COMPARATIVE: SIMILARITIES AND CONTRAST IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF NADEEM ASLAM AND MOHSIN HAMID

I

SIMILARITIES IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF NADEEM ASLAM AND MOHSIN HAMID

The first part of this chapter discusses the similarities between the selected novels.

Part two discusses the contrast in the novels.

Aslam and Hamid’s first novel has background and characters from Pakistan. Aslam’s second novel is based on the immigrants with the mixture of the Eastern and some of the western characters. *The Wasted Vigil* is set into Afghanistan; *The Blind Man’s Garden* is between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The major characters in Hamid’s novels are settlers including the protagonist who has moved away from his village to the city in *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*. Except *Moth Smoke*, all characters settle down in a new place. They arrive from their birthplaces to a distant land for an individual quest like Lara or political driven as Shamas and Changez who left Pakistan for the scope of better future. The immigrant dreams of Raider and Daru in *Moth Smoke* bears a resemblance to Kasa’s dream in *The Wasted Vigil* to go to England to start a new life and if lucky a chance to love and to be loved. Pakistan is a difficult country so ‘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.’ (MLL, 12) The rejection of the West by Eastern characters and rejection of Eastern immigrants by the West occurs at various levels. Kaukab rejects the West at all stages
of her residence, and the seeds from Pakistan does not grow on the English soil in *The Map of the Lost Lovers* whereas Changez merges into the new scene in New York. The rejection of the East in West occurs with the hostile reception of immigrants, Muslims and beard after 9/11 in the US in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and the brandishing of the burqa in the *Dasht-e-Tanhai*. Emerson traces the issues of the assimilationist society towards the elements of clothing like burqa and the tolerant reception of such clothing items, ‘The multicultural policy will tend to be supportive of such symbols, while the assimilationist policy will be restrictive or exclusionary.’ (6)

The class divide and awareness are prevalent; the woman who has studied in the Oxford is a minor character which shares the attitude of the privileged Pakistani like Changez. Jugnu and Changez share similarities of education. Both hold prestigious degrees and worked in various countries. Changez is well-travelled a student of the elite university flies continents hence geographically liberal and in love with American women. Jugnu has a career in Science as a lepidopterist and lived in Russia, United States and travelled to western China, India, Peru and Iran for butterfly collecting trips. He writes articles for *Afternoon*, a local evening newspaper. Like Changez, he is involved with a white woman and does not pray. Jugnu gives his opinion on the highest religious head and slams the religious blindness and the sheepish mentality of Islam. ‘the fact of the matter is that had I lived at the time of Muhammad, and he came to me with his heavenly message, I would have walked away.’ (52, MLL) The rebellious streak is visible when he mocks the five prayers of the day, ‘I smoke five a day. My five prayers.’ (17, BMG) His apostate belief is partially due to the hold of his communist parents and his inclination towards the science. Among all, Kaukab, Rohan, Dunia, Casa are the primarily grey characters.
They follow the religion with sincerity. In between this dedication, the single value of the humanity slips from their actions.

The confusion and quest are the issues faced and recorded by the earlier generation of Pakistani creative authors. The poet, Faiz Ahmad Faiz and novelists, Zulfikar Ghose, Bapsi Sidhwa encloses the twinge of being twice removed from the motherland. After the first removal of Pakistanis from the India during the partition, the second deletion happened when they were detached from Pakistan as he moved out of the county. Eventually Faiz settled down in the US. Esra Santesso explains ‘The difficulty of “losing” the East even after moving to the West is out of the Disorientation, which she argues is a term for the Muslim immigrants in the West for woman like Kaukab.

Disorientation, in other words, is not a synonym for alienation or marginalisation, but rather a particular phase experienced by the devout Muslim woman estranged from her Muslim homeland and whose integration into Britishness depends on her ability to re-negotiate religious identity. (15)

There are two cultures in the society, the dominant and the subculture. The white culture/western dominated the subculture of the Muslims and other immigrants. The complex structure of cultures generates the identity concerns. The self-division of Changez is driven by the internal, external conflicts and quest for the Eastern identity. Shamas seeks change, but unlike Jugnu, he is stuck in the family duties. He faces the adversities to make a difference and favours the liberal religious views in the West. The past of his father, Deepak/Chakor, makes him challenge the religious conformity. He is a liberal squeezed between his confused identities, especially deciding factor is religious identity. Shamas connotes a broken link between the India and Pakistan.
He painted his home in the same fashion exactly like his home in Pakistan. The previous life in the form of rituals, religious beliefs, food habits and the moral of the society they grew up in is detectable in the all immigrant characters. Shamas, in the beginning compares the four seasons, among the other loses to be an immigrant; he acknowledges the loss of one season. With the failure to achieve other identities, unlike Changez, the immigrants in Aslam carry on the extreme chauvinism. They refer to the rich cultural heritage of Pakistan and keep looking back at the grandeur of the culture back home. Changez frowns on Western countries in the eighteenth century with the privilege and haughtiness of his refined society in the Indus valley. The nostalgia in the immigrants is immense and identical in connection to both novelists.

It is high time to discuss to define the relationship between the Islam and the West. The gap between East/West is an urgent issue to debate and understand. ‘The clash of civilizations thus occurs at two levels. At the micro level, adjacent groups along the fault lines between civilizations struggle, often violently, over the control of territory and each other. At the macro-level, states from different civilizations compete for relative military and economic power, struggle over the control of international institutions and third parties, and competitively promote their particular political and religious values.’ (Huntington, 29) Racism creates the sense of exclusion leading to a strong sense of community, ‘Our’ people/white, us/them and natives/immigrants diversions crop up. Racism by the white superimposes the patriotism of the immigrants. Bhabha aptly put the issues of the immigrants in Location of culture. ‘As a range of culturally and racially marginalized groups readily assume the mask of the black, or the position of the minority, not to deny their diversity, but audaciously to announce the important artifice.’ (Bhabha, 62) The
racism in Britain was worse than the racism in the US. The supremacist mind-set of Britain took the time to get out of the empirical outlook. A white traveller abuse the bus driver ‘Oi, Gupta, or whatever it is you call yourself, Abdul-Patel. Mr Illegal Immigrant-Asylum Seeker! Get back into your seat…Show us some respect. This is our country, not yours.’ (MLL, 255) This comment hurled at driver has the broad spectrum to insult immigrants from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. In Brick Lane, Karim’s father used to be a bus driver who has suffered and taken the abuses tossed at him during the 25 years of time-span of his job. (Ali, 233) The inability to understand or differentiate a Middle Easterner to the Pakistani is the generalisation of the identities. The prejudices are detrimental for the solidarity of the communities and nation. If one divide the population into two categories, the identity issues after 9/11 and 7/7 have been critical for the immigrants and Americans. Racism faced by Pakistani origin in America and England is the major theme in The Maps for Lost Lovers and The Reluctant Fundamentalist. Looking at the figures on the racist attacks on Asian, one can be sure it was a non-favourable time for any immigrants. The study showed that ‘South Asians were 50 times more likely than whites to be victims of racially motivated incidents’ (Home Office 1981: 10-11) The brown skin is associated with the stereotype of immigrants. The black rights movement is a long history of the White world.

In every age, authors portray the social politics. The revolutionary writers like William Golding, Walt Whitman have actively wrote about the contemporary issues in their work. The political correctness in the works of the Immigrant authors like Salman Rushdie, Mahfouz Hussain, lashes the vices in the East and West alike. Spivak affirms, in connection with the subaltern writers and their subject matter, ‘When we come to concomitant question of the consciousness of the subaltern, the
notion of what the work cannot say becomes important. (‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’, 82) Mohsin Hamid has been politically active with his articles on the political conditions and general understanding of Pakistan. His articles like ‘Refugees: Overcoming Our Fear’ (2016) in Time, ‘Unity, Faith and Discipline’ (2016) on Tin House are a critique on the contemporary issues. Hamid defends Pakistan as a country beyond the unsavoury reputation it has achieved with ‘Why They Get Pakistan Wrong’ (2013) He candidly admitted never agreeing, ‘with the claim that art must be kept separate from politics.’ (DIS, 64) Aslam’s unwavering stand on the Guantanamo Bay and the collateral damage in the Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Pakistan is perceptible in his interviews. He has been keenly asking questions on the violent deaths on both sides by Eastern terrorists or Western drone attacks in Pakistan. He stated in one of his interview with Marianne Brace, ‘I vote every time I write.’ and didn’t hear about the September 11 until September 20. On being asked about writing a novel based on 9/11. ’ (Aslam: Bookslut Interview) His political awareness on the current issues is evident,

the extraordinary decade beginning with 9/11 and ending with the Arab Spring....and between these two moments, we had the call to jihad, the War on Terror, Guantanamo Bay, Abu Ghraib, the finding and killing of Osama Bin Laden, the murder of Benazir Bhutto. This clash between an incomplete understanding of the East and an incomplete understanding of the West. (Interview with Julian Gaugh)

But he has covered 26th February, the first attack the World Trade Centre when a car bomb detonated. ‘..just after 12:17 p.m. that February afternoon in1993, that the thirteen-hundred-pound bomb exploded a block away in the underground garage of the North Tower of the World Trade Center.’ (WV, 194) In Salman
Rushdie’s novel *Shalimar the Clown* (2005) there is an emphasis on remembering the 1993 bombing as ‘the first bombing’ on the World Trade Centre. (377) Mikal answers it is a monstrous crime when he is interrogated and questioned how he felt when he came to know about the Twin Towers. David mocks his sympathy, ‘Most of your people didn’t think so. They were pleased’ (BMG, 193) Changez was ecstatic to see the falling tower. Dunia is glad that America was attacked on its home front. For she thinks, without 9/11 US would never attack Taliban, ‘a part of her is glad America was attacked in 2001, because had it not been for that Afghanistan would still be suffering under the Taliban.’ (WV, 326) The delighted Muslims like Dunia and Changez have their reasons to validate the attack on the US. Jeo readies himself to help fellow Muslims in Afghanistan after the 9/11. October is the month of the beginning in the Afghanistan. When a country goes to war, the people are bound to be affected by the uproar, unease and proceeding madness. This critical period becomes an opportunity to gain profit by the arms dealers, the gun shop Mikal works in offers ‘piety discount’ to join the holy war after the invasion of the ‘West’ in the Afghanistan. (BMG, 16)

The anti-west dialogues take place in the novels which criticise the US interfere in the world and criticism of Empirical policies in the world affair in *The Blind Man’s Garden* and *The Wasted Vigil*, as well as in Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. The policy of US is part of the novels is a reflection of the political tensions amidst the war on terror. While discussing the threats from the west in the Islamic sense, Eagleton mapped out the assumed fears, ‘Islamic terrorism aims to bring down its Western antagonist by conspiring with a self-destructive impulse at its heart. It can rely on the aid of a fifth columnist: the overreaching will of the West
itself. The more Western civilization pollutes the planet and breeds poverty and inequality on a global scale, the more credence it lends to its opponents.’ (123)

The disapproval and concern over the interference of US in Afghanistan are comparable. The prejudice towards Islam is swiping the world through images, statements, media, news channels and opinions on the heating debate in every sphere. David, the interrogating officer in the US prison camp, emphasise why the US does not apply the torturous method to get information. He stresses on the moral correctness and boasts the stand of the US for not taking ‘uncivilized’ manners like terrorist groups. The very next day the soldiers beat a man in the cell next to Mikal’s to find his link with other organisations (BMG, 186) Such treatment to the youth fuel the civil agitation in the Muslim communities across the world. Maleeha writes, the Western countries have been engaged in the fight of terrorism. The disappearance of detainees in the interrogation clearly besmirches the intervention in a negative light. Maleeha slams the policies adopted by the West to deal and erase the terrorism have caused ‘disproportionate levels of civilian deaths and casualties in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan and an overarching vilification of the Muslim community globally.’ (Maleeha, 10) The questions and doubts on the fairness are raised to validate the role of United States as a peacemaker in the world politics.

Changez condemns the fading support of US after Pakistan’s loyalty to the US during the war with Afghanistan. Changez blames the role of Empirical patterns and officious dealings of the US during Afghanistan and US war. ‘why America felt justified in bringing so many deaths to Afghanistan and Iraq, and why America felt justified in risking so many more deaths by tacitly using India to pressure Pakistan’ (RF, 178) More he understands, more he is detached from playing his part in the wealth creation of America.
The conflicts between East and West in Afghanistan destroyed the country. The region is raged with religion and extremists since last two decades. In 1989 Russian Troops backed out of Afghanistan. Afghanistan becomes the epicentre of the struggle for power. The number of Afghanistani refugees arrived in hordes in Pakistan since countries didn’t have a border checkpoint earlier. Aslam travelled to Afghanistan and Pakistan before penning down *the Blind Man’s Garden* to research the people and place. He communicated with the locals and interviewed ‘almost 200 Afghan refugees about their memories of Afghanistan’ in Britain on their loss of their motherland. (Interview with Naeem)

The contempt for the intervention of the US troops and intelligence services in the South Asian countries is encapsulated. *The Blind Man’s Garden* mentions the American military bases in Germany, Japan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Albania, Macedonia, Qatar, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Hungary, Bosnia, Tajikistan, Croatia, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Georgia, ‘a base in each vicinity ready to mobilize and put down possible threats….. Now it is about the survival of America itself.’ (56) Hamid narrated the presence of America in the world, the presence of the military bases. They are intruding the authentic cultures in the countries they are present, ‘your country’s constant interference in the affairs of others was insufferable, Vietnam, Korea, the straits of Taiwan, the Middle East, and now Afghanistan’ ‘detention facility…in some lawless limbo between your country and mine’ (RF, 182)

Pakistani youth’s brethren sentiments for Afghanistan, a fellow Muslim nation pushes them to visit Afghanistan and rescue the victims of the war. Jeo and Mikal too feel the kinship to help the neighbour country in need as the North-west territory of Pakistan shares close cultural ties with the Afghanistan. When Pakistan vowed to
support the United States for its ‘war on terror’ in Afghanistan, Changez too has brotherly emotions for Afghanistan ‘a fellow Muslim country’ and its starving and badly equipped tribesmen are facing the American with their high-tech armaments (RF, 99-100) The Wasted Vigil has a stanza from Daulat Shah of Herat’s poem Tazkirat-ush-Shuara (1487) about conversation between a poet and a landlord before the beginning of the book. The contrast between the love and openness is preceded by the declaration of the Jimmy Carter’s advisor’s statement25 whether he regrets the support of the US to the terrorist activities in the Afghanistan statements sums up the standing of the US forces and policies for the Afghanistan. The statement of the other military officers is given in The Blind Man’s Garden.

According to a newspaper, a brick from the pulverised home of Mullah Omar has been flown to the United States as a war trophy for the White House. And, according to another, on 19 September a CIA paramilitary officer was told by his chief at Langley, Virginia, ‘I want bin Laden’s head shipped in a box filled with dry ice. I want to show it to the President. I promised him I would do that. (BMG, 24)

The paragraph discloses the events of recent terrorist activities and the reaction of the US spokesperson, military chief on the terrorist is quoted. The characters in the Wasted Vigil are interestingly immigrants. Katrina is the only prime character from Afghanistan and belongs to the place. The area is occupied cannot be conveyed with any other significant events.

Kaukab cannot accept the modern changes in Mah-jabin. (Own Italics) As it simply signifies the adoption of western standards, licentious, outrageous and unacceptable as it suggests the abandonment of the tradition Islamic way of life. The
modernity does not have a positive connotation in the dialogue between Kaukab and Mah-Jabin. Changez could not continue his posh life in New York after realising his small part in the large US Empire. *Death to America* and *Kill Infidels* graffiti on the walls, *jihadi* material with the tapes of the scream of Russian soldiers to invoke the cruelty and single shoes for sale describe the market in the Afghanistan. The Pakistani man thinks Americans, ‘they are worse than Genghis and Halagu Khan.’²⁶ (BMG, 383) In Islam along with Temur, Hulugu and Ganghes Khan are despised tyrant rulers. Hulugu Khan is Ganghes Khan’s grandson. ‘Mongols sacked Baghdad, ending the position of Caliph among the Sunnis in 1258. Hulugu had executed the Caliph rolling him in a carpet, and having him trampled.’ (Timothy, 55) Thus the contempt is palpable. The Americans are a curse, *Kill Americans* and President Carter must die shouted in protest is the voice of Pakistan residents in support of Afghanistan and for the role of the US in their country. The cleric who had inspired the attack lived and preached across the Hudson in Jersey. He seeks asylum in the United states to stipulate Muslims communally in the West to ‘revenge for the centuries of humiliation and subjugation.’ (WV, 196) The revenge to damage is to equate what West has done to Islam and the systematic subjugation at the hand of the supremacy in the East.

The population in Pakistan is 196,744,376 million as per the figures of *United Nations Population Division*²⁷. The number confirms it is the most populous Islamic country followed by Indonesia. Pakistan’s nuclear tests of in 1997 to reinforce its standing against India brought economic breakdown and rampant employment. The nuclear tests of 1998 heightened the financial cataclysm. ‘In the wake of the 1998 nuclear tests, both states hiked their defence spending, India by 17 percent in real terms and Pakistani by 11 percent. While both states were initially placed under
sanctions, the effects on the Pakistani economy were more serious and led to an immediate capital scarcity.’ (Hewitt, 299) The shady role and involvement of state-sponsored terrorism through the US in Afghanistan and Kashmir tarnished its image and encouraged home front fatalists. The US attacked stealthily on the Pakistani soil and signalled the confirmation of the killing of one of the most wanted terrorist Bin Laden\textsuperscript{28}. In 2008 Pakistan urged international Monetary Fund for aid to steering clear of the financial fiscal in the country. Ahmad Rashid noted in the chapter, ‘Pakistan in Crisis’, since last 20 years Pakistan has lived on the International Monetary Fund loan programme between 2001 to 2010. ‘the United States gave a total sum of $20.5 billion’ out of that only ‘$6.1 billion was used for the economic aid’ and rest of the donation was spent for the Pakistan Army operations for the Afghan border. (\textit{Pakistan on the Brink}, 33) In \textit{Trespassing}, Daanish, a young man assesses the position of Pakistan in comparison to the US, ‘The biggest problem is that we require aid at all. Beggars, that is what we are.’ (Uzma Aslam Khan, 262) Despite the drawbacks, the authors succeed to project their countries as a state with several political mistakes and vivid image. ‘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.’ (MLL, 12) Pakistani national identities Jasmine flower, ‘so rare in New York, so common here.’ features in the novels is similar to the Rohan wearing Jasmine in \textit{The Blind Man's Garden}. (RF, 84)

The corruption of the police is part of the novels \textit{The Blind Man's Garden}, \textit{Moth Smoke} and \textit{How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia}. After his failure to locate Naheed, Basie approaches the police. The careless answers and abusive language from the side of the police inspector are contrasted with and the six qualities of the Police force written on the chart. Later Tara has to offer her gold earrings to save
Naheed from the police inquiry, which can turn into any physical assault in the name of decent inquiry. The police accept bribe Daru offers a bribe to the policeman when Daru is caught for drink and drive, the policeman wants and accepts a bribe. But no one cares to question well-off Ozi when he accidently hits a boy and kills him. The derogating standard of the law protectors are tainted, the authorities have always jeopardised rules, imposed on weak and poor. The radical Islamic connection and the violence in Pakistan have exposed ‘A suicide truck bomb kills 12 people’ (BMG, 347) is scribed. A massive truck bomb attack on ‘a leading international chain’ is covered in Hamid is the attack on the Islamabad Marriott Hotel bombing on 20th September 2008. (HFR, 103) The suicide truck bombing on the Pakistani landmarks is inspired by the real-life attacks in Pakistan ‘On October 18 a huge truck bomb has exploded, resulting 140 dead and hundreds wounded.’ (Rashid, 37)

Shamas wants to offer unmatchable hospitality experience to Stella. The hidden desire to present one’s self as the mascot of the origin country is normal. Kaukab wants to make sure the Western world should know how rich Pakistan culinary is. She wishes to present as many dishes as she can cook to impress. The hard efforts before dinner are to impress and alter the image of a Pakistanis who are clean and fit to equate with the western standards. When Changez offers his suggestions to try lassi, chicken, gulabjamun, he is wooing the guest with his hospitality. Wainwright likes the food at the Pak Deli, Changez feels the fraternity, ‘we Pakistani take great pride in our food when someone offers or appreciate the food, we feel gratitude.’ (RF, 40) Food and terrorism are strikingly related in the of Changez and American, ‘we Pakistanis tend to take an inordinate pride in our food.’ (RF, 101) The cricket laurel of Pakistan is one of the positive identities of the country. Changez feels Pakistan lacks wealth, development or power in international stage and sports achievements are not
outstanding apart from ‘the occasional brilliance of our temperamental cricket team’ (RF, 101) He bonds over cricket with Wainwright. Wainwright’s father is from Barbados where cricket is a very popular game. (RF, 39) The world cup final match between England and Pakistan evokes the spirit of the good cricket game in the witnesses in *The Maps for Lost Lovers*. (248)

*History is the third parent*, the first sentence of *The Wasted Vigil* insinuates the scope of imagination to present facts to question unruly history. In his interview with Kamila Shamsi, Aslam explained, the first sentence is closely linked to the politics, history of a family and history of a land. (Interview with Amina Yaqin) The native country and cultural background play an indispensable role to any author. The Indus land is rich in culture and history. The Silk Route passes by the Korakoram highway in the northern region of Pakistan was an important trade link between East and West in the past. Therefore the region attracted Colonists. The dominance of the British remains in the Pakistan is part of the life post-independence. The Republic of India and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and were created on 15th August and 14th August respectively. The exodus of the Hindu-Muslims in the both countries became a tragic event. Muslims in the Indian side migrated to Pakistan side. The Hindus in Pakistan migrated to the Indian domain. Better known as the partition of 1947 in both countries was achieved after the death of millions on both sides. Kamila Shamsie’s *Kartography* (2002), Khushwant Singh’s *A Train to Pakistan* (1956) documents partition. Kiran’s father, a migrant worker, had ‘lost all other members of his family during the massacre that accompanied the partition of India in 1947.’ And he is a survivor of the massacre during the partition. (MLL, 14) The timing of Chakor’s death in the novel corresponds to the year 1971 and the termination of East Pakistan
from West Pakistan. Thus the pain of exile is carried by Muslim and non-Muslim characters.

Urvashi Batalia records in her *The Other Side of Silence* (2000), that among the other facts, the partition is one of the largest human migration in few months. The countries, homes, and businesses were changed in a single decision. There were deaths due to malnutrition and disease while migrants were en route. The sexual attack on women was higher in the commotion and chaos. The death toll rose in few months, Batalia noted, ‘In the space of a few months, about twelve million people moved between the new, truncated India and the two wings, East and West, of the newly created Pakistan. By far, the largest proportion of these refugees—more than ten million of them—...Estimates of the dead vary from 200,000 (the contemporary British figure) to two million (a later Indian estimate)’ According to her the acceptable number of death is around a million. The number of women is about 75,000 who were abducted, raped by the men from other religion. (Butalia, 41)

The partition influenced narration is part of Hamid and Aslam. Daru’s forefathers had to depart from India during partition in 1947. The loss of loved ones made Dadi fragile. During the partition, she lost her husband on a train from Amritsar to Lahore and lost her eldest son Shezad, Daru’s father in Bangladesh.’ (MS, 64) Her insistence on seeing the whole family together is out of post-traumatic shock in *Moth Smoke*, and in April 1930 British soldiers had massacred a crowd of unarmed protesters there, a defining moment in the struggle to drive the British out of India. (WV, 151) Jalianwala Bag tragedy on 13th April 1919 is one of the prominent incidents to ignite the revolution of Indian freedom movement. The infamous general Michael O’Dwyre, the governor of Punjab then, ordered to fire on a peaceful protest. Almost 600 people were killed in this attack. He was later gunned down by one of the
Punjabi, Udam Singh in 1940 in London. Udam Singh was later hanged till death in Pentonville for committing murder. (MLL, 75) The historical tragedy is in the connection of the subjugation of the natives by the English rulers.

The relationship between India and Pakistan are estranged since the partition. Though both countries share common rituals, language, social structure and the same past, it didn’t work to acquire cordial relationship. Border and national securities are the concern for India and Pakistan, and abhorrence and loathing on both parts for the ownership of the Kashmir elevated the differences. Hewitt observed on the Indo-Pakistan relations, ‘The mutual mistrust that lies at the heart of Indo-Pakistan relations has been historically and politically constructed in the minds of specific elites, and although these elites have changed since Independence, they remain profoundly influenced by the trauma of partition.’(Hewitt, 285)

In Orientalism, Said explains the fear of the Islam is not imaginary as ‘Not for nothing did Islam come to symbolise terror, devastation, the demonic, hordes of hated barbarians. For Europe, Islam was a lasting trauma. Until the end of the seventeenth century the "Otto-man peril" lurked alongside Europe to represent the whole of Christian civilization a constant danger, and in time European civilization incorporated that peril and its lore, its great events.’ (59) Decades after the same trauma was generalised in West as the militant Islamic organisations are operating actively. ‘Criticising Islam is not racist’ the title of the interview of Stephen Idams is the statement of McEwan during the promotion of his novel, Saturday (2006) which centres on the 9/11. The criticism here is subjective and blinkered. Rushdie has repeatedly clarified, ‘It needs to be said repeatedly in the West that Islam is no more monolithically cruel, no more an ‘evil empire’ than Christianity, capitalism or communism. (Rushdie, 54) The janissaries in Hamid and incorporated Islamic history
in Aslam’s writing propounds the glimpse of the rich heritage along the story telling. The stereotype of the nations and ethnic identity are exigent in the present time and well documented. ‘The logic is that there are no innocent people in a guilty nation.’ (BMG, 6) and ‘you should not imagine that we Pakistanis are all potential terrorists, just as we should not imagine that you Americans are all undercover assassins. (RF, 182) The Westerners take every Pakistani as a Taliban and bloodthirsty race. Authors propose to shun the typecast based on the nationality as the disproportion between the reason and religion has proved terminal for the rational decisions between East and West. The representation of the Islamic/Eastern characters is prejudiced in the past. In *A Passage to India* (1924) Dr Aziz is painted as the sexually vigorous and repressive, he is involved in the rape case easily. The brown skin or being a Muslim pinpoints him to the crime is the empirical regression based on the perception. This fear of immigrants in the US in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* echoes as Lara is alone and terrified of an intruder sneaking around in Marcus’s house, the fear is projected to the burglar of Islamic nationals, but she assures herself there is no thief around. ‘Nor an Arab, Pakistani, Uzbek, Chechen, Indonesian terrorist’...the seeds of such acts sprouted from the Muslim countries. (WV, 14)

The use of the symbols in a rich context helps us to decode the culture in Pakistan. The typical use of the Peacock in *Maps for Lost Lovers* suggests religious openness since Peacock is a symbol of the fall in the Koran. (334) It represents the sexuality, it is something that is considered disgusting in Islam. The love between Jugnu and Chanda is allusion with the theme of the fall of man according to Quran. It helps the Satan to enter in the Paradise inadvertently. The use of the sacred flowers and birds in the Islam invokes the rich heritage of Islam. Muslims do burn lamps on graves, and the moths they attract are said by some to be angels, the spirits of the
departed by others, or lovers in disguise come to say prayers for their beloveds’ souls. The similar trope occurs in the Hamid, ‘butterflies and fireflies, they belonged to a dreamier world incompatible with the pollution and congestion of a modern metropolis. (RF, 65)

The characters in Maps for Lost Lovers represent light and darkness, enlightenment and ignorance. The characters have a name related to light. Shamas (sun), Kaukab (star), Ujala and Charag (light), Charag is light, Chanda, Mah-Jabin and Mehtaab (Moon). Suraya and Parveen (a star in the seven sisters constellation of Pleiades/ the Seven Sisters) Dipak (source of light). Kiran (a ray of light). ‘The novel’s central characters Shamas, Kaukab, Mah-Jabin, Chanda, Charag, Ujala are given names that recall the sun, the moon, stars setting up a cosmology that echoes some of the stock characteristics of the lyric.’ (Yaqin A. unpag.) Dipak is named Chakor (Moonbird) for his fascination for the moon. Chakor is a moon bird that flies high to catch the beams of moonlight and can be found deadbeat on the roof during the morning. It is precisely the reaction of a moth around the light. On the first meeting, his future wife complements him to be rightly named because her name is Mahtaab (moon).

Amputation and the loss of body part are intermittent in the novels. Rohan loses his ability to see and is blinded by the ruby. Mikal loses his index finger. Marcus loses his hand as a punishment from Taliban. He paid the price of a hand for a robbery he never committed. Kaukab’s womb is slipping. The loss signifies the inability of the character in the respective areas. As Rohan fails to see the facts, Kaukab fails as a mother. The lost son or daughters are never found in all novels. In The Blind Man’s Garden, Rohan cannot locate Jeo; his dead body arrives at home. Naheed terminates her kid. The same loss of son like a brother to Shamas faces after the disappearance of
Jugnu in *The Maps for Lost Lovers*, Marcus and Lara lose daughter and brother respectively. Zameen loses her young son who was never found regardless of continuous efforts of her grandfather, Marcus in *The Wasted Vigil*.

Aslam completed his primary education in Urdu medium. In his interview with Terry Hong in July 2013, Aslam states his gratitude for his knowledge of two languages, ‘I don't just have the twenty-six letters of English, I have the thirty-eight letters of Urdu, too... And my language is influenced by Urdu poetry, by the Koran -- which of course is Arab poetry.’ (Aslam: Interview) The addition makes his alphabet outsized; his ability to think in two languages clearly gives him an edge as a writer. Aslam’s writing is opulent with the subtlety and delicacy of the Urdu. The Urdu terms Jamun, *Shaftalu*, Falsa, chor batti, *vie jaaj* for aeroplane and Urdu translation of *Madame Bovary* are fused in the description. The same inclination for Urdu is discernible in the novels of Hamid. The search for the two parallel cultures in the daily life incidents can be seen in the works of the both authors. Orhan Pamuk and Rushdie attempted to bring the Urdu history in their English versions in *My Name is Red* (1998), and *Snow* (2002) and *Haroun and the Sea of the Stories* (1999) follow the storytelling methods analogous to the *Arabic Nights*. Aslam’s writing style has the poetic quality and subtlety of Urdu literature. Hamid’s *Moth Smoke* has the Dara Sikoh trial as a foil to the novel. With Urdu terms and fusing of the English and with Urdu it builds a Pakistani urban locale. Like the Ozi in the *Moth Smoke*, Aurungzeb is depicted as a stern restrictive Islamic emperor in *The Blind Man’s Garden* (264)

The novels pay homage to the classics of the literary traditions in East and West. The Classics *Aeneid, Iliad, The Epic of Gilgamesh, The Charterhouse of Parma, War and Peace*, , Shakespeare, Joyce, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, John Burger Vasko Popa., Anna Akhmatova, Marina Tsvetaeva, The hymn of the (Genesis 3:24);
from Urdu-Eastern tradition and folklores, Syed Abid Ali Abid, Munir Niazi, Qani, Hiraman and princess Padmavati, *Muraqqa-e-Chughtai, Taoos Chaman ki Mynah by Shilappadikaram* and Sanskrit poetry, creates a literary rich layer in Aslam’s novels. The chapter titles are inspired by various artists. ‘You’ll Forget Love. Like Other Disaster’ is from the Anwar Saeed, a Lahore born poet. A chapter title ‘vvv’ is borrowed from the painting of the Indian artist, Bhupen Kakar and ‘The Circe’ chapter of from James Joyce *Ulysses* and Bloom wears the Koh-i-Noor in the same chapter. Sufi mystics and Zen masters, Urdu poems of Faiz and Ghalib, The Arabian Nights, Kafka, Zulfikar are implicated in Hamid’s novels. The influence of Manto is certain in Aslam and Nadeem. Mumtaz’s pen name is Zulfikar Manto and Toba Tek Singh, district in Pakistan is named after Manto’s short story is mentioned in *The Blind Man’s Garden*. It adds a rich texture to the novels and indicates similar impact.

The music is interlaced in the novels with a Rolling Stones concert in Hyde Park in July. Nusrat Ali Fateh Khan, Naseeb Lal, Umme Kulsum and Jazz music are intertwined with the story. The medium of Music is used to synthesise universal love and brotherhood. Jazz is introduced to the migrant community by Kiran’s father, and Basie is named after Count Basie, a jazz player. Nadeem Aslam deploys Qawali, a genre of devotional Sufi literature usually attached to patron shrines. The internationally renowned Pakistani singer Nusrat Ali Fateh Khan performs for the community and renditions local aesthetic form of devotional music. Sufism is a cult of the divine bond between God and music in the Indian subcontinent. All folktales present women’s repressive state, their vulnerability. Aslam uses the blend of poetry in his novel to deepen the narrative voice and inherent subjectivity. Sufism is linked to Hinduism and favours music and singing, intimate knowledge and awakening it is also ‘the opposition party of Islam’ in line with rigid Muslims. (MLL, 275)
To highlight the South Asian feature of black hair, Changez described himself ‘a distraught and hirsute Pakistani carrying an unmarked box’ (RF, 160). In his last novel the wife of Protagonist ‘instructs her waxing lady to remove all of her pubic hair’ (HFR, 130) which is similar to full body waxing of Suraya in *Maps for Lost Lovers*. (301)

Aslam believes on global oneness and freedom beyond borders. He opined in *British Muslim Fiction* ‘Nature, beauty and art belong to everyone and is without nationality.’ (Aslam, 157) The similarity between the River Murghab and Colorado and Towns named Delhi, Dinosaurs in Colorado. The similarity of the river based towns makes it less strange to each other. The universal motifs of the human emotions and the universality of the places are weighted upon. The term ‘Global Village’ was coined by Marshall MacLuhan during the 1920s. The credit was claimed by his son Eric MacLuhan. All the novels of Nadeem Aslam highlight the failure of the multicultural dream. In *The Wasted Vigil*, the community in the unknown town in Britain never tries to integrate with the natives. The cultures and the countries are at the intersection of the knowing each other. The environment of the Pakistani society has been exposed.

Erica and Changez, Mumtaz and Daru and Protagonist and Pretty girl, romantic linkings in Hamid’s novels are not materialised due to the power structure in *Moth Smoke*, the clash of civilisation and the social constraints respectively. In Aslam’s novels, The marriage of Charag with Stella is a union of the West and East. Charag’s English wife leaves him. Chanda is brought up in the England, accepts her life in Pakistan after betrothed to a cousin back home. There are no happy lovers in the story. Multicultural marriages or relationship never worked in the works discussed in the research. Their strong integration of East and West signifies the change in the
stereotyped characters. There is only one exception of Marcus and Katrina’s marriage which is a momentous alliance of coherent matrimony bound by love. Their marriage is marred by the Taliban.

The similarities exist in the structure of the novels. The plot of The Wasted Vigil begins from sentence one. The story starts moving with the arrival of Lara in Afghanistan. The story of Maps for Lost Lovers does not begin till the page seventy. Moth Smoke and The Blind Man’s Garden open with an anecdote. Maps for Lost Lovers develops gradually with the change of seasons since the chapters are divided according to the seasons. Hamid’s novels are divided into chapters with the experimental point of view in each novel. He used monologue, second person perspectives and multiple points of view in his novels. Hamid’s desire to create a nameless city with universal appeal in How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia is similar to the unnamed community in Aslam’s Maps for Lost Lovers. To describe the bracelet of Kiran like semicolons are used in a series (17) and the position of the Kaukab with her family in the photograph is presented in a square box with the name of everyone in the exact order. (453) Thus, the various writing devices are employed. The discussion on the topics above helps to understand the similarities between Mohsin Hamid and Nadeem Aslam.
II CONTRAST IN THE SELECTED NOVELS OF NADEEM ASLAM AND MOHSIN HAMID

The dissimilarities in Nadeem Aslam and Hamid’s novels surface in the narration and characters. The characters in Hamid’s novels are ambitious young men. The old Marcus, Lara, Shamas and Kaukab are battered with the events around them and fate. The joint family or the family like the unit in *Maps for Lost Lovers* and *The Wasted Vigil, The Blind Man’s Garden* are distinctively different. Hamid’s novel does not throw any lights on the generation gap except when Fatty Chacha Daru’s home. He advises him to stay grounded reflects the changes in the aim from one generation to another. The presence of the joint family in Hamid’s novel is nonexistent. The bus driver is upset and in tears after being racially abused, When racially profiled Changez grabs tire iron ready to face the attacker ‘had my share of fights.’ (118, RF) Daru kills the moths for his pleasure and feels proud. Thus, the violence in the central character is manifested.

The predicament of women is a grave issue in Pakistan. The immigrant women have little, or no education in Pakistan is helpless in a new country. Their ignorance of the world they live in, and inadequate understanding of the English language separates them from the daily life around them since there is no communication outside their ethnic groups. The role of women is limited to the home; they barely go out except grocery shopping at Chanda’s Grocery Shop. They are assisted by their husband or sons on an excursion. Sijal Sarfraz notes that Aslam presents stereotyped characters and events to feed the image presented in the media about Islam and Pakistan, ‘Aslam endorses stereotypical images of Pakistani Muslim men. Keeping up with Orientalist traditions, men are described in relation to violence, and subjugation of women.’ (508) Pankaj Mishra in his review of Nadeem Aslam
writes that Aslam has a penchant for the conservative Muslim. (‘Post-Colonial Enchantment’ n.p.) The subjugation of women is an issue to discuss. The view of Sarfraz and Mishra are countered by other critics. As Lente notes, ‘The radical Maps For Lost Lovers was not received with so much protest against alleged ‘misrepresentations’ of Muslim communities and honour killings – quite probably because its highly artistic language and complicated constructions have brought along a different audience that does not look for ‘authentic’ accounts in works of fiction and is not a mass-market audience.’ (59)

Women with education and opinions are pigeonholed as sluts. Most of the married women follow the same chores as they would in Pakistan. The conversation of Kaukab with other women ranges from cooking method, what clothes they would like to borrow, exchange of clothes and food, matchmaking, and gossip. They are consumed by their own domestic affairs and the tiny circle of the immigrants. The group is an ethnic minority and marginalised class out of the part of the broad picture of society. The oppression of females in the domestic sphere as well in social constraints is narrated in Aslam’s novels. His female characters like Kaukab, her daughter, Mah-Jabin, Suraya, Chanda, Naheed, Zameen, Katrina are subjugated females. In contrast to the females in Nadeem s, all novels women in Hamid’s novels are head strong. They play a huge part in the story, Mumtaz, the Pretty girl and Erica is determined dominant women with their choices without being pitiful victims. The liberal women are free to drive, follow their careers and go around with the man they love. Mumtaz is completely contradictory to docile, uneducated, illogical and religious Kaukab.

The classification of a Western woman by immigration is precisely poles apart from the codes applicable to Eastern women. The women are perverted, fallen,
shameless and easily available for the sexual encounter. The prostitution of the woman next to Kiran’s house is taken lightly by the community. One community member feels if she had been a woman from India or Pakistan, she would have been dead for the matter of honour. Her Western ethnicity protects her due to stereotyping the prostitution of white woman is taken for granted. Education is not easily available to women in Aslam’s novels. Naheed, Kaukab, Dunia and the vast majority of women in Pakistan and Afghanistan struggle to get an education, ‘locked up girls’ school and the worms eating books’ in Usha are just the example. (WV, 19) The books are used in rich context in The Wasted Vigil, Katrina pierced books with nails to hold them on the ceiling symbolises the constraint on the free ideas, the subjugation of the knowledge, science to everyone under the Taliban’s grip. Yet books manage to travel with visitors indicates the free spread of the ideas under a despotic regime. A young man reads books or around knowledgeable ‘had to be a communist like Zameen’s lover.’ (WV, 26) The spirit of learning is on its last legs in the town Usha. In The Blind Man’s Garden, the library is close and inoperative. Naheed began reading from it and is curious about the world wider than what she was brought up into. The books transform her views to muster the courage to get an education so she can teach women. The chronology of her reading suggests a reading of the 14th century in Christian calendar, which is a chronicle of the religious influence and wars like the John Wycliffe and 1429, Joan of Arc, the war of catholic against Jan Hus and religion based fights of kingdoms in Europe. (301-2) There is this description of events from Venetians at war with Milan, the University of Florence begins teaching Greek and Latin literature, Naheed wonders

According to the Islamic calendar, it is currently the early fifteenth century, the 1420s. She wonders what was occurring in the Christian lands in the early
fifteenth century of the Christian era...Were things better in Christendom ten years on from 1423? Would things be better for Pakistan and Islam in a decade? (BMG, 301-2)

This would be an interesting parallel if Islam was still in the 14th century and the timeline before 1423 was the period of Dark Ages in the Europe. She compares dark age period to the contemporary Pakistan circumstances and waits for the renaissance.

Marriage in the novel is a forced decision of the parents since they see the early wedding in their country would result to preserve their culture. Chanda and Jugnu are not married. Shamas and Kaukab’s marriage is due to courtship; there is no choice or willing courtship in any other marriages. Mikal is rejected as the suitable partner for Naheed. ‘Islam underwrites the masculine as primary, while the feminine is almost an afterthought.’ (Geoffrey, 38) The repressive sexuality of women is in attendance. Suraya is a traditional Muslim who decides to lure Shamas’ son for the licentious affair. She offers herself as bait to get married to a man and leave him for her son back in Pakistan. Suraya is involved with Shamas sexually. Initially, the reader thinks she is affected by the affection or attraction, but her religious side does not let her enjoy the company of an interesting man and sensual pleasure. Once home from her encounter, she scrubs her body roughly to wash the stains on her sacred body. Kaukab does not take marital bliss as it is, in fact, her desire is never to be touched or feel the physical warmth from Shamas. Kaukab notes, the desire outside the reproduction is not allowed. She acquiesces based on the religious belief that if a wife does not make her husband happy, Allah will send houri for him in the Heaven. (369-70) Moore remarks, ‘In Maps, two of the three female characters to express sexual desire are killed, and the affair of the third (Kiran) is the indirect catalyst for
the central murder.’ (8, Moore) The sexuality is a condemnable in Islam and taken as a taboo in *Dasht-e-Tanhaii*. Despite the ban on the natural feelings in a religious context, there is secret lovers and love. Ironically, it is morally correct society, Shamas and Suraya, Chhota and Kiran share a passion for each other outside the marriage. The under carpet abundance of secret affairs of teenagers exists, and adultery becomes the catalyst of the death of Chanda and Jugnu. In fact, suppression of the natural instincts brings more complex issues in the double lives of affairs.

The thought process, monologues and dialogues of the women is limited to the domestic affairs. They are not active on the bigger issues like female characters in Hamid’s novels. Mumtaz is writing in order to expose the corruption and the dark sides of the Pakistani society. Mumtaz and Katrina share the streak of rebelliousness. They confront the norms of how a woman should behave. The women in Hamid are stronger and in charge of their lives, sexuality and independent than Aslam’s. There is a clear clash between Eastern and Western ideology and progress.

The death of the female character in the *Wasted Vigil* and *The Blind Man’s Garden* are the catalyst of the religious oppression. The death of the lovers in *Maps for Lost Lovers* is driven by the religious concepts of the shame. The death of Erica is her own invention of the imaginary world with Chris. The death of the mother of the protagonist in HFR is a natural cause. The life and death in Hamid’s work are not affected by the tragic mishaps. There is no role of the terrorists and nefarious force in their lives.

Nadeem Aslam in his broader tolerance of the all religions highlights the historical facts of India and Indian civilisation, Tansen, Ram-Sita (Indian God and Goddess) temple, Gwalior (a city in India) association between India and Pakistan is active through the letters being posted to a third country, to some relative who can
post it back to its final destination. (MLL, 104-5) The tamarind tree in the Indian subcontinent is associated with Kabir, a saint revered by the Hindus and Muslims in India and Pakistan. There are characters from India, a Hindu religious priest, a Gujarati woman, Kiran and her father. Kiran was in love with Kaukab’s brother, but families never accept or approve the union. (MLL, 28) The unification of two natives from India and Pakistan in love never takes place.

Changez is wary of possible war with India on the contrary Pakistan government is accused to create a war in Kashmir ‘to distract the attention of the public who had become disaffected following that election back in 1964, the government had sent that army into Kashmir, and India had retaliated by crossing the border into Lahore.’ In Aslam’s plot. (MLL, 114-5) Kashmir conflict has been part of another novel, Shalimar the Clown (2005) develops during the political turmoil in the Kashmir, 9/11 and the attack on the Afghanistan. Hewitt unisons in the light of the recent tension between India and Pakistan ‘The changes throughout the Islamic world following the Iranian revolution and the inflow of arms and Muslim fighters for the Afghanistan conflict also led to the growth of insurgency in Kashmir against what many saw as the Indian 'occupation' and demanded widespread political change.’ (Hewitt, 290)

In The Wasted Vigil Casa recounts ‘the training camp in the jungles of Pakistani-occupied Kashmir.’ to free Kashmir. (343) Major Kyra actively train youngsters to fight for radical Islam, has a scarred face due to an explosion during ‘the war with India two years ago.’ (BMG, 33) The same issue is criticised by a young illegal refugee. The tone for the freedom movement in both nations is criticised as the Freedom for Kashmir ‘Pakistan can’t afford to feed the people it already has within its
borders, and yet it wants more people, a bigger territory. The same goes for India of course.’ (MLL, 315)

The religion is an important part of the Aslam’s novels. The discourse and critique by the characters’ de rigueur superiority and religious certainty of the Islam tug the disputes. On the dinner table, Shamas serves wine to the Stella as a friendly gesture. Kuakab infuriated with her husband’s defying action Islamic serves the daal in shoes. The family dinner to bring children and parents together is spoiled. Shamas’ attempt to mediate fails. The rejection of alcohol is similar to Hamid’s novels as discussed in the previous chapter Suraya thinks if she is nicer to her husband and helps him to control his anger and ‘…be a good Muslim, stay away from alcohol?’ it would be ideal. (MLL, 239) To her, alcohol abstain define the religious identity.

The agnostic west irritates religious inhabitants in the Pakistan and Afghanistan ‘The West has dared to ask itself the question, What begins with the God?’ (BMG, 362) The indispensable religion cues the damage done to the communities by authorities of religious body; some of the clerics and Imams are the corrupt and in position to take advantage to establish superiority over commoners. Maps for Lost Lovers covers ‘the period up to 1997 before Islamism gained a firm hold in West Yorkshire.’ (Weedon, 23) In an interview with Brace Marriane Aslam identifies himself, ‘a culturally Muslim but a non-believer.’ In the same interview he defended the role of a moderate Muslims is to raise the right issues in the chaos. He criticised the role of the radical Muslims, Osama Bin Laden who fail to do constructive works for society.

Mohsin Hamid advocates innocence of Muslims in the contemporary terrorised society in his non-fiction. The religion is not the essential part of his fiction yet Changez and Daru are conscious of religious identity. Islamic Fundamentalism in
the West is well articulated in the novels of Aslam. Radical Islamists characters of Fedella, Major Kyra, and Casa are waging war in the real term for the rise of Islam. To some extent Rohan, Kaukab, clerics and fanatics are far from basic humanity and linked to the violent Islam. Muslims love Islam. But Muslims hate fundamentalism. (WV, 312) Militant Islam is a counter turn on certain interpretations of fundamental Islam and a distinguished reaction to modernity especially, the globalising, intrusive, consumerist culture. The 9/11 is seen through the lens of the native of the Afghanistan, the terrorists are innocent men destined to paradise, ‘the blameless Muslims who died in the attacks of the Twin Towers: Allah has sent them to Paradise. (Italics in original, WV, 75) Several prophets and twenty-six prophets are part of the Kuran. Naheed is one of the ancestors of Mohammad’s daughter Fatima. Each time the name of Mohammad, the creator of the Islam is with the salutation in the similar fashion of the Quran, ‘Prophet, peace be upon him’ the phrase is repeated right through the novel. (MLL, 42)

The metaphorical element is a reminder of the magic realism. The bullets are fired at the status of Buddha at Marcus’ house. The idol seems to open eyes and dozens of bullets could not disfigure the face. (WV, 42: 141) Aslam skilfully inserts the supernatural elements in his work. Buddha with infinite eyes occurs in The Wasted Vigil, the luminous hands of the Jugnu, the transformation of Leila into a bird in his novella Laila in the Wilderness (2013). The experimental transformation and super powers to his characters add more credibility to the readers.

The assimilation to the West in terms of the relationship with the native people can be seen as a bridge between East and West. There are relationships between the immigrants and the natives in The Wasted Vigil. The very first affiliating relationship between East and West is through Mikal and his attempts to save the American
soldier. He wants redemption from the killing of the American soldiers, unaware of
the fact that the man he is trying to save is the elder brother of the American soldier
and develops the affinity towards the brother of the soldier. (BMG, 393) The use of
the charcoal to deliver a message to him can make a point that the language barrier is
not a hurdle to communicate if both sides are willing to make a dialogue. Mikal thinks
about W.B. Yeats’s poem33 Naheed had quoted. (BMG, 393) Out of penitence after
killing two American soldiers resolves to save an innocent American who happens to
be the brother of the same soldier he killed. The events come to a full circle in the
novel. During their journey towards Megiddo he becomes the protector of the
American soldier and develops affection towards everything and everyone. Mikal
comes to the terms with the torture and detention he had undergone. The American
soldier is in search of his brother’s killer. Mikal, the man he aims to kill, becomes a
medium to save his own life. Thus, it brings an end to the series of the revenge
prejudices and bitter rage. Micahel is ‘Mikal in Islam.’ (BMG, 201) This relationship
symbolises the complex relationship between East and West which accomplishes a
reconciling ground.

While he is at the Bagram prison, Christ appears in Bihzad’s dreams several
times. He is seen with ‘carrying the Koran in his right hand, the Bible in the left.’
(WV, 62) In Father Mede’s school, Urdu prayers and the Bible get same importance.
‘The Muslims say they revere Christ.’ Qatrina had said, ‘pointing out the fact that
Mary is the only woman mentioned in the Koran, and that Jesus is mentioned more
times in there than Muhammad.’ (WV, 352) Said thinks, the Western representation
of Islam in classic texts is prejudiced. He discussed the example of Dante’s The
Divine Comedy. In sustaining the common teaching and appearance of the Jesus in
Koran, Said stated, ‘Even though the Koran specifies Jesus as a prophet. Dante
chooses to consider the great Muslim philosophers and king as having been fundamentally ignorant of Christianity’ (Said, 69) To symbolise the oneness of the three continents Marcus, Lara and James think their togetherness is faithful to ‘William Blake prophecy! America, Europe and Asia.’ (WV, 210) The prophecy of William Blake about the Europe, Africa and Asia as the unified body is part of the famous prophecies in his book The Song of Los. According to a critic, this is a book on comparative religion. (Mee, 122) The book clearly shows the faith enthusiasm of Blake, covering the history of the religion. The intersection, a meeting point of the East and West is the focus in The Wasted Vigil and the Blind Man’s Garden as it approaches the climax of the novels.

Aslam actually binds the origin of the mankind, he notes that the whole of humanity is one creator and the first man was created from the various parts of the world. ‘His hand was made from the soil of the East, his breast from the soil of the Mecca, his feet from the soil of the West.’ (MLL. 42) The middle class Pakistani migrant family in England is the central theme of The Map of the Lost Lovers. Marcus and Lara’s life in Afghanistan and Naheed, Mikal and Rohan’s lives in Pakistan traces marginalised people in the backdrop of war. Dasht-e-Tanhaii inhabitants are chiefly of working class; odd job people and taxi drivers. (46, MLL) Higher education is a harbinger of the better social standing and their space in the immigrant land. Thus immigrant kids are expected to perform better in the academic life. Men with menial jobs and in a constant struggle to keep the immigration dream alive expects a better job for their kids. The education in immigrants is not high, Jugnu, aspiring doctors of the second generation, have higher education and white collar jobs. The kitchen, the house and the suburbs around Dasht-e-Tanhaii are the settings. The narration never takes place any other part outside the town. In Cosmopolitanism In Contemporary
British Fiction, Fiona McCulloch noted, ‘Echoing the despair of transnationals, Aslam draws attention to global capitalism’s culpability in generating an ever-widening poverty gap where its victims are further impoverished by the constraints of religious discourse.’ (McCulloch, 103) The village, communities and towns with closer internal interference of the neighbour and society is feared in the Aslam’s works. Daru, Ozi, Mumtaz, Pretty girl and Protagonists belongs to the upper middle class family in Lahore. The food in the Mohsin Hamid is westernised, chicken-pesto-in-sun-dried-tomato wraps, ketchup, soy sauce, lychee juice where Kaukab prepares food, all home-made naan in her kitchen. Nusrat Ali Fateh Khan is re-mixed and clubby in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* whereas in Aslam’s Nusrat Ali Fateh Khan is revered artist and an artistic medium to convey immigrant’s pain. His inspirations are drawn from the ‘classic theme of Islamic literature: the quest for the beloved. Aslam maintained that The book [*The Maps for Lost Lovers*] wouldn’t be what it is without *1001 Nights*, the Koran, Bihzad. (Interview with M. O’ Connor) Aslam is inclined to classic references; Mohsin Hamid’s western perspective is part of the narrative. The reference to popular art forms like movies, music and other popular symbols are in abundance in Mohsin Hamid. One can take it as a mighty attempt to pay homage to the classics of the literary traditions, and it adds a rich texture of the books reference. In Milan Kundera in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984) Tereza feels,

> Being in a foreign country means walking a tightrope high above the ground without the net afforded a person by the country where he has his family, colleagues, and friends, and where he can easily say what he has to say in a language he has known from childhood. (27)
The country the authors are hailing from has a colonised past. The impact of the English language in the colonised countries is at all times measured high. The English proficiency was limited to the upper class of society. Hamid’s grandfather was a successful lawyer with a good command on the English language. Thus, it becomes easy to deduct the fact that he is from an affluent background. The wealthy looking Pakistani woman is vocal about the ignorant people tarnishing Pakistan’s image because she was attacked by a white man, ‘I who speak better English than him, educated as I was at Cambridge, my sons studying at Harward right now’ is a female counterpart of Changez who claims his language superiority over a female officer at the immigration. (MLL, 443) On his first homecoming in Lahore after 6 years in Stanford, Hamid is not able to speak Urdu. He endorsed it in ‘Once upon a life’ an essay in Discontent and Its Civilisation, ‘...my first language would be a second language for me from then on.’ (8) Aslam humbly accepted his limited use of English since his arrival in England. (Interview with Hasan) The non-English background is not a barrier. ‘Writers of ‘symbolic’ texts, on the other hand, are more aware of the inevitable necessity of using the native as a mediator of European desires. Grounded more firmly and securely in the egalitarian imperatives of Western societies’ (Janmohamed, 66) The characters in Hamid speak polished impeccable English, they are outgoing and easily mingling with the hip society. Shamas is the Director of the Community Relations Council He deals with the immigrants and explain the official procedure to them ‘who are unemployable in two languages, loathed in several, who know no English or are too intimidated to walk up to someone white-skinned for help.’ (273)

The migrants have an issue with the expertise of English language. Anglophone characters belong to the second generation of the immigrants. The
inability to speak English in the first generation migrant is stressed in the Nadeem Aslam. ‘According to the Office for National Statics, 2011 Census indicates, ‘Of the foreign-born residents who had been in the UK for 5-10 years and 11-30 years, those born in Bangladesh (43% and 46% respectively) and Pakistan (50% and 48% respectively) had the lowest proportions in employment.’ (The Office of Statistics, 15) The report of November 2013 indicates there are 116514 Pakistanis who cannot understand or speak English. (English Language Proficiency by Ethnic Group: Office of National Statics 2013) When Stella, his son Charag’s wife visits Kaukab and Shamas, Kaukab makes an extra effort to look presentable. She practices sentences to speak in a language Stella would understand. Her preliminary efforts to familiarise with English and her aspirations to master the language are reflected in the notebook. In which she attempts to write down words, phrases and proverbs she overhears without completely catching every word such as ‘Heaven is other people.’ (MLL, 45) When she hears the cuss words from her kids’ speech, and wonders to speak same phrases is ‘to sound more like a person who belonged to this country.’ (MLL, 374) During the visit to her sons in prison, Chanda’s mother is told not to speak ‘Paki language’ ‘Speak English or shut up’ (250) Nazneen in Monika Ali’s Brick Lane decides to learn English to connect to the main stream society.

The current building of the mosque in Dasht-e-Tanhaii was a property of a woman who went insane after losing her son. In England, her husband convinced her for hysterectomy after doctors’ suggestion. None of them had proper English to understand what hysterectomy means. Later their son was charged and killed by police. In a shock, mother became insane. It may be a far-fetched instance but accurately defines the language barrier. Mikal cannot talk to the American soldier, as ‘Vere is gurl? (BMG, 355) When he is reading maps with Jeo, Mikal reads each
English word very slowly ‘syllable by syllable. Sometimes letter by letter.’ (BMG, 34) The constant language parallel the narration in the two languages essentiate new place from the language struggle of an immigrant.

To conclude, the chapter brings out the aspects which are comparable in respect of the selected novels. The similarities are accessed how the immigrants and the reception is dealt with. It further describes the role of women, the religiousness of characters, the language and structure of the novels. The part two of the chapter highlights the contrast in the novels, in connection of the female characters, the class these characters belong to and the impact of English language in the writing of the authors.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION