CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

I

The novel is one of the oldest forms of writing which have stood the course of time. It is a perfect medium to express a range of themes, multiple stories and characters. Murasaki Shikibu's Tale of Genji\textsuperscript{1} (1010) is perhaps one of the oldest novel, a fine crafted post-modern form of narrative still in the initial stage. (The Encyclopedia of Novel, 1665) Over the twentieth century, it sustained its form and popularity. The current version of the novel brings out minimal and maximum characters. It is a favourable medium for readers and authors thus an instrument which stood strong. The novel remains a popular form due to its capacity to represent life. It is truer to our lives. Henry James puts in Art of Fiction (1884) ‘The only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life.’ (46) In Humanities each language offers an entirely new world to explore. Comparative literature is a platform to discover cohesion in the regional, national and international works. This field of study lets Comparative literature allows comparing works of two or more authors based on two elements fused in comparison. Comparative literature emerged as the exciting area in the late twentieth century.

There are a large number of immigrants’ novels from expatriate authors. The writers from the East at one point settled down in West, they write from an Eastern man in the Western set up. Khalid Husseini moved from Afghanistan to Paris, a valiant author Azar Nafisi made the US her home after her creative struggle in Iran. The famous oriental critic Edward Said was born in Jerusalem moved to Egypt in childhood and later in the US. Leila Aboulela, Cairo-born Sudanese moved to Scotland. The umbrella term ‘South Asia’ includes the countries in the Indian subcontinent, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Maldives. In the
league of contemporary novelists from India, Mother-daughter duo Booker Prize finalist Anita Desai and Booker Prize winner Kiran Desai. Richard Crasta, Tabish Khair, David Davidar, Amitav Ghosh, Rohinton Mistry, and Michael Ondaatje from Sri Lanka, a winner of 1992 Booker Prize for his novel *The English Patient* (1992), all of them moved to Canada. The exodus proves a remarkable experience that reflects in their writing, in particular, the fuse between East and the West.

The vast spectrum is narrowed down to the two authors with Pakistani origin. The contribution of Pakistani authors in English writing is remarkable. It is important to understand Pakistan as a country, especially its political and religious conditions to understand novelists and their works. Initially, India was divided into two major countries after 100 years of British Raj. The division was based on the religion. Hindu population preferred India and Muslims moved to Pakistan. After a fight over two religious groups, Pakistan was further divided into two parts in 1974. West Pakistan is Pakistan, and East Pakistan emerged as a new country on the world map as Bangladesh. This division brought enough bloodshed and violent deaths of civilians in both parts of Pakistan. Demographically it stands next to country. The ruling parties consists a military and constitutional powers. Unfortunately, there is a lot of uproars and political instability².

In recent times an enormous number of authors are contributing to Pakistani English literature particularly the English novels. In a way, Pakistani English novelists are enjoying celebratory phase, since the acknowledgement of some of the contemporary authors in the world literature. *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (2008) by Mohammed Hanif was shortlisted for the 2008 Guardian First Book Award and longlisted for the 2008 Man Booker Prize. It won the Commonwealth Book Prize in the Best First Book category 2009. Hanif’s *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011) was
shortlisted for Wellcome Trust Book Prize (2012), and the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature (2013) Uzma Aslam Khan’s *Trespassing* (2003) was shortlisted for the 2003 Commonwealth Writers' Prize Eurasia region, her fourth novel *Thinner than Skin* (2012) was shortlisted for Man Asian Literary Prize. This international acclaim brought notice to this nation which was overshadowed by it's literary wealthy and already renowned neighbour India in literary circle. These Pakistani authors have experienced a dual life; the sense of trampled identity is visible in their literary endeavours.

In the history of Pakistan English writing, Ahmad Ali and Zulfikar Ghose are pioneer novelists. The very first important English novel published in Pakistan was *The Murder of Azim Khan* by the expatriate Zulfikar Ghose in 1967. (Zulfikar Ghose left Pakistan quite early; his name is affixed to the Pakistani novel history.) The first ever chief author to come under limelight was Bapsi Sidhwa for *The Crow Eaters*. (1980) The accomplished young authors are writing about their immigrant experiences. Shaila Abdullah, a Pakistani author who moved to US post-marriage. Hanif Kureishi is an eminent face of UK literary scene and scriptwriter. His novels *My Beautiful Launderette* (1985), *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990) and script of the movie *East is East* (1999) won him accolades. Manzu Islam was born in East-Pakistan (current Bangladesh) moved to Britain, produced *Song of our Swampland* (2010) Moni Mohsin, born in Lahore, educated at Cambridge carried the tradition with her three novels and articles. Muneeza Shamsie was born in Lahore-Pakistan and educated in England. She edited *A Dragonfly in the Sun: An Anthology of Pakistani Writing in English* (1997). Her daughter, Kamila Shamsie now in England carries literary sensibilities of her mother. She received the Prime Minister's Award for Literature in Pakistan in 1999. Her newest novel, *Burnt Shadows*, was shortlisted for
the 2009 Orange Prize. Daniyal Mueenuddin is famous for *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders*. This work won him critical acclaim along with The Story Prize, and Commonwealth Writers' Prize. Bina Shah, author of four novels is renowned for *A Season for Martyrs* (2014) was born in Karachi, Pakistan and raised in Charlottesville, Virginia holds a degree from Harvard Graduate School of Education. Her humorous writing won her global audience. Uzma Aslam Khan has lived in Manila, Tokyo, London and Karachi. Aamer Hussein, a short story writer from Karachi, settled in London. Some writers are emerging to voice the unvoiced. The number of immigrant authors is huge. The label of Muslim Immigrant literature can be applied to their novels. Such large quantity of work helps us to understand the multiple voices from the immigrant’s point of view.

Mohsin Hamid was born in Karachi lived in US and UK, ultimately moved back to his home country, Pakistan. Nadeem Aslam was shifted to the UK during Zia rule in Pakistan. The present research centres on the comparison in the selected novels of Nadeem Aslam and Mohsin Hamid regarding the presentation and portrayal of the East and the West. The West is defined as Europe, America, Latin America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. In this study, in the connection of settings chiefly it is the US and UK. East refers to Oriental countries, primarily Pakistan and Afghanistan, with occasional reference to India and Chile, Philippines. In this exploration the East-West difference is based on religions; Christianity represents the West. Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism are identical to East.

There are various discourses as *Orientalism* (1978) and *Empire Writes Back* (1989) to explain the differences and contrasts between East and the West. Apart from the geographical boundaries, there is a cultural difference and not limited to it only. There is a core social and national difference. With the discussion of the Orientalism
and Pakistani Diasporas in West, there are inter-related themes with the study like racism, Islamic religious beliefs, Jihad, the war on terror, feminism, Taliban regime in Afghanistan, immigrants in West, the impact of 9/11 on the immigrants, class representation and the clash of civilisation. The novels bring forth the issues of the inferior status and strict Islamic codes and conduct for women, and honour killing, the subthemes in all selected novels of Nadeem Aslam. The original contribution is to bring out the comparison between the authors on the following propositions with the utmost unbiased finding. The objectives of the research are listed.

- To find the similarities in the fiction of Mohsin Hamid and Nadeem Aslam in the context of the representation of the social life they narrated in Eastern and Western settings, notion of nationalism, globalism, the image of the modern youth who is dangling between tradition and progressiveness, socio-economic and political perspective, Muslim culture, post-colonial spirituality and representation of East and West.
- To find the contrast in the depiction of east and west in the novels of Nadeem Aslam and Mohsin Hamid on the identical basis.
- To compare selected novels of both authors on the above grounds and come to a conclusion to what extent similarities and dissimilarities exist. Thereby examine each author’s contribution to the body of comparative literary studies in general and of Pakistani literature in particular.

The hypotheses of the current research are listed below.

- There are many similarities in the portrayal of East and West in the context of selected novels of Nadeem Aslam and Mohsin Hamid, three works of each author.
Both the writers are from Pakistan and expatriate in the western countries, the depiction of Pakistani bourgeois in the tradition Eastern set up. The representation of the western societal elements in their work and there is a similar pattern in the portrayal.

The contrast in the depiction of East and West in the works of Nadeem Aslam and Mohsin Hamid is present on the individual level, be it narration and treatment and presentation of East and West.

Diaspora writing is part of the vast spectrum of postcolonial writing. In the context of Pakistani English writing, novel circling the expatriates and Diasporas is considerably written (as discussed earlier) by various writers and explored further by research scholars. However, the path has been defined but not studied at great extent when it comes to contemporary Pakistani authors’ depiction of East and West through fiction, further in the light of selected writers. How the tensions of xenophobia, religion and an intercontinental cosmopolitanism play out in literary-cultural representations written from within and outside Pakistan? What are the legacy of a Diasporas and former imperial rulers such as Great Britain and the US? Apart from Hamid and Aslam, there are contemporary migrant writers, Kamila Shamsie, Zahid Husain, Aamer Hussein, Daniyal Mueenuddin, Mohammad Hanif and Bina Shah but they were ruled out on the after the initial reading. The selection of the novels is based on the similarities of the characters and theme. Since the authors are almost of same age and backgrounds, there are considerable similarities in the structure of the novel and the theme. The comparison in the study includes the theme, characters, plot, presentation, writing methods, language, allegory and a similar pattern. The comparative study not only makes a note of similarities between authors but it also points the differences in their writing and access without prejudices.
East and West is the sum of the cultures of countries; the broad term ‘culture’ refers to heritage, historical facts, political situations and systems, social norms, customs, tradition, beliefs, arts, literature, music. The language, clothing, dress code, industry, religion, law, freedom of speech, values, class division; these elements altogether define it. The questions arise what is East exactly? How to represent West and what are the influences of East on West and vice versa? Are there any similarities in the portrayal of East and West in the selected novels regarding both writers? What is the role of the politics in the chosen works?

Aslam and Hamid are at the crossroads of East and West; they both have spent initial years of their lives in Pakistan, and they voice the Pakistani youth. It would be an interesting to see how they figure the West from the eyes of Eastern men. Mohsin Hamid published his first novel *Moth Smoke* in 2000. Nadeem Aslam published his debut novel *The Season of Rainbirds* in 1993. Both had been writing on the recurrent theme and of the issues between East and West. They are actively voicing their opinions on the current political situation and expressed the autobiographical struggle in the multicultural society in the fiction. It is a collective effort to speak up on the prejudiced measures towards Muslims and raising the issues of immigrants and non-native Easterners in the Western world. They have voiced the suppressive environment during childhood and adulthood. Ultimately they concentrated on Islam and their interpretation of the religion. This made an interesting study since they have been following similar subject matter in their peculiar treatment through their novels and essays. Both are from the same cultural and religious background.

On the above-mentioned grounds, the selected authors are the contemporary voice of Pakistani literature in English. It should be noted that the research is not limited to the immigrant perspective only. The parallel and opposite binary of the
East-West is the central part of the research. The task here is to investigate, find out and measure the elements of East and West. The focus is the two opposite ideology and cultures. The selected novels explore the East and West in the contemporary world in synchronisation, and it is not only focused on East versus West. The focus would be on the coherence between East and West to establish a tie between the two extremes. The work further explores the multiculturalism and immigrants in the other land. The critical aspect is presented through the dialogue of East and West. The reception of new culture in the context of the characters is to be studied. The concise research framework is as followed. The details of the chapters will be as stated.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The history of Pakistan regarding a nation and its literary contribution in the English writing is followed by a brief presentation of the involvement of novelists, and the quintessential introduction of Mohsin Hamid and Nadeem Aslam would be given. The proposed hypothesis and primary sources are listed. The concept of East and West is defined and supported by the critics.


The summary of the selected novels of Aslam will be followed by the inspection of plot and portrayal of East and West in the novels *The Wasted Vigil, The Blind Man’s Garden* and *The Maps for Lost Lovers*. The anti-west attitude of immigrants in the UK, US’s role in Afghanistan, social setting, characters, the western inclination of characters and the clash between the East and West about US and UK and conditions of the suppressed women is highlighted.
Chapter 3: The Portrayal of East and West in Mohsin Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, *Moth Smoke* and *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*.

The summary of the novels written by Mohsin Hamid follows the inspection of East and West depicted in the three selected novels *The Moth Smoke*, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *How to Get Filthy Rich in Asia*. The interpretation would be in the light of political and personal musing of their characters and plots. Western social settings, characters, the inclination of the west in the characters, the impact of 9/11 on the immigrant life, the role of religious and standing of the female is as depicted in the three novels of Hamid.

Chapter 4: A comparative study: The portrayal of East and West in the selected novels of Nadeem Aslam and Mohsin Hamid.

This section will see at what extent similarities and contrast between East and West exist in selected works of Nadeem Aslam and Mohsin Hamid. It is divided into two parts; first part notes the similarities in the portrayal of East and West in the selected novels and the latter part records the contrast in the depiction of East and West in the selected novels. The degree of contrast in the books and the point of views of authors will be analysed. Moreover, the writing style, characters and thematic concern will be studied.

Chapter 5: Conclusion.

The final chapter will conclude whether the hypotheses are proved and to what extent. My principal argument is that there is a lot of similarities between the way authors put Islam and west in their selected novels. The chapter discusses how it was possible to conclude on hypotheses with the findings in hand and reach to the
findings. The limitation of the study will be mentioned with the scope of further research areas in the same discipline.

At this point, the major limitation could be the number of works I have selected to investigate. The league of contemporary Pakistani British and Pakistani American writers is colossal. This research focuses on only two contemporary writers in the contexts of three novels of each. The investigation is restricted to explore the standpoint of just two Pakistani authors Nadeem Aslam and Mohsin Hamid in their selected work. In a comparison of the vast number of works and broad area of the East and West elements, this research is limited to a small area. The debut novel of Aslam, *The Season of the Rainbirds* is excluded from the analysis due to the setting of the story in the Pakistani hamlet, thus curtailing the scope of comparison. The selection of all published works of Hamid (the research was proposed in 2013) and three out of four books from Aslam would fill the gap in the previous research. The conclusions of the present study are derived from the content of the novels; this can be an entity constructed conclusions.

There are research works based on the novels of Mohsin Hamid and Nadeem Aslam. Except for few research papers and thesis no critic has attempted a comparison of all the works of the selected authors. The researcher found a handful research thesis on Mohsin Hamid and Nadeem Aslam while reviewing the relevant literature. The doctorate thesis of Duce Cristy is a study of *In Love and War: The Politics of Romance in Four 21st-Century Pakistani Novels*. It compares *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid, *Trespassing* by Uzma Aslam Khan, *The Wasted Vigil* by Nadeem Aslam, and *Burnt Shadows* by Kamila Shamsie. The comparison is in the light of the global politics, gender roles and treatments. It is restricted to the only one novel selected in the research it had been helpful to set up
the initial postulations of the current research. *East Meets West: Gender and Cultural Difference in the Work of Ahdaf Soueif, Farhana Sheikh and Monica Ali* (2010) a doctorate thesis by Elsayed Abdullah Muhammad Ahmed is an extensive study of the East and West of selected Muslim authors. The work focuses on the East/West encounters, colonisation of the Egypt and the British settlements in the East. The selection of the author is based on the portrayal of the keeping feminism, and the post-colonial theme is the centre. The thesis includes selected novels by Ahdaf Soueif, *In the Eye of the Sun* (1992) and *The Map of Love* (1999), Farhana Sheikh’s *The Red Box* (1991) and in Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane* (2002) The thesis offers an evocative insight into the Bangladeshi, Egyptian and British postcolonial author’s take on the subject. The selected authors have not included the highlight of the East and West studies. It supplied an underpinning perceptive of East and West in the literary framework. *Writing the 9/11 Decade* (2013) by Charlie Lee-Potter is a thesis based on the novels of Richard Ford, Paul Auster, Kamila Shamsie, Nadeem Aslam, Don DeLillo, Mohsin Hamid and Amy Waldman. The core of the research is the Post 9/11 backdrop. This thesis has mostly provided the framework for the analysis as it includes three books discussed in the present study, *The Wasted Vigil* and *The Blind Man’s Garden* by Nadeem Aslam and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid.

The following abbreviations are used for the reference of primary novels in the thesis; *The Maps for Lost Lovers* (MLL), *The Wasted Vigil* (WV), and *The Blind Man’s Garden* (BMG). *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (RF), *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (HFR), *Moth Smoke* (MS), and *Discontent and Its Civilisation: Dispatches from Lahore, New York and London*. (DIS)
MOHSIN HAMID

Mohsin Hamid was born in Lahore in 1971. He was named after his great-grandfather, a lawyer. He spent his early childhood in Lahore until his parents moved to the USA in 1974. Hamid described his childhood in the chapter ‘Once upon a Life’ in Discontent and Its Civilisation. (DIS, 5-9) His father did his PhD at Stanford University, while his mother worked in the accounting department of Silicon Valley electronics firm. The family went back to Lahore in December 1980. Mohsin Hamid was nine years old with limited knowledge of Urdu. At the age of eighteen, he went to the US for his college education in Princeton. Hamid worked as a commercial banker in a firm, lived in London and ultimately moved back to Pakistan in December 2009. He resides in Lahore with his wife and daughter Deena.

Hamid published three novels Moth Smoke (2000), The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007) How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia (2013) and a collection of essays Discontents and its Civilisation. (2014). His first novel Moth Smoke was written when he was 22. The book won Betty Trask Award, was a finalist for the PEN/Hemingway Award, was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best First Book, and was named a New York Times Notable Book of the Year. Moth Smoke was an ingenious debut for Hamid. It garnered not only critical recognition but also the attention of other creative industries: it was made into an Italian operetta and a Pakistani television mini-series. Daira, the circle of life, a vicious circle of lust, longing and Lahore is a series on the book Moth Smoke. He contributed a short story, The Beheading in Granta issue.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist was shortlisted for the 2007 Booker Prize. It won the Ambassador Book Award, Anisfield-Wolf Book Award, Asian American
Literary Award, Good Housekeeping Book Award, Premio Speciale Dal Testo Allo Scheme, and South Bank Show Award for Literature; it was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize, International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award, James Tait Black Memorial Prize, Commonwealth Writers Prize, Arts Council England Decibel Award, Australia-Asia Literary Award, Index on Censorship T R Fyvel Award. It was named a Book of the Decade by the Guardian and a Notable Book of the Year by the New York Times. The book was later adapted into a movie of the same name by Mira Nair. The movie was screened at Venice Film Festival in August 2012 and released worldwide in April 2013.

How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia is a winner of the Tiziano Terzani International Literary Prize; it was shortlisted for the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature, the Haus der Kulturen der Welt International Literature Award and the KLF Embassy of France Prize. His non-fictional book, Discontent and Its Civilisation (2014) is a collection of articles and personal notes. The book is divided into three sections, life, art and politics. Many articles were published in various news columns including Observer, The New York Times, Daily Princetonian, New Statesman, and Guardian. His latest novel Exit West (2017) will be launched on 7th March 2017. Hamid himself has acknowledged the influence of novels and novelists such as Dostoevsky for Crime and Punishment (1866) and The Brothers Karamazov (1879–80), F. Scott Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby (1925), Haruki Murakami’s Norwegian Wood (1987) and Kazuo Ishiguro’s The Remains of the Day (1989) Antonio Tabucchi’s Sostiene Pereira (Pereira Declares) (1994) and especially Albert Camus’s The Fall (1957) (Hamid qtd in Adriano, 68)
NADEEM ASLAM

Nadeem Aslam was born in Gujranwala in 1966. He was named after the short story writer and poet, Ahmad Nadeem Qasimi. He used to write short stories for a children magazine. At the age of 14, his family had to flee from Pakistan. The reason behind the move was strict policies of Zia-ul-Huq regime during the 1980s in Pakistan. According to Aslam, they had to go to England due to increasing surveillance looming on his father, a Communist poet due to his political view. They relocated in Huddersfield in Britain in June 1982. His father Mia Mohammed Aslam was a poet, a filmmaker and member of Progressive Writers Association. Mia Mohammad Aslam wrote under the pen name Wamaq Saleem and couldn’t follow his dream to be a published poet. Mia wanted to call his son, Qes.

Aslam feared he would take the job after study and won’t be able to write once he finishes his graduation in Biochemistry engineering from the University of Manchester. He dropped out during his third year to pursue writing. He struggled to understand English, took his time until he was confident enough to write in English. He decided to work menial jobs on construction sites for six months and write for remaining months in a year. Aslam is known to be highly attached to his work and prefers solitude while he writes.

His first published work was an Urdu Story, printed in Imroze, a magazine. In an interview with Kamila Shamsie Aslam acknowledged ‘It was about a boy who couldn’t do his math homework, so it was clearly autobiographical’ (Aslam: Interview) His debut novel, Season of the Rainbirds (1993) won the Betty Trask and the Author's Club First Novel Award. The book was shortlisted for John Llewellyn Rhys Prize 1994 and The Whitbread First Novel Award 1994. His next novel Maps for Lost Lovers (2004) won The Encore Award 2005, The Kiriyama Pacific Rim Book
Prize 2005 and British Book Awards, shortlisted for Decibel Writer of the Year in 2006 and International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award 2006. The Wasted Vigil (2008) was short-listed for the Warwick Prize for Writing. The Blind Man’s Garden (2013) was shortlisted for DSC Prize for South Asian Literature. For his literary contribution, he was awarded Windham–Campbell Literature Prize for fiction in 2014. Laila in the Wilderness (2010) is a novella raising the awareness for the female foeticide in Pakistan in the Granta 112 Pakistan issue. The influence of James Joyce, Thousand and One Night on Aslam is remarkable. He admitted being inspired from Faiz. Nayyar Masud, Habib Jabib, Parveen Shakir, Intizar Hussain (“as great as Calvino”), Mushtaq Ahmed Yusufi (“Pakistan’s Nabakov”) (Interview with Shamsie)
‘OH, East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgement Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth!

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth! (Kipling)

_The Ballad of the East and West_ (1889) by Rudyard Kipling is the accurate account of how east and west were defined for a long time. Since the ballad is taken as indication of rift between East and West, it has a positive end and harmony between two main characters, Kamal and Colonel’s son.  

Edward Said came up with a path-breaking text _Orientalism_ in 1978. From the view of cultural changes, Female Rights (1960-1980s) were at the height to bloom all over the west, and this was the time when Civil Rights Campaign during 1954–68 was spread in US and UK respectively. East and the West existed coherent in the midst of the constant feud about the cultural, social standing and the tug of the power war. The concept of Orientalism already existed, but there was no binding argument like Said’s. The concept of Orientalism and Occidental with compelling arguments surged discourses that explain politics and perceptions between East and the West. _Orientalism_ drew attention to the world as it tries to define the history of East-West
relations and the dichotomy of power between Eastern and Western world. The concept of Orientalism is almost difficult to explain precisely. The Orient is an idea ‘that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West.’ (Said, 25) In ‘Culture Identity and Diaspora’ East is referred from the European imaginary as ‘the Dark Continent’ (Hall, 227) The publication of the Orientalism opens up a debate on the fundaments of the post-colonial Islamic countries and not so pleasant role of the West in the creation of an Empire in the world. Orientalism was beginning when a text from the postcolonial author’s East- Islam provided vast discussions and studies in the Western world. Aslam feels, ‘East and West at one level are complete opposites.’ (British Muslim Fiction, 145) The gap is to be filled. Said puts forward in Orientalism, Orientalism study is a medium to understand the centuries old difference and offers help to build a connection between ‘an unbridgeable chasm separating East from West.’ (Said, 352)

‘From the very beginning, postcolonial scholars have questioned the Western ideology of centre and periphery, through which the West assigned to itself the power of signification while relocating the East to the position of the West’s lesser Other.’ (Izabella, 26) Among the critical and creative cross-cultural contributions of the authors, they provide details at what extend the amalgam of the East and West projects the real issues in a contemporary setting. The culture difference in the East/West rooted the disparity. The term ‘culture’ is hard to define and limit. ‘the word ‘culture’ is used to refer to whatever is distinctive about the ‘way of life’ of people, community, nation or social group. It is an anthropological definition. In the societal definition, it can be described as, ‘the ‘shared values’ of a group or of society’(Hall, 2) The change of the social settings has a significant influence on the
religious and national identities, an integral part of the culture. In sociological
definition, it is a ‘Circuit of culture’ a reoccurring process and practices in a social
setting through generations. (Hall, 3) Said proposes in *Culture and Imperialism*
(1993) ‘the culture is not monolithic either, and is not the exclusive property of East
or West, nor of small groups of men or women (Said, xxiv)

Culture is a foundation of civilisation. It maintains the design of the ideas,
artistic capabilities and forms a society with a collective identity. Ethnicity is based on
the shared culture; it brings more close relations with one another based on their
unique group or clan. Bates and Plog quoted in the thesis of Elsayed Abdullah
Muhammad Ahmed *East Meets West: Gender and Cultural Difference in the Work of
Ahdaf Soueif, Farhana Sheikh and Monica Ali*, “Culture is a system of shared beliefs,
values, customs, behaviours, and artefacts that the members of a society use to cope
with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation to
generation through learning” (Bates and Plog qtd in Elsayed). ‘Culture, of course, is
to be found operating within civil society, where the influence of ideas, of institutions,
and of other persons works not through domination but by what Gramsci calls consent
‘(Said, 7)

The emphasis on the Islamic practice and religious beliefs would be one of the
major critical aspects in the consideration. The issue between the Islam and West is a
long term issue. ‘Conflict along the fault line between Western and Islamic
civilizations has been going on for 1,300 years.’ (Huntington, 31) The religious norms
and the body of values differ in the East. Primary freedom is an individual choice to
live the way one wants to inside the criminal behaviour in West. The selection and
liberty are secondary in tight bound customs, built on religious scriptures and social
norms in East. The submission of a believer is a common characteristic of all religion
as Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism favour the surrender to the almighty. After
the publication of the *Satanic Verses* (1986) the immediate debate and critiques were
unbolted. The revolutionary Islamic groups protested the depiction of the religious
head Mohammad. The riot erupted in various countries formed a restrictive image of
Islam in the world. The ban on the book in Islamic countries and non-Islamic
countries, the message reached to the liberals was clear. There should be no doubt,
fun or the portrayal of the Islamic religious sentiments. This whole episode tainted the
image of Islam.

Pakistan is a one of the largest Islamic country. Pak is an Urdu term for
sacred, and Stan is derived from Sanskrit for place or nation. Thus it is, The land of
the pure. Pakistan’s official language is Urdu and English. The idea of the separate
country for the Muslims was the brainchild of Iqbal. Chaudhari Rahmat Ali has
summed up the name for the new nation with Punjab, North-West Frontier Province
(Afghan Province), Kashmir, Sind and Baluchistan in an acronym PAKISTAN in
1933. The origin of the Pakistan was conceived by in a pamphlet distributed Pamphlet
‘Now or Never: Are We to Live or Perish Forever?’ in January 1933 while they were
students at the Cambridge. (Chaudhari, 103-10) They harbour the seed of the
Pakistan as a separate Islamic nation quite earlier than 1947 freedom. It was
concretised in the Lahore Resolution of 1940. The move was then supported by other
Islamic freedom fighters and All-India Muslim League. Jinnah became the father of
the nation and ‘Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s government declared Urdu the national language
of Pakistan- enshrined in Article 251 of the 1973 Constitute, so the nation is bounded
by the language.’ (Ayres, 38) The country had its hard time and governmental
commotion. ‘Pakistan’s army has seized power on three occasions, replacing
significant episodes of civilian rule with extended periods of military rule. These
coups occurred in 1958, 1977, and 1999.’ (Barracca, 125) In addition to the large economy and political stability, inter-communal violence and rise of the terrorism are one of the major issues the country is facing.

All-India Progressive Movement is a literary alliance developed in 1936 and active with the progressive authors’ contribution till 1952. In the restrictive literary society, one association kept the literary torch alive. In the 1930s in India, the movement drew its inspiration largely from a spirit of internationalism and left activism on a world stage. Rahman notes, the Association was first recognised in 1935 in London and came under the guidance of British legendary figures such as the leftist Ralph Fox.

‘All India Progressive Writers Association- AIPWA, first meeting on April 9-10 1936 in Lucknow. It was established to fend creative rights. British administrative banned a book under the Indian Penal Code 295-A in 1933 book Angaree 1932 published, a collection of stories.’ (31)

Faiz was a Progressive poet and a key member of a major literary movement from 1936-1954 that spanned across India and later Pakistan. After Partition the Association was also separated, and the establishment of the All Pakistan Progressive Writers Association7 emerged. The term Progressive is from the All-India Progressive Writer’s Association that was formed in 1936. Saadia Toor reports that in Pakistan, the Progressives were a fractured group with two factions, one still committed to a radical nationalism prescribed by the Left and the other more liberal part attracted to a conservative vision of the nation. As an activist, Faiz was firmly on the side of the Left and drew direct censure from the state in the form of imprisonment. (Toor qtd in Yaqin A.)
The natives of the Commonwealth countries were free to move to England and take citizenship. The freedom of movement was introduced during 1940s-1960s. This encouraged a horde of immigrants. The 1970s served as a decade bringing the end of the colonial powers. By the mid-1970s, major colonised countries became autonomous and self-governing nations. ‘The migratory patterns that had characterised the first decades of the post-war period focusing largely on Europe began to give way to flows of people with Asian and African origins. Decolonizing wars of independence and heightened ethnic conflict accounted for much of this movement. (Bradley, 33) In 1971, Idi Amin took command of Uganda, hordes of Indian immigrants were driven out from the country, they settled in UK and Australia, contributing the number of immigration in the UK. During World War I and II, some soldiers were recruited for the British Arms force. ‘South Asian immigration to the US began on a massive scale only after the pro-immigration legislation of 1965.’ (Izabella, 23)

The construction of the Mangla Dam on the Jhelum River in Mirpur district during the 1960s encouraged the immigration as it dislodged 100,000 people in the area. (Abbas, 47) The migration during 1970 heightened due to the oppressive rule of Zia-ul-Huq. During his rule (1977-1988) xenophobic rules were imposed to the nation. The agenda of Zia-ul-Huq’s government was to bring back the Islamic legal system as known as Sharia in the Pakistan. The ten-year tenure in the office resulted in the massive changes pertains the religious policies. In an essay, ‘Zia ul-Haq. 17 August 1988’ Rushdie maintained ‘The medieval, misogynistic, stultifying ideology which Zia imposed on Pakistan in his ‘Islamization’ programme was the ugliest possible face of the faith.’ (Imaginary Homelands, 54) The breakup of the former Pakistan into two current Pakistan and Bangladesh become a catastrophe for the
countrymen. They were driven to settle down in the West. ‘In 1945 there is a major surge of South Asian immigrants in US and Britain. 1962 is favourable for the Indians and Pakistanis.’ (Maxey, 32) A large number of immigrants are divided into groups based on the countries like India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The division is based on the region of their countries, religion and the sex.

The population of Britain and US consist of immigrants around the world; a rich cultural mix has its advantages and disadvantages. The disadvantage is the clash between the immigrants coming from different creed and religion from major countries. The first reaction of a settler towards the new culture in a foreign land is domination of set of values from the old country. In the second place, new culture minimises the native culture. In an attempt to maintain the old set, resistance develops; such retaliation helps to sustain their codes and conducts which mirror their mother country. The process of the adaptation takes time and can be painful and conflicting. The final and ideal step of the immigration process would be an adjustment of the new set of codes and modify them to fit into their own.

The protagonists Changez, Shamas, Kaukab, settles in a new country since it is revolving around the experiences of the immigrants, the focus on the sense of the identities in two contrary civilisations. Two unique cultures fuel a void of individual sense. The receptivity and the adequate orientation in the new space create concerns of the image. The abrupt location change and failure to find the known surroundings compel to claim social space of their own or to create a comfort zone in the host country. The shroud of the old memories blinds the interrelation of the characters. The confused immigrant hanging between two nations faces the dilemma to accept the present or hold on to the past. Rahman explained the terms with full sincerity as the plethora of emotions in the immigrants.
Alienation before considering alienation and deracination, however, I will define the terms as I will use them. Deracination is being used for rootlessness: for the feeling that one is not permanently embedded in a community, a social group, or part of whole, in cultural, ethnic and historical terms. Alienation is being defined in terms of psychological symptoms. A person who feels as if he is alienated from a society feels as if he is a stranger in it. He is the outsider, the alien, even if he is treated by others as if he were one. (Rahman, 90)

The characters in Aslam’s novels live in the West; they are still in the East in their mind. Zulfikar Ghosh, an author and twice uprooted from his identity declares himself, ‘Indo-Pakistani who had gone Anglo’ he has spent his life in Pakistan, India and England. (Ghose, 156) Pakistan was part of the English Empire. Partition is one of the most decisive and formative political events in the Pakistan. Ashcroft Bill et al. notes, the apprehension with place and dislocation is the chief characteristic of post-colonial literature. ‘It is here that the special post-colonial crisis of identity comes into being; the concern with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place.’ (Ashcroft et al., 8) The concept of multicultural crossed identities and the intersection of the cultural melting pot help to comprehend the identity struggle. ‘The colonized subject is constantly on his guard: Confused by the myriad signs of the colonial world he never knows whether he is out of line. (Fanon, 16) Beyond their historical and cultural differences, place, displacement, and a pervasive concern with the myths of identity and authenticity are some of the standard features of all post-colonial literature in English. Aslam’s Orientalism has direct relevance to his straddling British Asian and postcolonial author identities. One can define Aslam’s perspective as that of the ‘Orientalized Oriental’, ‘one who
physically resides in the “East” and sometimes in the West, yet spiritually feeds on the West. (Soguk qtd in Upstone, 118)

Literary texts frequently are interpreted within the East-versus-West paradigm, as either nationalist (that is, glorifying South Asia) or assimilationist (in other words, idealizing the US), regardless of whether the text in question actually subscribes to this East-versus-West binary (Izabella, 15)

In the past encounters between the East and West has been tensed. The reaction of both partakers has seen bigotry. In the current scenario, the East feels the threat of extinction with the role of Western society. On the contrary, West feels threatened by the Islam. The fears and prejudices actively pustule the trouble-free cultural exchange.

[The] fictional representations of South Asia grapple with the uncertain temper of liberal freedoms by playing with stereotypes. Thus, stereotypes of multitudes, slums, civil war, and migrancy vacillate unpredictably’ (Chakravorty, M. 153)

The politics and policies are keywords in the selected novels. Secondly, there are events based on the political issues. Aslam and Hamid bring forward the realities of the lesser known nations in a compelling form. Their writing is an individual attempt as politically aware authors to highlight the struggle of the minority Muslims in the terrorist states. The central characters are involved in a political uproar, radical actions; they are either forced to and always under adverse conditions to choose a path of violence indeliberately. The effects of the political events in the conventional life consist the plot. The 9/11 has been a governing literary influence. There is a huge number of fictions inspired by events and a bigger number of criticism and non-fiction narratives.
The intense backlash on the policies of the Western countries is a major theme discussed in the novels, *The Wasted Vigil*, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, *The Map of the Lost Lovers*, *The Blind Man’s Garden*. While the racial bias and the positions of the immigrants are receiving more focus for argument and intellectual debate, it is wise to point out, the threat of the immigrants and ‘coloured’ people was always there. The undercurrent has now surfaced/re-surfaced if we see the history of abuses of the people of colour and the empirical dealing with the colonised countries and their natives. Boehmer and Morton derive that the influence driven by the US and Europe in the free countries is vast. They use a term, Post Colony to describe the ongoing dominance of the West. ‘-‘Post colony’ refers to the effective continuation of the authority structures of the colony in the post-imperial nation despite the ‘flag independence’’. (Boehmer and Morton, 7) The stereotype is also part of the racism as it limits the point of view for an individual.


The Orientalism is limited to the South Asian descendants, Middle East and Indian subcontinent countries only. Muslim identities are limited to the Middle East countries or Pakistan. For race-based verbal attacks they are name calling, ‘Arab’ and ‘Paki.’ are some of the favourite terms of racially motivated slurs. The racial profiling of the Islamic origin in West is a recent issue. ‘In this new world, as Islam as a signifier is categorically released from its “Islam and the West” binary.’ (Debashi,
10) The racist attitudes of the British government were criticised by the South Asian immigrant authors and the Xenoracism in the US after 9/11 is a concern. The gender, race, class, politics based differences are prevalent in work. Fascism and racism are the two concerns to tackle for any successful multicultural society. Social equality and social cohesion

The fault-line between Islam and the West is often articulated by the projection of the western discourse of rights onto Muslim societies, focusing on Muslim men’s ‘oppression’ of Muslim women. Difference is frequently constructed according to notions of the phallo-centric, traditional/fundamentalist Muslim male who is threatened by female sexuality and incapable of grasping subtle argumentation. Alongside him are juxtaposed Muslim women who are defined by their absence from the public space, and their repressed/controlled/subservient presence within the male-dominated household. (Nash, 50)

In Pakistan, women have suffered under the reign of the extremist religious heads and government policies during Zia’s rule. Shamsie confessed the conditions in the Pakistan in an interview. While she grew up in the 1980s in Pakistan ‘harsh world of a misogynist military government…-where women’s freedom was severely threatened-’ (Interview) The eye for details in Aslam captures the rural life in Pakistan. Alamgir Hashmi maintained for the Aslam’s writing in his review of The Season of the Rainbirds. ‘a first novel of merit whose perceptions are contained within the characterisation, dialogue, and social detail of small-town Pakistan. (224)

The repressive sexuality is in the blinkered sacred framework is conferred in the novels. The strong sexual morality for female, their upbringing with inadequate
education, early wedding and male guardianship system is socially acceptable in the society. The Sharia law is criticised on the moral and humanity grounds. Some Muslims and non-Muslims have considered Islamist states to be antithetical to inalienable human rights biased toward minorities and women. ‘This assessment appears to be accurate because the existing body of Islamic laws deduced by Muslim jurists was formulated without regard to changing contexts and times. As such, their rulings often contradict the Qur’anic ethos of justice, equity, and fairness.’ (Mavani, 243)

The post-colonial impact in the native country can be weighed as English is still a form of empirical notion and class differences. The writing style and the language play an important role. English, the language of the colonisers, is accepted in the colonised countries like Pakistan, India and have stamped the superiority of the English in the administration medium. The modernisation or the cultural milieu leads to the extinction of the mother tongue or the native language. English plays an instrumental role to achieve the uniformity of the language and the rituals of the world. Empire Writes Back tracks ‘As post-colonial societies sought to establish their difference from Britain, the response of those who recognized this complicity between language, education, and cultural incorporation was to break the link between language and literary study by dividing ‘English’ departments in universities into separate schools of Linguistics and of Literature.’ (Ashcroft et al, 4) In an attempt to copy the colonisers language authors strive to build a link. ‘In so doing, South Asian Anglophone writers investigate various texts of memory, stretching beyond written and spoken narrative to assume other, provocative forms in sites such as food, clothing, maps, and the human body. What might have appeared as the limits of
memory may also inspire and foster new possibilities of encoding and decoding the past.’ (Mallot, 26) Thus, the grounds mentioned above are essential to investigate.