

## Pakistan's Cultural Complexity in Contemporary Times: *The Wish Maker* (2009) by Ali Sethi

Rabia Amir<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

*The identity issues experienced in a post 9/11 novel by Ali Sethi have a slightly different complexion from most of the contemporary novels focusing on these themes.<sup>i</sup> A great many, (mostly Pakistani novels) addressing these issues are set against the American background, while only some, take up this issue of identity and impact of 9/11 against the ethnic backdrop of Pakistan; a setting of *The Wish Maker* (2009), in which some important facets of Pakistani society/ psyche are explored. Disregarding the disparaging connotations<sup>ii</sup> of considering Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi K Bhabha as the "Holy Trinity," Robert Young observes that though there are many things overlapping in their theories as both Spivak and Bhabha have drawn from Said's *Orientalism*, yet they cannot be taken as similar. Said, in turn is influenced by Michel Foucault's *New Historicism*.<sup>iii</sup> The text of the novel under study helps invoking selective features of Foucauldian *New Historicism* with special emphasis on the factors contributing for hegemony and aspects of Bhabha's hybridity theory, which may be seen as some of the dominant concerns of the present century's global and Anglophonic literature. Thus, engaging with these theoretical perspectives, this paper offers cloze reading of this novel to study some of the features of Pakistan's cultural complexity in the present millennium.*

**Key Words:** Hybridity, Post 9/11, Orientalism, New historicism, Anglophonic literature

### 1. Introduction

Graduating in South Asian Studies from Harvard University, Ali Sethi is a Pakistani singer, musician, and a columnist belonging to the environs of Lahore. In his debut novel *The Wish Maker* (2009), he gives a vicarious understanding about two largely discussed thematic strands<sup>iv</sup> in most of the works of fiction in the first decade of the present century, namely identity issues and impact of 9/11. Sethi, one of the emerging Pakistani

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<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of English, NUML, Islamabad

Anglophonic writers of the first decade of this century, engages an evolving aspect of Postcolonial theory in his novel *The Wish Maker* (2009). This aspect combines three theoretical perspectives of what Robert Young calls the “Holy Trinity” (Young 1995, 154, 163) of Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha. On account of their drawing from Said’s Orientalism, both Spivak and Bhabha have many things overlapping in their theories, though, they cannot be taken as similar. And Said’s theorizing, influenced by Michel Foucault in certain aspects, imports conceptualization of hegemony<sup>v</sup> as imbibed in Foucault’s New Historicism. The novel under study, embodies dominant themes which highlight, integrate, and exhibit aspects of hegemony, new historicism, and hybridity, and therefore, these aspects of Postcolonial theory become a part of this study in order to analyze the features of cultural complexities of Pakistani society.

## **2. Theoretical Perspectives and Research Methodology**

Hegemony, a term defined as the dominance within a confederation, is also described as “domination by consent” (Ashcroft 1998, 2000, 106). In their seminal book, *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* (1998), Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin define this term coined by Marxist Antonio Gramsci in 1930, as the power of the ruling class, exhibited both by consent and by coercion. In hegemony, therefore, interests are presented as the common interest couched in the terms of social order, stability and advancement. The consent thus achieved is by the interpellation of the colonized subject (Ashcroft 1998, 2000, 102, 117). Alternatively, hegemony by coercion can be understood as a power exercised by a few factions in a given society, which holds sway in all aspects of its culture, and results in limited choices open to the subjects of society<sup>vi</sup>; in postcolonial terms, these are the colonized subjects. Hegemony thus becomes, as Viswanathan believes, the “refraction of rapacious, exploitative and ruthless actor of history into the reflective subject of literature” (Ashcroft 1998, 2000, 107). In other words, the ruthless actors of history manifest in the narrative of a given text, and in the given context, this manifestation may be seen as the characters of the novel under study.

The second perspective in this theoretical framework is hybridity, as theorized by Homi K. Bhabha. Some critics like Bart Moore Gilbert view hybridity as “the relationship between colonizer and colonized [which is] more complex, nuanced, and politically ambiguous than either *Orientalism*

(1978) or *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) recognize[,] because [Bhabha believes that] both identity and agency in the colonial context are deeply inflected by the operations of the “unconscious” (Gilbert 2000, 2005, 457). According to Bhabha, these actions of the unconscious result in an implicit and explicit ambivalence, i.e. “wanting one thing and wanting its opposite” (Ashcroft 1998, 2000, 10), which makes the situation difficult to understand in black and white. This amorphous nature of ambivalence, in Gilbert’s view, “hybridizes the dominant culture’s current narratives of self-representation and self-legitimation”. It also “extends the site of the political to the zone of psychic relations ‘in-between’ the dominant and subordinate cultures, across which an unstable traffic of continuously (re)negotiated (counter-)identifications is conducted” (Gilbert 2000, 2005, 458). This paper, therefore, aims to study these dominant tropes of the in-betweenness, the hybridizations, and the hegemonic maneuvers, that result in renegotiations of representations of culture, or alternate modes of representations, in the novel, *The Wish Maker* (2009).

This paper postulates that Ali Sethi’s *The Wish Maker* (2009) which is one novel from the genre of post 9/11 Pakistani diasporic fiction in the first decade of the present century, in addition to hybridity, also takes the stance of New Historicism which has many features overlapping with Post-Colonialism. This is because that along with the post-colonial perspective, “Post-colonial writing and literary theory intersect in several ways” (Ashcroft, *The Empire Writes Back* 1989, 155). Where, the theory of New Historicism is explained as a theory that “aims at describing the present through an analysis of the forces that created it [or] writing the history of the past in terms of the present....[or] history of the present” (Leitch, *Michael Foucault* 2001, 1616). In Foucault’s own words, he expresses it as “the analysis of present reality into the history of modern philosophy” (Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others: Lectures at the College De France* 2008, 39). Therefore, tropes of hegemony, the Post-Colonial aspect of Bhabha’s theory, particularly aspects relating to identity and hybridity, and new historicism present a bricolage of theoretical perspectives employed in conducting this research.

Subsequently a qualitative approach is adopted and hermeneutic method of inquiry is applied during the textual analysis of this novel. There are occasional comparisons with some other contemporary Pakistani novelists during the course of this study.<sup>vii</sup> These comparisons, if any, are only done with one or two other contemporary Pakistan’s novelists of English to

validate the discussion about the prima indicants of the hybridity theory of Bhabha. In this paper, I study the manifestations of post-colonial aspects resulting from the forces that created this post-coloniality. Consequently, this reinterpretation and reanalysis of history of the past in modern terms is what makes the lines of New Historicism and post-colonialism intersect in the text of this novel.

Ali Sethi's *The Wish Maker* (2009) entails the portrayal of Pakistani ethnic background with a meticulous attention to detail. Sethi has given a vicarious understanding of two major thematic strands in most of the works of fiction in this first decade of the present century, namely identity issues, and impact of 9/11. Therefore, this paper discusses the major themes of *The Wish Maker* (2009) in the light of Bhabha's hybridity theory and Michel Foucault's New Historicism.

### **3. Key Themes: Identity Crises—Futility of Existence—Self-Actualization**

#### **3.1 Identity Crises**

Identity issues, self-actualization or realization of identity are the themes explored in many works of fiction in world literature in the first decade of the present century. The identity issues experienced in Ali Sethi's debut novel *The Wish Maker* (2009) have a slightly different complexion than most of the contemporary novels focusing on these themes. The first difference is that of the setting. A great many, (mostly Pakistani novels)<sup>viii</sup> addressing these issues are set against the American background while only some take up this issue of identity and impact of 9/11 against the ethnic backdrop of Pakistan. The setting of *The Wish Maker* (2009) is purely ethnic and some important facets of Pakistani society/ psyche are explored. The pendulum of the identity matters in this novel are therefore oscillating between the immediate and very strong eastern neighbor's (India's) influence and quite remote western (American) affect with the resting position of the pendulum being the acute political influence on the Pakistani society. The first influence manifests in the culminating point of the novel for Samar Api, the protagonist Zaki Shirazi's distant cousin. It is shown that the sole objective of Samar's life is to get married to her prince charming, who, in her case, is the famous Bollywood actor, Amitabh Bachan. This state is a distinct example of Bhabha's theory of hybridity which he says, "as new, neither the one nor the other" (H. K. Bhabha 2001, 2385). Zaki's comment at the end of the book, when he says "Samar Api,..your Amitabh has arrived" (Sethi 2009, 406) speaks for this newness

of the perceptions of this character which are neither the one nor the other, the way it is proposed by Bhabha's theory. It is a dominant bend of mind of Pakistani youth symbolized in Samar Api as well as other characters of this novel.

The westernizing effect or hybridity as manifested in this novel can also be felt in the hybrid states of mind of the characters of this novel on a number of occasions. For instance, when Samar chances upon a letter in a newspaper etc. about a dejected lover from Dallas Texas who is torn between the possibility of whether or not to continue dating her ex-boyfriend, she deduces automatically her situation like the one in the letter and says, "It's just like my situation" (Sethi 2009, 240). Instances like these and many other in the novel seem a bit juvenile but that perhaps owes to the age bracket of the writer, Ali Sethi, himself. These incidents speak of the mentally displaced states of different characters who have a prominent bend towards a hybrid mind set as "hybridity commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization" (Ashcroft, *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* 1998, 2000, 108). The character of Samar Api, likewise shows a hybrid self which is quite transcultural in nature.

A strong, political influence prevalent in Pakistani society causes quite hybrid and variant outlooks of the characters. It is observed though, that belonging to a family of journalists, Ali Sethi has quoted political actions more as hearsay, rather than experiencing them on a personal basis, unlike to what we see in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) by Mohsin Hamid, and *Home Boy* (2010) by H. M. Naqvi, two other contemporary writers.

Citing the issues of hybridity in comparison to the examples of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), *Home Boy* (2010) and *Burnt Shadows* (2009), it is observed, that being set mostly against the background of America, the identity issues or factors related to hybridity manifested in these novels, and consequently their plots, are quite fast paced, whereas, in *The Wish Maker* (2009), it seems that the whole life's stride comes, if not to a standstill, then definitely drops down to a snail's pace. For instance, the typical Pakistani Routines emerged.

In the morning Naseem appeared with her perforated bowl of vegetables and settled cross-legged on the carpet. She watched the sports channel,

cricket mostly,...which Pakistan have won, but also county-level matches between unknown English teams. She peeled the vegetables and cut her hand repeatedly. Daadi turned to television in the afternoon, after waking from her nap, and was joined in her commentaries by Suri and Hukmi, who brought confectionaries from the bakery to show that they were contributing. After dinner my mother stayed on in Daadi's room to watch the news for an unbiased view on recent quagmires. And late at night, after the others had gone to sleep, Samar Api took the TV and the telephone into her room, where she watched soap operas and discussed with the phone the significance of new realities, the kisses and confessions and the hanging sense they left of what was yet to come (Sethi 2009, 159-60).

The unhurried routines and easy-going behavior of different characters depicting different age brackets is apparent and portray the essential quality of the setting of Pakistani society. The characters mentioned in this segment seem to be totally oblivious to raising any pertinent identity questions. However, these identity questions seem embedded in the deep recesses of the Pakistani youth, as depicted in the character of Samar Api.

At the psychological level we see implicit identity crisis when identity questions are being raised by the author for children who are left unattended and free to follow their whims which end, at times, in obscene pranks and vain activities of different characters. These whimsical patterns of children, with neither any sense of direction nor any sense of realization of identity at a later stage in their lives, is worth reflecting upon. For instance, children are shown to be engrossed like zombies in video games, "fingers waiting on the buttons of the joystick" (Sethi 2009, 169), or watching porn (Sethi 2009, 177), or wandering and wheeling around in the streets (Sethi 2009, 158). Such mindless activities may result in quite crushing and devastating precepts of identity.

Probing issues and questions in *The Wish Maker* (2009), are however, not raised the way we experience them in the other contemporary novels by Mohsin Hamid, H M Naqvi, or Kamila Shamsie. The comparison becomes quite interesting when it is seen that a person living in a typical Pakistani environment neither has the urge nor the realization to raise any real questions for the purpose of his life, or to probe into the ways the world is heading, for that matter. However, we can see that by mirroring Pakistani society in his novel, in a way, Ali Sethi has raised pointed issues relating

to hybridity manifested in the characters of this novel and humanity at large. Hamid, in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), talks about the retaliation of a frustrated mind in its own particular way, but not without any justification. Similarly, the protagonist in *Home Boy* (2010), Shahzad, undergoes a different kind of metamorphosis with entirely different experiences and a different background altogether. In *Burnt Shadows* (2009) the ultimate questions about the purpose of all the seemingly logical activities of the world scene are questioned. The characters in these novels are embodiments of hybrid states of minds but this hybridity can be taken in a positive stride as suggested by Bhabha, when he says that it “fosters the larger goal of ‘socialist community’ while acknowledging cultural differences” (Leitch, Homi K. Bhabha 2001, 2378). A person’s mind, it can be safely deduced therefore, gets more ability for the assimilation of ground realities when the horizon is broadened because “we are all a part of this ongoing and evolving “big story”” (Paranjape 291), or as Bacon says, “By indignities men come to dignities”. In the *The Wish Maker* (2009) however, it may be seen that Ali Sethi has discussed Pakistan’s identity issues manifested due to the political progeny in this country.

A criticized aspect of Bhabha’s hybridity can be seen in *The Wish Maker* (2009). Some commentators consider Bhabha’s “notion of a hybrid identity [as] too broad and amorphous” (Leitch, Homi K. Bhabha 2001, 2378) but Vincent B. Leitch is of the opinion that “within the context of post-colonial studies the concept of hybridity has decisively altered static thinking about nations and identities” (Leitch, Homi K. Bhabha 2001, 2378). The characters of this novel “all follow commands delivered by someone else, and their lives are for nothing, and their deaths are for nothing” (Sethi 2009, 336). Consequently, not only the characters but the nations discussed in this narrative so far, i.e. America and Pakistan, also seem to have identity issues.

Charles R. Kesler in his article “The crisis of American national identity” (2005), opines that “Unsure of our national identity, we are left uncertain of our national interests, too; now even the war brought on by 9/11 seems strangely indefinite. And so Samuel P. Huntington is correct in his recent book to ask *Who Are We?*.. In Huntington’s view America is undergoing an identity crisis, in which the long-term trend points squarely towards national disintegration” (24). In this book review, Kesler has given his critique on the different ways and means put forward by Huntington to

save this national disintegration. The two articulate nations, therefore, having the most direct link to the post 9/11 world scenario, i.e. America and Pakistan, are shown to be undergoing an identity crisis issue, with the possibility of desperate measures in case of dejection or futility in their goals, where it is yet to be seen as to when they would spread their wings like Daedalus in order to harbor the citizens of this world.

### 3.2 Futility of Existence

Identity crisis is the first step in the realization process to self-actualization. However, the intermediary step which the characters of this narrative take is kind of retrogressive as it leads all the characters to a feeling of futility of their existences before they liberate themselves to embark upon their journeys to self-actualization.

The second major theme discussed in the novel—the treatment of the issue of leading futile lives, and leading a hybrid existence in *The Wish Maker* (2009) is strongly entwined with a strong political influence on the Pakistani Nation. Jim Hannan has commended Sethi's handling of "Pakistan's political tensions" (Hannan 2009, 70) in his review of the novel. Etched against a purely ethnic background, Sethi highlights the "fluctuations of national politics" (Hannan 2009, 69). These political fluctuations manifest themselves in the dialogues of the characters. The protagonist Zaki's two paternal aunts slug in the household all the time; since they are always welcome to do so by his grandmother and also because his father is dead. They are always at a liberty to come and go out of the house as they please. On one of these occasions, aunt Suri says, "Democracy this and democracy that. Very well. But will you tell me, please, that is it democracy to steal peoples lands? To take away the things they have lawfully earned? Land reform, they said. Land reform my foot. First the father came to steal, and now the daughter is stealing, and nobody can say a thing because we are in democracy" (Sethi 2009, 188). The quite vociferous remark of the character, points at the long-term turmoil that the people of this country have had to face, and are still facing. The divided identities are a manifestation of hybridity which Bhabha contends [as] cultural statements and systems [which] are constructed in a space that he calls the 'Third Space of enunciation' (1994: 37). Cultural identity always emerges in this contradictory and ambivalent space, which for Bhabha makes the claim to a hierarchical 'purity' of cultures [that is] untenable" (Ashcroft, Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies 1998, 2000, 108). This hybridity in the process of realization of identities of different characters



of this novel is bound to propel them to face a feeling of leading a futile existence for which the messiah has yet to arrive.

### 3.3 Self-Actualization: The Process

The discussion of the second theme of futility of existence resulting from the altered political action, as depicted in the novel propel my analysis to the next theme of self-actualization as exhibited in this novel under study. This bring forth an aspect discussed by Edward Said in the “Introduction” of his seminal book *Orientalism* (1978). Said defines orientalism as “a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident"” (Said 1978, 2003, 2). According to this Saidian definition, orient is presented as the stereotype whose concept is built upon by the Occident, i.e. the “British, French, or American” (Said 1978, 2003, 4). Broadly based on this definition, I draw an analogy in the context of the novel under study, *The Wish Maker* (2009), in order to strengthen the argument that there is an eastern version of occident that draws principally from the critique of any British, French, or American occident. In my opinion this occident paradigm, which Said has termed as ‘Occident’, may be termed as—‘Occidentalism’. This occidentalism is not only adopted by Sethi, the writer of this novel but is also a conviction, expressed in different characters of this novel under study. The characters seem to have adopted modes of occidentalism both from a western influence as well as the Indianized version of the same. The decor of the girls (Sethi 2009, 20), their mannerisms at the marriage parties (Sethi 2009, 25), the obscene language of Pakistani youth expressed in their speech (Sethi 2009, 22) and their indulgence in liquor (Sethi 2009, 22) is something which manifests the nature of occidentalism. This is a distorted version of occidentalism as it is enabling the characters to question the age-old traditions of Pakistani culture and consequently attach taboos to these cultural norms or stereotyping these norms as something negative. This vision of occident goes off in a tangent to what Said initially proposed because instead of constructing a stereotyped orient, this occident is stereotyping the traditions and customs of Pakistan by making a mockery of them.

These occidental patterns of characters may be termed as assumed instead of acquired as they embolden them to develop some anti-occident/ defiant elements during the course of the plot of *The Wish Maker* (2009). By anti-occident elements I mean those modes of exhibits that subvert rather than subscribe to occidental modes of perceptions. A number of reasons

contribute to this change. Perhaps the first contributing factor is that which is stated by Homi K Bhabha in his essay “The Commitment to Theory” (1989), when he said, “a historical nineteenth-century polarity of Orient and Occident which, in the name of progress, unleashed the exclusionary imperialist ideologies of self and other” (H. K. Bhabha 2001, 2379). Bhabha was talking in terms of the critical theories of the center i.e. “Eurocentric archives” (H. K. Bhabha 2001, 2379) and that of the periphery i.e. “Third World creativity” (H. K. Bhabha 2001, 2379) but the analogy can certainly be extended to the lives of the characters of this narrative who become the victims of “polarity of Orient and Occident” (H. K. Bhabha 2001, 2379). These characters, who started off with criticizing their own customs and values and showed occidental patterns of their lives, now resultantly show signs of anti-Occidentalism.

It is this anti-occident stance adopted by Sethi and consequently by his characters of this novel that enable them to embark upon the road to self-actualization. It is evidently depicted in the character of Zaki Shirazi who after his return from his studies in America finds the same anti-occident traits in his cousins, especially Samar Api. It is an interesting feature that this “Third World creativity” (H. K. Bhabha 2001, 2379) of post 9/11 Pakistani diasporic fiction and *The Wish Maker* (2009) particularly, looks the creative power of “Eurocentric archives” (H. K. Bhabha 2001, 2379) in the eye and the writings of these post 9/11 Pakistani fictional writers display an already bridged gap relating to the literary prowess attributed to “literature of Europe from Homer” (Eliot 2001, 1093).

There is another indicator of this self-actualization process. The post-colonial “imperial education system [which] install a ‘standard’ version of the metropolitan language as the norm and marginalize all ‘variants’ as impurities” (Ashcroft, *The Empire Writes Back* 1989, 7) is something which is denounced in the narratives of Pakistani diasporic fiction. Depicting an anti-occident pattern in *The Wish Maker* (2009), Ali Sethi makes bold use of Urdu words like “halwa and sawaiyya,..matar pulao and biryani, and naan and kheer...” (*WM* 184), quite explicitly. This uninhibited usage of non-English terms speaks of the “polyglossic” (Ashcroft, *The Empire Writes Back* 1989, 39) nature of these narratives as well as the usage of language as “an efficient tool for conveying cultural complexity” (Ashcroft, *The Empire Writes Back* 1989, 40). They have used English as a “versatile tool [which] is continually changing and ‘growing’” (Ashcroft, *The Empire Writes Back* 1989, 40). The unreserved

usage of such foreign terms in English also speaks of “the syncretic and hybridized nature of post-colonial experience [which] refutes the privileged position of a standard code in language and any monocentric view of human experience” (Ashcroft, *The Empire Writes Back* 1989, 40). Ali Sethi has addressed this “monocentric view of human experience” and instead, added a polycentric view of a contemporary world. In doing so he has negated the literary hegemonic standards which may be regarded as “a healthy repudiation of British and US hegemony...” (Ashcroft, *The Empire Writes Back* 1989, 18). Ali Sethi has therefore, contributed the polyphonic voice of the characters of his novel in the canon of international literature.

Another aspect for the hybridized manifestations in *The Wish Maker* (2009) by Ali Sethi are the implicit denunciation of materialistic hegemony which is experienced by different characters of this novel in a purely ethnic backdrop of Pakistani society. It is interesting to note that although the whole novel is set in a Pakistani background but the base line of the hegemonic features are quite universal in nature, i.e. money makes the mare go—a something which is explicitly pointed out in a retrospective monologue of the narrator, the protagonist Zaki Shirazi, when he says: “But the talk in the room was of money even after Naseem had gone; it was of money for the rest of the afternoon, since it was money and not love that made the biggest difference, money that in the end made marriages and families and enabled understandings between people and money that made the world go round and round” (Sethi 2009, 14). Shirazi’s elocutionary sentence conveys the materialistic power of Pakistan that has brought an altered political action peculiar to this country; a country where a “nin-com-poop [gets] promotions [because of] connections. This is the game. [A person] will be GM in a year or two, just wait and see. And mark my words: he will take this company down the drain” (Sethi 2009, 187-8). Such are the state of affairs in this country as narrated by a character of this novel. This frustration and denunciation speaks for the hybrid existence that the characters of this novel have to adopt forcibly. All the spiraling pep talk about money in a country like Pakistan depicted in *The Wish Maker* (2009) has an immediate effect on the political and cultural scene of this country.

One facet of the manifestation which has “alter[ed] the model of political action” (Leitch, Michael Foucault 2001, 1618) is the changing scales of the balance between patriarchal and matriarchal societies; for it is seen

that the women characters in this novel are influencing the lives of the protagonists in one way or the other. In *The Wish Maker* (2009), the protagonist, Zaki Shirazi, is shown to have grown in the chaperoning tutelage of the assemblage comprising of his grandmother, mother, his paternal aunts, their ever present house maid Naseem and Zaki's very influential cousin Samar Api. Thus, the changing scales of the balance show a strong leaning towards a matriarchal scale as compared to the patriarchal one.

These changing scales of balance may be understood as the analogy in terms of what Bhabha has suggested, as "a certain degree of complicity or "partnership" between colonizer and colonized, the affective 'borderland' between them also opens up unexpected and hitherto unrecognized ways in which colonial power can be circumvented by the native subject" (Gilbert 2000, 2005, 458). This analogy of colonized and the colonizer can certainly be extended to patriarchal and matriarchal characteristics of nations and opens up an angle of research for further researchers.

#### 4. Conclusion

Ali Sethi, in *The Wish Maker* (2009), therefore focusses on the contrasting ethnic cultural milieu of Pakistan and the related identity issues. It is a manifestation of the argument of Bhabha, according to which, "claims to inherent originality or purity of cultures are untenable, even before we resort to empirical historical instances that demonstrate their hybridity" (Ashcroft 1998, 2000, 61). This is established, to a great extent, as the altered political action of the social system exhibited in this novel. Bhabha's hybridity theory may be seen at work in a positive connotation of an experience of self-actualization in Sethi's debut novel. It also depicts the manifestation of an altered political action, an aspect of New Historicism theory of Michel Foucault, in terms of evolving from occidental to anti-occidental bearings of different characters of the novel.

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## End Notes

<sup>i</sup> For detailed discussion, see, Rabiya Aamir, (Dec 2016) “Post 9/11 Pakistan’s Diasporic Fiction: Redefining Boundaries of South Asian Literature” *Kashmir Journal of Language Research (KJLR)*. ISSN 1028-6640 Volume 19. Issue No 1. 169-179. Can be accessed at Researchgate.net:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303102141\\_Post\\_911\\_Pakistans\\_Diasporic\\_Fiction\\_Redefining\\_South\\_Asian\\_Literature](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303102141_Post_911_Pakistans_Diasporic_Fiction_Redefining_South_Asian_Literature) &  
<https://web.p.ebscohost.com/abstract?direct=true&profile=ehost&scope=site&authtype=crawler&jrnl=10286640&AN=130974131&h=mcToINAq12DzAHNGFPN%2fCJbIzIXqR2OA3q7Ak6iXcfKzHkVmnHw3GYuhLtiSgcKWH8oVRVN6eQKAQN8JrGXc%2bQ%3d%3d&crl=c&resultNs=AdminWebAuth&resultLocal=ErrCrlNotAuth&crlhashurl=login.aspx%3fdirect%3dtrue%26profile%3dehost%26scope%3dsite%26authtype%3dcrawler%26jrnl%3d10286640%26AN%3d130974131>

<sup>ii</sup> Aijaz Ahmad uses the phrase of “the Holy Trinity” disparagingly for Said, Spivak, and Bhabha in his book *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (1992, 1994, 2000)

<sup>iii</sup> A term coined by Stephen Greenblatt in the 1980s.

<sup>iv</sup> Same as endnote 1.

<sup>v</sup> The concept of hegemony as theorized by Antonio Gramsci in his *Prison Notebooks* (1930). Though Foucault does not use the term hegemony but he refers to Gramsci’s conceptualization of the term and adapts and develops it as the concept of panopticism. [See *Discipline and Punish* pg. 195]

<sup>vi</sup> In other words, this is interpellation

<sup>vii</sup> See for instance article in note 1 and the following: Rabia Aamir, “The Twilight of 911 and Altered ‘Political Action:’ A Reading of Pakistani Anglophone Fiction,” *Kashmir Journal of Language Research (KJLR)*. ISSN 1028-6640 Volume 23. Issue No 2. (2020), pp. 221-239 at <https://kjlr.pk/index.php/kjlr/article/view/90> , Rabia Aamir, “Shades of Postcolonial Marxism and *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013): A Sociological Concern,” *Kashmir Journal of Language Research (KJLR)*. ISSN 1028-6640 Volume 21. Issue No 2. (2018), pp. 191-202 at <https://kjlr.pk/index.php/kjlr/article/view/185> , Rabia Aamir, “Ecumenical Environmental Ethics In Shamsie’s *Burnt Shadows*: A Study Of Occidental And Anti-Occidental Patterns,” in *Webology*, Volume 18, No. 3. (2021), pp. 765- 780 at <https://www.webology.org/abstract.php?id=2442> , and other sources.

<sup>viii</sup> See, for instance, *Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) by Mohsin Hamid, *Burnt Shadows* (2009) by Kamila Shamsie, and *Home Boy* (2009) by H M Naqvi etc.