the protest against the American man who is accused of killing three Pakistanis in Zamana and a Saudi court’s order regarding beheading of man accused of blasphemy (158). Imran reports that when an advertisement plays on the television “about mosquitoes, almost everyone around him agreed that *Dengue fever was a CIA conspiracy to decimate Muslim populations*. They were deeply convinced, and it didn’t matter whether such accusations were true: what mattered was that they felt true” (231-232; emphasis added). In the same manner he shows how Hindu fanaticism, like Islamic fanaticism in case of Pakistan, has damaged the secular Indian nationalism by quoting an incident in which “a mob of Hindu militants had beaten to death a Muslim man whom they claimed had eaten beef. The announcement of his crime had been made from a temple loudspeaker. Following the lynching, the police had sent the meat in the man’s fridge to a laboratory for analysis, to ascertain whether or not it really was beef” (232). That is when he donates blood for Massud and walks into the lives of Nargis and Helen who he helps to escape from the

persecution after the mob burns the houses of Christians because Lily and his daughter, Helen, are accused of blasphemy for petty things such as walking into a mosque while wearing a Christian cross and doubting the existence of djinns respectively, as the novel shows. The role of the police force has been exposed on a number of occasions in the novel. For example, the evidence against the murderer of Grace is destroyed by the police, Seraphina, Nargis' sister is raped by the police, Imran is forced to bribe the police and tie the shoelaces of a police officer before he is allowed to leave as if he were a servant. And the most gruesome of all, they first let a prisoner escape by convincing him that he was free and when he starts running they hunt him down by opening fire at him as if he were a prey for hunting (164), which explicates how the author dramatises the naked brutality of the police force in Pakistan. Thus, the narrative of the novel seems to have been structured in accordance with the politicisation of the religio-cultural and gendered issues as the incidents and events are formed accordingly to the social issues rather than the characters. That is why the narrative seems to pick and choose incidences in the lives of people in the novel rather than presenting a whole picture—which is what I refer to as conditioning of the plot/narrative, exploitation of characters and hence objectification of fiction. Nazir has analysed the “traditional orientalist discourse and its recent upsurge in global political discourse” while looking at how the self/re-Orientalist leanings in Aslam's novels, among others becomes characteristic of that (*Orientalism Post 9/11* 19) which is quite relevant of how Aslam presents a lopsided depiction of certain religious societies in his novels, especially Eastern/Muslim.

In this regard, Nargis' rather astonishing journey of life is quite appealing as it shows how the politics of religious identity gets played in the novel by the implied author as he exploits characters. The narrator explains that Nargis' real name is

Margaret who was in fact a Christian from Lyallpur where she had been living with her elder sister, Seraphina, in their uncle's guardianship, who is, in fact, Bishop Solomon, a Christian clergyman of Lyallpur. Seraphina becomes a victim of abuse, torture, and humiliation at the hands of the local police just because of being a Christian when she is interrogated along with other employees of the departmental store, where she was working, as a suspect of a theft that turned out to be a misunderstanding (191-193). The incident changes her life altogether which, perhaps, resulted in her early death. Margaret after having observed what difference it makes being a Christian in Pakistan decides to change her official religion and to pretend to be a Muslim without converting to Islam in reality. That is when she leaves her city of Lyallpur and comes to study in Zamana where she lives permanently as Nargis and becomes an architect, and later marries Massud, who is also an architect (and remains unaware of her real identity). She visits Solomon in Lyallpur in secret sometimes and becomes more like Massud who had nothing to do with religion, yet she decides to keep her story a secret even from him in fear of retribution. I think, the author has constructed these characters deliberately in order to manifest how after having been witnesses and victims of the systemic and physical persecution of Christians and other minorities in Pakistan the confidence of minorities has been shattered to the point that they have lost all their hopes and belief in goodness, hence, they have to resort to changing their identities and names.

Moreover, the implied author shows how Nargis later adopts Helen, the daughter of their Christian servant, Lily, who is extraordinary in her studies while Massud buys Lily a rickshaw and also helps him build a small house in the Christian locality of Badami Bagh in Zamana. After becoming a so-called Muslim and thus a free citizen of the country (as is presented by the author), Nargis has to leave all her

past behind in order to have a new and free life as a Muslim, which she thinks would not be possible if she remained a Christian. Thus, she divorces her past and marries her fellow architect Massud while keeping her real identity hidden. Once while on a train to Peshawar with Massud, Nargis incidentally meets Solomon, her uncle who had brought her up along with her late sister, but she could not even speak to him because of the fear of exposing her real identity (98), especially after she gets threats from Major Burhan to pardon Massud's killer. Hence, Nargis becomes more careful because she knows that if her secret about her true identity becomes known to the intelligence agency they might expose her which would be disastrous as in a country like Pakistan such allegations would be tantamount to blasphemy, as she is aware of a number of other cases where people were extra-judicially killed for petty crimes if they belonged to a minority group (100). But there is nothing she could do except for lamenting the way her state failed her for being a member of minority, which she often does and in return is deceiving the state in her own way but at the same time she knows that her whole life has been a lie for the choices she has to make to have a life of freedom even which after all is turning out to be an illusion to her. Her fears come true and that is exactly what happens when she is exposed and taken into custody by the intelligence officers in Lyallpur where she goes alone to attend the funeral services of Bishop Solomon who commits suicide in a courtroom in protest against the discriminatory treatment of its minorities in Pakistan. The author also connects the plight of minorities to the way state and society of Pakistan have been complicit in the marginalisation of minorities and oppression against them as he shows that even the state of Pakistan trades on the religious hatred for instance in case of Nargis, the intelligence agency is shown to use all resources and tactics to dig her true identity in order to pressurise her to pardon the American as they threaten her that if she does not

do that there is lot she will have to go through as they will expose her true identity of being a Christian/fake Muslim. That is when she makes a deal with major Burhan, on the condition that after she pardons the American in the courtroom Lily and Helen will be spared, which the officer agrees to (335). Even though in the end Lily is reported to have been arrested by the police and killed brutally in an extrajudicial encounter—which manifests that there is now enforcement of law in Pakistan and that no guarantee can save the lives of minorities if they are accused of committing blasphemy. The incident of Lily’s extrajudicial and brutal murder at the policemen is presented by the narrator with a lot of drama and horrendous details as he is shown pulled out of the manhole where has been hiding and is shot dead like a prey. All the police offices “wanted the privilege of killing the blasphemer, to have all their sins wiped out with that one act, and it had been decided that they would all stand around him in a circle and fire their guns simultaneously (349). That is how through this single incident the implied author highlights the issue of marginalisation and persecution of minorities in Pakistan and the use of religion in personal and political lives as pressure tactic while exposing the treatment of the minorities not just in the society by also by the state institutions including courts and intelligence agencies. It is also used to reveal how the Pakistani government and its institutions such as military and judiciary work at the behest of the American masters, so to say. Like the issue of forced conversions, the novel also makes reference to the plight of Muslims who convert to other religions as he narrates a story of such a Muslim who after having been converted to Christianity has been living in closet in Pakistan and “fleeing both the police and his own family. His own brothers and father were searching for him in the towns and cities in order to kill him” (175), although, “[l]ater he paid a human smuggler to take him to Europe, where he hoped to seek asylum, moving from

Pakistan to Turkey to Greece to Italy and then Germany” (175), but on reaching Germany he realises that it is not easy to get political asylum as he has to live a homeless life on the streets. And, in Pakistan his four-year-old “son had died [after one moth], poisoned, everyone suspected, for being the child of an apostate, by someone in her [wife’s] family. Such was the abhorrence” (175). This is indicative of how the author conditions the narrative while also invoking discussions about extrajudicial punishments in Pakistan, especially in religious matters as I have mentioned with reference to his exploitation of ‘honour killings’ in *Maps for Lost Lovers*. In addition to that, I think, it is also meant to describe the plight of refugees in the European countries—which is again reflective of the exploitation of fiction in view of the social and political issues.

Furthermore, the author deploys foil characters such as Shakeel, his companions and Grace’s killer, in order to manifest the intrinsic religious fanaticism of Pakistani society and discrimination against the minorities as represented by the Christian population of Badami Bagh. For example, Shakeel (who is often shown angry on being confronted by the local Christians every now and then) is exploited by the author to represent the anti-minority (and in this case anti-Christian) sentiments among the predominantly Muslim majority of Pakistan. He is shown shouting to expel the Christians from their community because he finds it difficult to believe that he lives in Pakistan (a Muslim country) as he is encircled by Christians. He further says that their “mosque is a stone’s throw from a place that openly sells alcohol, and there is no restriction on the noise they can make with their church bell on Sunday morning” (90). Thus, Shakeel’s character is formed by the author in a way to highlight the issue of marginalisation of women and oppression against them inherent in the Pakistani Muslim society. For example, Shakeel’s attitude with her sister-in-law

is more of a master than a brother-in-law as he often orders her to do his chores (91), which is indicative of his views about women and the way he treats them as I have explained with reference to his opposition of Aysha's second marriage. Also, when Shakeel once sees Aysha using a cellular phone, he thinks that women must not be allowed the use of mobile phone especially widows, like Aysha (94). Moreover, the author also creates various situation to depict the marginalisation of women in Pakistani society. For instance, on an occasion of a religious rally women are shown gossiping about their husbands' attitudes towards them where some of them reveal that their husbands and mothers-in-law require them to wear *hijab* all the time hence they do that even when they are among women (200-202). Nargis feels that being a woman is a hard thing in Pakistani society, especially when she confines herself in their mosque in an Island, she thinks that "[s]he had never realised how completely alone women were in the world" (287)—through which I think the author depicts the subjugated position of women in Pakistani society and elsewhere.

In the same way, Lily's character reveals how the author objectifies the minority characters in order to propagate his agenda of highlighting the issues of the marginalisation of and oppression against minorities in Pakistan. Lily is one of the many characters like Nargis (Margaret), Seraphina, Helen, and Solomon that have been employed by the author in order to show not just how badly minorities are treated in Pakistani society but also that their under-privileged status has been acknowledged by the state and its institutions as I have discussed, especially with reference to Grace's murder case. Likewise, Lily's childhood is defined by his religion like many Pakistani kids though in a different way as he happens to be a Christian. The narrator explains that when he was just "nine years old he had split open the head of an older Muslim boy, who had grabbed him by the hair and slammed

his head repeatedly into the wall: ‘Convert! Convert!’” (303). Similarly, the author objectifies Lily’s character to present a picture of religious intolerance and plight of minorities in Pakistan. For example, in his teenage Lily would get “angry at the daily—sometimes hourly – humiliations he had to endure at the hands of Muslims, he had often felt that if Pakistan were a person he would kill it. Tired of being a non-citizen – a half-citizen at best” (70). Also, the way Lily is implicated in the alleged blasphemy case on the basis of a concocted evidence involving a Christian crucifix that is found in the lawn of the local mosque is quite interesting as it is used to prove that he has been entering the mosque to meet Aysha, the cleric’s daughter who lives in the mosque and with whom he has an affair after the tragic murder of his wife, Grace. Interestingly, Grace, Lily’s wife, is also reported to have been killed extrajudicially earlier after she is accused of committing blasphemy. Lily’s extramarital relationship with Aysha, is indeed considered an immoral act but his bigger crime proves to be entering the holy mosque while wearing the Christian cross for which his house is burnt along with many other, as he is chased in the locality by a charged mob who wants to kill him and his daughter, Helen, who is also accused of blasphemy for having denied the existence of djinns in an a magazine article, for that is the only punishment in practice in the Pakistani society in such cases, as the author presents (138-144). Likewise, it is also meaningful how his crime is announced from the loudspeakers of the mosque which results in bringing people into a mob, who do not only set Lily’s house on fire but all the houses of Christian in the area that leaves almost a dozen Christians dead and many more wounded (224). The author employs the narrative to show that exactly when the mob is setting the Christian houses of Badami Bagh on fire, the local police force is shown busy in chasing Helen to arrest her for the frivolous charges of denying the existence of djinns, which is taken as a

case of blasphemy, as a number of police officers break in Nargis' house announcing that they are there "to arrest this girl for doubting the existence of djinns. She has been under investigation since the massacre at the Tilla Jogian magazine. In an article she wrote she cast doubt upon the existence of the djinn and therefore doubted the truth of the Koran" (143). I think that through this the author wants to draw attention to how minorities are persecuted in Pakistan and how state and its institutions are also involved and complicit in those crime. Similarly, after the massacre at the Christian locality of Badami Bagh, Lily is denied a minor job after the employer gets to know that he is in fact Lily Masih, a Christian (212-213). While Lily moves about the outskirts of Zamana to find some work, the narrator describes the appalling living and working conditions of labourers in Pakistan and the way they are exploited by their employers but he is surprised to see that despite that the fellow labourers treat him well and offer him food as he seems hungry and homeless, but the moment they come to know that he is a Christian their attitude changes at once, as the same people start humiliating Lily and even throwing stone on him (213-217): Lily is shown to have once been literally thrown among the dogs, as the narrative describes: "He was lying under a railway bridge when the sun rose and *a street dog came and lay down next to him, arranging his spine against his*" (224; emphasis added). This offers another example of the cultural objectification and fictional conditioning.

Thus, I conclude that the very idea of presenting a strong case of religious persecution of minorities in Pakistan is a type of fictional objectification on the part of the implied author. As a result, the narrative gets marred by reductions and stereotyping as it becomes dramatised. Aslam's implied author's polemic against religion in general and Islam in particular is widespread in many of his texts, as I have discussed with reference to *Maps for Lost Lovers*. In this novel too he objectifies a

number of characters by conditioning their roles. For example, his favourite character (i.e., Massud and Nargis) represent the cultural resilience and resistance against religious extremism and violence on the name of religion; which refers to the deep division and great diversity in Pakistani society at one and the same time. Massud and Nargis' attachment to the rich South Asian history and Islamic past in unison is mainly based on the author's idea of globalism in which religion is important in the cultural sense rather than the ideological. He seems to suggest that Sufiism or a mystic form of religion and a global form of culture can be the solution rather than the religion(s) towards the realisation of a more inclusive and tolerant society. That is why I think he helps promote globalism by bringing people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds together into a happy marriage. In addition to the above, there are numerous other novels by Aslam as well as other contemporary Pakistani anglophone novelists who have deliberately situated their narratives within the socio-cultural and political contexts in relation to the Pakistani society including Zia's Islamization, pre- and post-9/11 cultural contexts, religious extremism, terrorism, Islamophobia and so-called Islam-West cultural divide/conflicts. This points to the fact that there is a particular pattern of politicising the fictional narratives within the popular political, cultural, gendered and religious issues. This indicates how the implied authors of these novelists cater to the requirements of the publishing market and fulfil the expectations of the readers, especially in the West. Thus, I contend that my selected authors have promoted a tradition of politicised fiction writing. It is reflected in Aslam's other novels such as *The Blind Man's Garden* (2013)—that appropriates the Afghan war, Taliban's regime and its impact on Pakistan's society, subjugation of women in the conservative Pakistani society and the issue of honour crimes and their religious justifications. Likewise, Ayad Akhtar's *American Dervish*

(2012) is set in the US and tells the story of a diverse group of Pakistani-Americans who face a number of socio-cultural, gendered and religious identity issues in their reluctant pursuit of integration in the modern Western society.

This study of “author-function” in the objectification of fiction has contextualised the emergence and valorisation of the contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction in the last twenty years by analysing the implied author in its appropriation of the global political narratives and socio-cultural relevance. The study has presented an understanding of the authors’ function in ways of appropriation of the global political issues and socio-cultural and religious narratives. It has examined how the selected author have influenced the tradition of politicised fiction writing; that is mostly in line with the popular discourses, trend of thought, and demand of the so-called postcolonial (publishing) market.

CONCLUSION

The contemporary Pakistani English literature in general and anglophone fiction in particular have seen an extraordinary expansion in the last twenty years or so; which has drawn attention of the literary critics, academia and related cultural production, including television as well as literature festivals in Pakistan, around South Asia and beyond, especially in the West. Keeping in view this rise of Pakistani English language fiction, several studies have been published in the last ten years that provide rich insights into the study of the contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction from various perspectives including and involving diverse facets such as representation, cultural alienation, identity politics, post-9/11 “war on terror”, gender and religious discrimination, Islamophobia, and so on. In this context my study has sought to contribute to the ongoing debate about the formation of a canon of Pakistani anglophone writings. It aimed at understanding what impact the socio-cultural and political events of late had had on the formation of the implied author(s) as well as the objectification of fiction in relation to the contemporary Pakistani anglophone novel. The study departs from the issues of representation to the broader questions of political agency and authorial function insofar as the determination of fictional narratives is concerned; which I assert influence the formation of narrative discourses, determine plots and locales and exploit characters—which leads to what I call the objectification of fiction. For that purpose, I have explored and analysed how “author-function” operates in playing with the globalist/liberal as well as nationalist/conservative narratives while at the same time appropriating the dominant discourses and, more importantly, in what way the selected fiction gets objectified. Thus, this study had aimed at reviewing and analysing the “author-function” in the objectification of fictional narratives with reference to the selected contemporary

Pakistani anglophone novels mainly by Shamsie, Hamid, and Aslam, who, I contend, have been responsible for promoting the politicised fictional tradition/trends in the context of Pakistan (that were familiarised by earlier South Asian authors like Rushdie, Naipaul and Adiga, among others). The idea of “author-function” relates to the ideological figure of the author, but at the same time, it entails the socio-cultural and economic conditions of artistic production, valorisation, circulation, promotion, and consumption. The study has offered a critical and counter-discursive response, but it has also attempted to provide an alternative theoretical lens to the critical study of the Pakistani anglophone novel. The research has mainly been based on the textual analysis; however, the contextual details of the proliferation of Pakistani anglophone fiction have also been taken into account in order to substantiate the arguments about the way the objectification of the fictional writings happen under the influence of the dominant and/or popular political discourses that are mainly derived from the global political conflicts/issues as well as the neoliberal cultural and economic values.

The basic premise around which this study has been conceived and carried out has to do the ways the “author-function” plays within the text in generating narrative and conditioning textual discourse as an ‘ideological figure’ or a ‘discourse maker’ and how that results into the objectification of fiction in relation to the selected contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction. In the beginning, the research problem was introduced and theoretical/ conceptual framework defined. The discussion led to exploring evaluation of authorship and how author has been conceptualised over time. This included how Foucault has gone on problematising the role of author as “author-function”—which formed the basic premise for this study. The first research question addressed in what ways Shamsie’s implied author overdetermines the narrative function and textual discourse in order to engender the socio-cultural and political

issues of the time. It included plot construction, twisting of narratives, and proliferation of socio-cultural and political discourses by using fiction as a vehicle. This makes the implied author a tool of regenerating narratives and supplying dominant/popular discourses and catering to the demands of the publishing market. The second question was as to what extent the selected contemporary Pakistani anglophone novels are conditioned by the implied authors to appropriate the socio-cultural and political divide in the wake of post-9/11. This has been studied in relation to the selected novels by Hamid and Naqvi in the context of post-9/11 political milieu. The third question focused on how the author (Nadeem Aslam) of the contemporary Pakistani anglophonic novels has played with the idea of socio-cultural objectification and religious and gendered identity politics while compromising on the art of his writings as well as culture of his native land. The study has found important links among “author-function”, fictional objectification, socio-cultural praxis and ideological implications, that have been cited in the following pages.

The study has explored how the implied author functions in the formation of textual discourse as a subject or an instrument. It has analysed how the authors appropriate the dominant/ popular political discourses while analysing the manipulation of fictional narratives in relation to the selected Pakistani English language novels. In so doing, it has explored the promotion of a trends of politicised fiction writing in English by the selected Pakistani authors in view of the proliferation of fiction writings in Pakistan and its diaspora, particularly in the UK and the US, during the last two decades or so. The research has essentially been grounded in Foucault’s idea of “author-function” as it provides the basic premise. However, the overall conceptual framework had been worked out by combining Foucault’s concept of “author-function” (that proposes that an author is distinct from a writer as he

operates as an ideological figure and/or a discourse maker) and Bourdieu's idea of literature as a 'social product' (which relates to how social condition (habitus) influence cultural/literary production), Huggan's theorisation of 'postcolonial exotic' (that challenges the so-called postcolonial writings in view of marketing of the margin), and Ahmad's "politics of culture"/"cultural fetish" (that relates to how cultural politics affects fictional narratives and vice versa). This conceptual/theoretical framework has proved helpful in problematising the construction of fictional narratives while unveiling the authorial agency in view of the objectification of cultural and religious identities within the selected texts. I have tried to redefine or at least restate the relationship between the implied author and her/his fictional writing in relation to the contemporary Pakistani anglophone novel. This has involved examining the selected authors' implied function in light of Foucault's theorisation of "author-function" by employing a "symptomatic reading" drawn from Žižek's idea of "ideological fantasy".

The analytical method used for the study was purely based on textual analysis that employed "symptomatic reading" as defined by Althusser and Žižek. It's neither psychoanalytical in Freudian/Lacanian sense nor Derridean deconstruction. However, the textual analyses of the selected texts have generated discussions about the broader political context(s) and social praxis in relation to how the implied authors operate within and outside the texts while drawing on extra-textual and para-textual aspects of the selected fiction. The study is analytical as well as theoretical in nature as it does not just provide close textual analyses, but also offers a theoretical debate regarding the authorship in literary studies especially as regards the so-called postcolonial/Third World anglophone fiction. The critical framework (as I have explained) has largely been drawn from the blend of Foucault's "author-function", Bourdieu's "cultural

production" and Huggan's postcolonial exotic". In this regard, the study has examined how the implied author operates in the construction of a literary text (i.e., novel) and in what ways they promote, perpetuate and/or limits textual discourses at the same time. Thus, the (implied) author's role has been defined in terms an ideological figure and/or discourse maker in order to deconstruct the authorial agency by unveiling the layers of meaning, revealing the sub-texts, and interpreting the under-currents of the narratives in the larger context of the global politics and socio-cultural objectification as well as the publishing market.

The first chapter (i.e., introduction of the study) has presented the background of the study, research questions, statement of problem, rationale, and delimitation of the study etc. The chapter one also provides a description of the methodological framework of the analyses that are essentially based on close textual reading of the selected texts. The second chapter presents a detailed discussion of the conceptualisation of my critical/theoretical framework as well as the evolution of the concept of author over time while tracing important historical developments. Hence, it has also covered an overview of the historical development of the idea of author so as to help situate the premise of this study in the larger context of the debates around the concept of author and authorship. This chapter also provides a detailed discussion about the relevant and noteworthy contributions by the selected scholars/critics such as Rahman, Waterman, Cilano, Kanwal, Clements and Chambers, among others. The following chapters (i.e., three, four and five) constitute my core study, wherein I have provided a number of exhaustive analyses of the selected texts of my authors by reading symptomatically. For that purpose, I deemed it important to employ a conceptual framework (as I have explained in detail), because I thought that in order to provide an in-depth understanding of the political and authorial agency and the way

“author-function” operates within the text the Foucauldian idea of “author-function” would not be enough despite its relevance and profundity. That is why I have adopted Foucault’s idea of “author-function” in coalescence with Bourdieu’s thought of “cultural production”, and Huggan’s “postcolonial exotic” to provide in-depth analyses of the selected novels that include *Burnt Shadows* (2009) and *Home Fire* (2017) by Kamila Shamsie, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), and *Exit West* (2017) by Hamid, *Home Boy* (2009) by H.M. Naqvi, *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004) and *The Golden Legend* (2017) by Nadeem Aslam. In the end, findings and/or outcome of this research study have been presented while also identifying avenues for the future research in view of my study.

The book-length writings on Pakistani anglophone literature including fiction/novel have been few and far between until recently. However, a lot of interest has been generated in the last decade as a result of the fresh proliferation of English language fiction by the new generation of Pakistani authors, both at home and in the diaspora, which has also given rise to the critical writings on Pakistani anglophone fiction. That is also indicative of how the contemporary Pakistani anglophone literature in general and fiction/novel in particular has gained a spotlight in academia both at home and abroad, particularly in the West mainly because of the political refocusing of the country. But it also reflects on how the so-called critical writings about the Pakistani anglophone literature in general and fiction in particular have been used in order to promote a particular trend of political fiction writings in Pakistan. This is particularly prevalent in the universities in Pakistan because the job of literary criticism has mainly been focused on exploring the expressive values of the literary texts including the issues of (mis)representation, diasporic identity crisis, and politics of identity and gender while often admiring the individual writers and texts rather than

exposing the discourse formation as well as manipulation through the art of fiction. While I regret to say that the scholarly contribution to the study of contemporary Pakistani anglophone literature in general and fiction in particular has mainly relied on studying the expressive fictional values and issues of representations/portrayals as well as cultural alienation and crises of identity, a few works especially those by Chambers, Kanwal and Clements have been critical of the contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction especially in terms of the reductionist approach insofar as the socio-cultural representation and politics of identity are concerned. These writings have not only provided an in-depth understanding of the contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction but have also been beneficial in contextualizing and finding research gap for this study.

The study has found that the authors of the selected contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction are more inclined to portray the characters from the so-called cosmopolitan urban settings involving issues that pertain to the middle and upper-middle class. Hence, the textual representations are often not inclusive and seldom representative of the Pakistani society at large; they rarely include people from the lower economic classes as well as those from the rural settings. That is how the implied authors of the selected texts condition plots, control narratives and exploit characters to recount the stories of the urban upper-middle class, cosmopolitan world and corporate-culture-driven issues (which are predominantly based on identity politics rather than socio-economic conditions in the rural areas of Pakistan). In this regard, I have noted that spatial as well as temporal arrangements in most of the selected novels have been politically influenced. That is, the massive movements of the characters across the multiple borders as well as through the historical times have been schemed by the implied authors so as to condition the narrative in the backdrop

of the socio-political happenings of the time. This has to do with the way physical places (spatial settings/locales) and timings (i.e., temporal elements) have been manufactured in order to situate the stories within the local, overseas or trans-geographical regions often fettered by political conflicts. For example, in Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows* we meet Hiroko and others in Nagasaki, Japan, in 1945 exactly when the US wreaks havoc by dropping the atomic bomb on two Japanese cities including Nagasaki in the midst of the Second World War (as I have discussed in detail in the third chapter). Later, Hiroko comes to live in New Delhi during the Indian partition in 1947. Interestingly, Hiroko and Harry (Conrad's son) move to the US during the September 11, 2001. After a while Raza (Hiroko's son), Harry (James' son), and Abdullah (Raza's Afghan friend) get involved in the post-9/11 American-led war in Afghanistan where Harry gets killed and Raza and Abdullah are arrested as suspected terrorists. That, I argue, is not a mere coincidence; it has been orchestrated by the author in order to situate the plot in the areas of political unrest as the narrative gets constructed in a way to dramatise the prevalent political issues as well as politicise the popular/dominant discourses. This is just one example of how the authors of the selected anglophone novels have objectified their fictional plots by twisting stories, manipulating the narratives, exploiting the characters, and politicising the subject matter. The same or at least similar is true of most of the selected anglophone novels such as Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Naqvi's *Home Boy*, Hamid's *Maps for Lost Lovers* and others. This, I contend, has been done mainly for the reasons of propagating certain dominant/popular discourses by creating dramatic situations and controversies. It is also evident of a deliberate effort on the part of the authors to dramatise socio-cultural and political issues in order to promote/publicise their novels (as I have argued). I think that while this explains how the global politics gets played

around the socio-cultural issues and the role the so-called postcolonial publishing market has had in influencing the tradition of politicised and polemical fiction writing in case of the Third World literature, it also explains why Pakistani anglophone fiction has been in the limelight particularly in the Western academy especially during the last two decades or so.

Moreover, the study has revealed that the selected novels lack aporia or delay in most cases for the reasons that the implied authors exploit the narrative to continually feed the reader so as to influence their interpretation of the text(s). Sometimes, it even results in dictating the readers to believe in whatever the implied authors think is right. That is why (as my analyses have uncovered) the novels become overtly descriptive more often than not. In this regard, the study has pointed towards the influences of the publishing market and “institutional system” as they not only determine the fictional plots but also impact the authors’ narrative choices, characters and locales as they get constructed within the global political issues and popular discourses. Likewise, the study has shown that the contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction happens to be rather repetitive/formulaic as it is engrossed in and around the global and local political issues, happenings, and events. That is why perhaps the narratives seem to be quite stereotypical in the sense that most of the stories replicate more or less the same accounts repeatedly which shows that the political fiction especially in the wake of “the war on terror” has reached the point of saturation. In this regard, I can give the example of a number of texts that seem to have been informed by other texts in the same tradition. For example, H. M. Naqvi’s *Home Boy* replicates the story of Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* while Aslam’s *The Wasted Vigil* seems to have been written in line with *No Space for Further Burials* by Gohar and *Burnt Shadows* by Shamsie. Also, *American Dervish*

by Akhtar has a lot in common with Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers* while Aslam's same novel has got many parallels with Qaisra Shahraz's first novel, *Holy Woman*. Similarly, parallels can also be drawn between Aslam's *The Golden Legend* and Shamsie's *Broken Verses* as well as between Hamid's *Exit West* and Shamsie's *Home Fire* and so on. All in all, there are a lots of similarities in terms of socio-cultural and religio-political representations as well as the plot construction, locales and characters amongst the selected authors, which provides scope for intertextual study of the contemporary Pakistani English fiction. Thus, most if not all the novels are in one way or the other related to each other to the extent that they can be termed as derivatives if not replications. This is indicative of the pattern that I have pointed to in my analysis, especially in terms of plot construction, subject matter, and characterisation. In this regard, it is also interesting to relate how (in most cases) the selected authors tend to argue that despite the fact that there are numerous cultural, racial, and religious differences, tensions, and conflicts in the world (as they have portrayed in their narratives) the cosmopolitan world is very much possible, and that the idea of globalization can thrive. That is why most of the authors seem to defend the idea of globalization and pluralism at least in the selected novels despite having depicted the issues and conflicts arising out of multiculturalism particularly in the West as I have discussed with reference to the selected texts in previous chapters.

Furthermore, the study has brought to the light that the subject matter of the novel in most cases relies heavily on the political discourses and popular narrative that are often taken from the media representations and political clichés. Hence, the content is mostly sensational, political, polemical, religious, and dramatic. The novels often get formed by the popular issues about and around gender; especially feminist narratives, Muslimness, Islamophobia, "the war on terror", Afghan conflict, Syrian

civil war, and problems of refugees, etc. The selected fiction is also found to be quite stereotypical in terms of the plot construction which is predominantly set around the political issues and religious conflicts as well as the politicisation of the subject matter—that is—mainly based on the cultural and religious controversies and the identity politics that stems from it. The authors of the selected novels seem to play on and dramatises the political and religious identity conflicts around the contemporaneous narratives and dominant discourses in the world particularly in the context of the so-called Islam-West clash. While the selected novels are informed by the dominant opinions in the academia, publishing market and media propaganda, the author's own role as function or instrument becomes significant once they are turned into what I call the products of the market or subject status (in Foucauldian terms). That is where the authorial agency comes into play as the implied author becomes discourse makers and typesetters in relation to the trend of thought and/or tradition of polemical fiction writing.

In addition, insofar as the representation/portrayal of the Pakistani (Muslim) society (whether at home or in the Western diaspora) as well as other religious/traditional societies is concerned, the selected Pakistani fiction authors seem to have branded a typical degenerating or at least alienating depiction, perhaps, as per the aspirations of the liberal/Western audience and intelligentsia. That is why in most cases it the depiction seems quite stereotypical as it often lacks diversity—which, in my view, is problematic even if not untrue—because, I argue, Pakistan is as good or bad in terms of its society and sociology as are other countries in the developing world or in the region. In other words, the diversity of Pakistani society that can be comparable to any other country at least in the region often conveniently gets missed by most if not all the authors of the selected novels—which gives rise to the suspicion

about the self-/re-Orientalist approach of the selected authors. In this regard, a number of examples have been cited to discuss and expose what I refer to as self-/re-Orientalist practice on the part of the selected anglophone fiction authors of Pakistan or Pakistani origin. However, my conclusions are in no way determined or influenced by any nationalist narrative or an ideological position but rather they are essentially based on the “symptomatic reading” of the implied authors while examining the author’s function in textual discursive formation in relation to the selected novels. While this is true in case of several novels where narratives are formed in line with the media images and projections of Pakistani society, its socio-political and religious representations, such as the persecution of minorities, blasphemy laws, oppression against women as well as the role of government and state institutions, particularly military, Pakistan’s role in the Afghan conflict and “war on terror” etc (as I have discussed), some authors have tried to keep a balance in their portrayals of the socio-cultural evils as well as the diversity within Pakistani society by experimenting with their novel forms and narrative techniques such as Shamsie and Hamid. Although I do recognise that Pakistani society is inundated by several socio-political, economic, racial and religious issues and that Pakistani state has not succeeded in evolving a system of welfare for its people and deliver justice and equal opportunities for progress and prosperity to its citizenry like the rest of South Asia, the selected portrayal of Pakistan and its society in relation to the Western world is a problematic comparison in many ways. I have found that the implied author does play an ideological function in portraying Pakistani/Muslim world as well as the Western world/civilization and that as a result of this the narratives often become overwhelmingly politicised as the fiction gets objectified. That is why the novels are

often quite polemical, prescriptive and propagative (in light of the popular notions particularly in the West) if not agenda-driven.

Hence, the narratives in several cases are potent with self /re-Orientalist discourses. But, having said that, I also feel the need to explain that it is just one of the many perspectives to read the selected fiction and it does not mean one cannot take another lens that might lend one to different and even opposite conclusions than the ones I am presenting here based on my own reading of the few texts within the framework that I have defined for this study. Also, I do not claim that it is a statement about the full body of Pakistani anglophone writings, because I think that Pakistani anglophone literature, especially fiction, has grown to be quite rich and extremely diverse as has been cited by Cilano, Chambers, Kanwal, Clements and others. Many authors of Pakistani English fiction have employed novel narrative techniques and nuanced approaches to contribute in diverse ways towards the formation of Pakistani canon of English language fiction. However, the formation of canon does necessitate canonisation of certain authors and a few texts over the others; that then leads to the formation of certain thoughts/traditions of fiction writing, hence the politicisation of art/literature becomes a trend, as I have presented. I theorised the author's function in objectification of fiction and carried out this study for the purpose of uncovering how fiction becomes politicised as the implied author/ideological figure/discourse maker twists the narrative and incorporates discourse while engendering politics of all sorts, as I have discussed in my study of the selected contemporary Pakistani anglophone novels. It was an attempt towards shifting the discussion away to the crucial questions regarding the relationship between socio-cultural conditions, material realities and literary productions in today's world. Thus, the fictional objectification, I contend, eventually leads to the promotion of (what I call) the popular trends of politicised

fictional writings. The study also reveals that the selected novels lack aporia and gaps perhaps because of the fact that the authors have tried to remain prescriptive. That is why, in many cases, a lot has been condensed and thrust into the novels so as to cover the issues and incidents of global political relevance and situate the narratives in the so-called controversial political and cultural milieu—because of which—the focus often gets lost as too many incidents and characters get muddled up in the narratives. Furthermore, the study has problematised the recent boom of the contemporary Pakistani anglophone novel while exploring the ways of the objectification of fiction; that endorses the basic assumptions of conducting this research. Hence the study has attempted to expose the author's function in discourse making (and limiting) by analysing the selected contemporary Pakistani anglophone novels symptomatically as well as contrapuntally.

There are always going to be certain limitations of every study and same is true in case of this research. However, what is left out can provide basis for future endeavours. For example, I could not take into account Žižek's idea of "the parallax view" in view of his "symptomatic reading"—which is going to be my reading for the future. Likewise, my study could not engage with the questions of how the author is formed and in what ways the social and political habitus impact author's development. In that regards, the paratextual factors involved in the formation of author's ideology can provide paths for the future studies. Similarly, the influences of the neoliberal market economy of publication and the mechanics of valorisation in relation to the selected fiction could not be exhausted, but they can be compelling questions for future studies. Besides, the study of the role of contemporary (polemical) anglophone fiction of South Asia/Third World in politicising the anti-communal, Islamophobic and related discourses can be quite interesting inquiry.

Nevertheless, the study has contributed by developing crucial links among the implied author's function, fictional objectification in relation to the dominant/popular discourses and the socio-cultural and political grand-narratives of the contemporary times. It has helped understand the ideological formation of Pakistani anglophone novel as well as the process of fictional objectification. Moreover, it has contributed towards developing a nuanced understanding of the relationship between author's function/authorial agency and the socio-cultural and gendered objectification in the canonical fiction. It has analysed how the implied authors create, determine, and limit the textual discourse(s) by employing a "symptomatic reading" of the selected texts. Besides, the study has made possible or at least identified some of the future directions for scholarly engagements with the anglophone literature especially fiction in the Pakistani as well as in the broader South Asian/Third World contexts. In addition, the study, I believe, has made a theoretical contribution by bringing forth the idea of "author-function" in the objectification of fiction that introduces a unique (if not a new framework) perspective to understand the development of Pakistani anglophone literature and other genres of cultural production (especially in the context of Third World). I am sure the departure (this study has intended to initiate from the study of autobiographical elements, diasporic issues, cultural cliché and neo-historicist accounts of the contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction to the critique of the anglophone fiction/literature and role/function and the implied author) will prove useful for the anglophone literary studies in general and the contemporary Pakistani anglophone fiction in particular by benefiting the scholars in the Pakistani/South Asian and postcolonial/Third World academy.

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