

Post 9/11 Pakistan's Diasporic Fiction: Redefining Boundaries of South Asian Literature

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Abstract

Emerging South Asian diasporic writers writing in English from Pakistan of the last half of the twentieth century are now regarded as pioneers of Pakistani Diaspora of English fiction. This Diaspora can be roughly divided into the pre and post 9/11 writers. English fiction by the writers prior to the beginning of this century had a dominant post-colonial perspective; an example of which can be seen in the writings of Bapsi Sidhwa, Hanif Kureishi, Sara Suleri and Nadeem Aslam's earlier works, to name a few. The second generation of Post 9/11 writings comprises works of those writers who have written their works mostly in the new century. Their writings reflect a poignant bend in the post-colonial perspective. Homi K. Bhabha terms this appropriation of post-colonial view as "hybridity [which he defines] as new, neither the one nor the other [, something which is] struggling to free itself from a past ancestry, and which values the 'pure' over its threatening opposite, the 'composite'. It replaces a temporal linearity with a spacial plurality" (Ashcroft, 1989). It is this standpoint of post-colonial theory, the "spacial plurality" (Ashcroft, 1989) that this paper explores, with regards to post 9/11 Pakistani diasporic novel; delimiting it to the first decade of this present millennium. Linking the concept of spacial plurality with the informed discursivity regarding the power structures of Foucaultian new historicism, this paper explores diasporic voices of Pakistani fiction written in English in the ever increasing milieu of post 9/11 novel. It inquires into the ways in which the effects of 9/11 have penetrated the writings of Pakistani writers of English fiction. This exploratory paper studies the significance of such works of post 9/11 Pakistani fictional writers as Mohsin Hamid, H. M. Naqvi, Kamila Shamsie and Ali Sethi and premises that these writers, in a very subtle way, are redefining South Asian Literature.

Keywords: *South Asian fiction, Post 9/11 Diasporic novel, hybridity, new historicism, post-colonial writings*

1. Introduction:

It is part of the business of the critic to preserve tradition—where a good tradition exists. It is part of his business to see literature steadily and to see it whole; and this is eminently to see it not as consecrated by time, but to see it beyond time...

(Eliot, 1927, 1990)

Throughout the annals of history prodigious events have influenced human thought profoundly and man has used different mediums of expression for the impressions garnered from such events. The events of September 11 2001 have influenced writers all over the world. Consequently there has been an isometric development of fictional works not only in America and in Pakistan but all around the globe. The significance of this fiction is apparent from the fact that it has opened up new chapters for discussion in the literary history of the world. It will not be out of place to consider the first decade of this twenty first century as the beginning of a new epoch in the genre

of novels in English literature; for, there is an array of “political thrillers in 21st century settings” (Seigel, 2007); hence entirely new dimensions of literary theories need to be applied in the literary analyses of fiction.

Epistemological Stance: Novel after 9/11

Hanif Kureishi, basically a pre-9/11 writer, is quoted by Andrew Hammond in his article *The Hybrid State: Hanif Kureishi and Thatcher's Britain* (2007) that, “English literature has changed enormously in the last ten years, because of writers from my background [...]. You know there are many, many of us, all with these strange names and some kind of colonial background. But we are part of English literature” (Hammond, 2010). Being part of the literary tradition can be better comprehended with an analogy of the vacuole of a plant cell. This study endeavors to establish that Bhabha’s theory of hybridity and Foucault’s theory of new historicism applies to the writings of post 9/11 Pakistani writers in entirely new parameters. These theories manifest in the selected works of these hybridized diasporic writers of English fiction of the present century who have further pushed the centrality of the nucleus of “Eurocentric standard of judgment” (Ashcroft, 1998) to the peripheries. Their narratives are combating the stereotypical image of Pakistan and its people and have become “the formative constituent of reality” (Ashcroft, 1998). Thus, with regards to post 9/11 Pakistani diaspora, this paper explores their writings which are contending the stereotypical images and have become the determinative essential perspective of post-colonial theory with special focus on the aspect of “spacial plurality” (Ashcroft, 1989).

In the ever increasing milieu of post 9/11 fiction this exploratory paper investigates the contribution of diasporic voices of Pakistani novelists writing in English. It inquires into the ways in which the effects of 9/11 have penetrated the writings of Pakistani writers of English fiction and explores, as to how, by integrating all the major themes discussed around the world, in post 9/11 milieu, Pakistani fictional writers like Mohsin Hamid, H. M. Naqvi, Kamila Shamsie and Ali Sethi, in a very subtle way, are redefining South Asian Literature. Therefore, this paper describes the selected corpus of the present literature of Pakistani fiction, through an analysis of the force of 9/11 that shaped this literary canon.

2. Background to the study:

Deriving the meaning of the genre of novel from Ian Watt’s seminal book, *Rise of the Novel* (1955), a novel may be defined as a diverse and quite holistic depiction of human life and can be delimited as a form of literary prose; a vehicle for imitating reality and culture in a particular way; with certain characteristics of realism; an attempt for the rejection of the accepted universals; and setting unprecedented value on originality (Watt, 1957, 1993). It is therefore the imitation of reality and culture in a particular way and unparalleled value on originality that compelled me to explore this genre in the first decade of the present century—one of the manifestations of which is found in Pakistan’s fiction in English post 9/11.

3. Literature Review:

The critical theory relating to Pakistan’s diasporic fiction, especially the genre of post 9/11 novel is still, however, in the making. There seems to be a difference in perspectives in the fictional and non-fictional writings when a background study of literature concerning the event of September 11

2001 is carried out. A bird's eye view of the critical mass of literature concerning the event may be of avail.

There seems to be an urgency and avidity in the stance of some analysts concerning the event of September 2001. Robin M. Frost, in his book *Nuclear Terrorism after 9/11* (2005), maintains "... a position that runs counter to the views on nuclear terrorism expressed by many politicians and academics as well as the media" (Frost, 2005). For him "the risk of nuclear terrorism... is overstated, and the popular wisdom on the topic is significantly flawed" (Frost, 2005). Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit voice equally fervent, though, opposite views in their book *Occidentalism; A Short History of Anti Westernism* (Buruma, 2004), arguing that "the war against the West was a war against the 'the poisonous materialistic civilization' built on Jewish financial capitalist power" (Buruma, 2004). They believe that America has antagonists who have strong reservations against "Americanism" (Buruma, 2004) and these antagonists were the ones who destroyed the "symbols of U.S power and wealth; ... symbols of New York City, our contemporary Babylon; ..." (Buruma, 2004). Here writers are asserting that the destruction of the twin towers of New York on September 11 2001 was an act of hatred from the opposing forces similar to what happened to the great historical city of Babylon. The citations above give a fair idea about the different standpoints in the conceptual terrains of some critics in a Post 9/11 world.

In addition to the criticism concerning the actual event, there is the issue of attenuation of the boundaries between fictional and nonfictional writing due to the political stance taken in the modern novels which is a grey area that needs to be addressed before discussing Pakistani diasporic novel post 9/11. This grey area is somewhat similar to the code mixing and code switching in the linguistic terminology, for, certainly, there seems to be a dissolution of boundaries due to the fact that "post-colonial literature [itself] and its study is essentially political [because] its development and [resultantly] the theories which accompany this development radically question the apparent axioms upon which the whole discipline of English has been raised" (Ashcroft, 1989). Perhaps that is why James Smith Allen in his article *History and the Novel: Mentalite in Modern Popular Fiction* maintains that historians have taken "easily accessible novels as documents" (Allen, 1983), which cannot be taken as political documents in true sense. The "tempting convenience and apparent resemblance" (Allen, 1983, p. 233) between fictional and nonfictional literature, as "[t]he modern novel, of course offers descriptions of society" (Allen, 1983, p. 234). Allen opines that "historians have mistaken a novel's observations for journalistic reporting, or more often considered as a simple literary transcription of political and social ideologies" (Allen, 1983, p. 233). Allen therefore believes that, though the genre of fictional and non-fictional writing should not be intermixed, the role of fiction as a social and cultural acquisition should not be undermined (Allen, 1983, p. 234). Consequently a novel can therefore be regarded as a social and cultural acquisition in a fictional perspective which cannot escape the tenets of its age.

The above critique endorses that fictional writing especially novels should be taken as distinct from nonfictional writing. Fiction displays all the poetic sensitivities of the author of a particular time period, reflects the artistic oeuvre of the writer and comprises of "a self contained world" (Allen, 1983, p. 233); a world inspired by and conceived from the surroundings; hence the seeming dissolution of boundaries. The viewpoint, tone and intonation of the artistic oeuvre of a

writer may, however, vary distinctly from the other on account of an author's *métier* or his personal inclinations.

Redefinition of Boundaries of South Asian Writers in a post 9/11 world:

Writers around the world have incorporated themes relating to the event of 9/11 2001. American, British and diasporic writers show some common features for rendering of 9/11. However, they, differ in their treatment of the subject. A number of themes are portrayed in the American corpora of writers but the psychologically traumatic impact of varying degrees related to 9/11 is the prime focus of these novels. Daniel Barrow has recommended twelve novels with the related themes of 9/11 in the 5th September 2011 issue of *New Statesman* (Barrow, 2011, p. 59). In some novels, there seems to be an immediate apprehension experienced; for instance, in the novels of Don DeLillo, *Falling Man* (2007), and Jonathan Safran Foer, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005). In *Falling Man* there is a depiction of "both the actual victims who, entrapped in burning towers, fell to their death on September 11, 2001, and the metaphorical fall experienced by the novel's several characters into post 9/11 world" (SöZalan, 2011, p. 1). In the second novel, i.e. *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005), Foer talks about the devastations of the event of 9/11 manifested in a small family in which a young boy loses his doting father who was trapped in the World Trade Center. Exploring this theme in this novel, the event of 9/11 is referred as "drastic disaster" by Nathalie Gerlach, in her seminar paper, *Wearing Heavy Boots - Trauma in Jonathan Safran Foer's Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2011). According to Gerlach this "ended America as it was known before 9/11 and overwhelmed its inhabitants with tragedy, terror and fear, leaving behind an overpowering numbness....." (Gerlach, 2011, p. 2). This numbness is particularly depicted effectively in the family of the deceased protagonist who dies in the 9/11 incident in this novel, and generally, in all the novels of this genre of immediate impact of 9/11. Similarly, John Updike's novel *Terrorist* (2006), delves into the mind of a young terrorist and his psychological state. Therefore these novels mostly highlight the psychological trauma ensuing due to this event.

Contrastingly another set of American writers explore themes of disillusionment from the political standpoint which is manifested in the post 9/11 decade. David Ignatius, a Washington Post Columnist, wrote his novel, *Body of Lies* (2008), "about al-Qaida and a fictional CIA attempt to penetrate it, an attempt that goes disastrously wrong" (Seigel, 2007). In his interview with Robert Siegel, Ignatius hoped his novel to be taken as a metaphor in some ways for their situation as a country. He said in an interview, "We've been struggling with this adversary. We don't understand it very well. We've been trying to combat it, but in the process we're doing things to ourselves that, you know, we're beginning to drive ourselves crazy" (quoted in Siegel, 2007). Unlike DeLillo and Foer's novels depicting America as a victim, David Ignatius' novel, *Body of Lies* (2008), provides a kind of cathartic effect to the American intelligentsia as it gives voice to a rational silent American majority.

In the *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Writers and Their Work* (2010), Geoff Hamilton and Brian Jones cite the contemporary writers and the themes taken up by them. They have rated *Absurdistan* (2006), a satirical novel by Gary Shteyngart as "his sophomore effort [in which he] even verges on the ultimate profanity for a post 9/11 Manhattanite: a slapstick reconstruction of the World Trade Center". Shteyngart "observes that the west, when stripped bare [is] essentially a

series of cheap plastic components, pneumatic work chairs, and poorly framed motivational posters” (Hamilton, 2010, p. 1). Shteyngart acknowledges himself that he even expected a “public lynching” (Hamilton, 2010, p. 1) for his satirical stance, which, to his surprise, never came. Satirical themes are explored by other writers like Sherman Alexie, another “prolific and critically acclaimed author in contemporary Native American Literature” (Hamilton, 2010, p. 6). His novel *Flight* (2007) explores the theme of “identity in the absence of culture ...because of his dark complexion and acne scarred skin” (Hamilton, 2010, p. 8). He refers to his writing as “‘Colonial Literature’ which tends to depict themes of displacement, subjectivity and alienation” (Hamilton, 2010, p. 6). A variety of themes therefore, can be seen in the works of American writers after 9/11. Interestingly writers like Sherman Alexie though, are seen to explore the themes related to identity, for he himself comes from the Native American background and is aware of “his dark complexion” (Hamilton, 2010, p. 8) and perhaps needs a recognition of his self. Resultantly it can be deduced that **there are two dominant thematic hues in American fiction post 9/11;**

1. fiction with political themes
2. fiction related to identity issues

Bringing other writers around the world in the ambit of this discussion of post 9/11 novels, it may be seen, that British novelists, being at a geographical distance from the place of the actual event of 9/11, incline to allude to it remotely, implicitly or allegorically with other themes intricately entwined with that of 9/11. Ian McEwan’s novel *Saturday* (2005) can be cited as an example.

If British novelists are alluding to the 9/11 event remotely then it may be seen that **another set of diasporic writers, who, belonging to different parts of the world, reminisce about a cultural bonding with a symbolic yearning for belonging to the lands of their roots.** Writers like Monica Ali, Michael Ondaatje, DBC Pierre, Ha Jin, Nadeem Aslam, Nafisa Haji, Azhar Abidi, Jhumpa Lahiri, Vikram Chandra, Pankaj Mishra and Akhil Sharma, can be grouped together in this broad spectrum writers. The degree of cultural bonding may, however, vary among these writers.

An exploration into the themes discussed by these writers demonstrates that Monica Ali, an “Anglophone fiction writer [] of Bangladeshi origin” (Haq, 2003), in her novel, *Brick Lane*, traces the Bangladeshi roots of the protagonists and discusses major themes of “identity, self-preservation and determination” (Hamilton, 2010, p. 9). Similarly Jhumpa Lahiri, belonging “to a new generation of East Indian writers of fiction” (Karim, 2006) traces the struggles and hardships of a young Bengali couple in *The Namesake* (2003). The couple has to form a life for themselves as immigrants in the United States. Rezaul Karim, in his article titled, “Jhumpa Lahiri” (2006), compares

“Lahiri and Bharati Mukherjee as chroniclers of the East Indian experience in American fiction. Daughters of Calcuttans, the two authors delineate the Indian Americans’ relationships to their homeland, as well as their responses to immigration and assimilation... Lahiri portrays Indians abroad who face displacement, adhere to their native culture, attempt to integrate themselves into their adopted homeland, and suffer tensions over moral and emotional issues” (n.p.).

The work of Latin American writer, Daniel Alarcon, is also compared with that of Lahiri for “often heartbreaking stories of migration and loss” (Hamilton, 2010, p. 5). Basically a short story writer, Alarcon’s novel, *Lost City Radio* (2007), talks about “the poverty and violence of present day Latin America” (Hamilton, 2010, p. 4). Similar themes of ethnic representations of Alarcon’s novel can be seen in Nigerian writer, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Though, both were born in 1977, but due to their different backgrounds, share totally separate experiences. **It is interesting to note though, that both have a common thread of writing about their respective ethnic backgrounds. Writing about ethnic background is therefore another dominant theme in the fiction written after 9/11.** The contents and contexts of both may be worlds apart but the common urge to write about their background and to represent it in the global literary canon is similar. Alarcon has written about Latin America while “Achidie’s novel might be read as an update of Achebe’s work” (Hamilton, 2010, p. 3). If Chinua Achebe wrote about the colonial impact on Igbo culture then Achidie explores the legacy of this impact in modern day Nigeria (Hamilton, 2010, p. 3).

Ha Jin, a Chinese writer; “an immigrant and a self exile...a spokesman in English for the downtrodden in China” (Versava, 2010, p. 1) has written an “overtly political novel” (Versava, 2010, p. 4), *A Free life* (2007), which is set in The United States. The theme of this novel is contrary to his earlier works set in Chinese settings. This novel takes up the issue “of social justice...[depicting] Chinese intellectuals frankly debating current Chinese politics from the safety of Boston, Atlanta and points in between. The novel portrays not only the process of self-exile, but also [] the dynamics of immigrant self-definition” (Versava, 2010, p. 4). Though written after 9/11, *A Free life* (2007) and his other works, *Waiting* (1999), *The Gazed* (2002) and *War Trash* (2004) explore the themes of “social superfluity [or] the alienation of the individual from public life” (Versava, 2010, p. 2). **Thus Ha Jin, who may be taken as representing Chinese writers, writes about the problems of Chinese immigrants and consequently issues relating to their identity debate, one of the major theme emerging in a post 9/11 world.** The critics have drawn similarities between the themes of these three works of Ha Jin and nineteenth century Russian fiction.

Diverse themes can be seen in the works of other diasporic writers. Nafisa Haji, a Pakistani American novelist explores the themes of culture, religion, tradition and modernity in the entwining familial stories in her two novels *The Writing on My Forehead* (2010) and *The Sweetness of Tears* (2011). Pakistani born Australian writer, Azhar Abidi’s novel *Passarola Rising* (2006) explores an altogether different subject about a “Brazilian born priest who explores the far reaches of the earth and heavens, ...a charming tale of high adventures, scientific curiosity and...a fraternal bond, something impossible to find in the cities” (“Abidi, Azhar: *Passarola Rising*,” 2005, p. 1241). Born in 1974, Rajeev Balasubramanyam, an Indian British novelist, won a Betty Trask award for his debut novel about a young girl living in India. It is his versatile style of writing or his sense of ‘longing for belonging’ to the place of his roots that he wrote a novel so removed from his own personal experiences. For he wrote in his essay “Living with the Whites” (2002) which is cited in Mark Stein’s article titled, “Rajeev Balasubramanyam”, that “his earliest memories include racism, [and almost] all of [his fellow pupils], to some extent, were infected with racial prejudices” (Stein, 2009). **The works of these aforementioned non-American writers do not have, therefore, a remote reference to the impact of 9/11 in their writings.**

Similarly themes surrounding the debate of identity issues and other various concerns may be identified in the works of some Indian writers. Their versatility in themes is perhaps due to the fact that “Indian writers in English, it seems, have shed all their inhibitions and are now boldly dealing with a variety of subjects in the manner of their choosing” (Agarwal, 2007, pp. 56- 57). Colonialism and effects of post colonialism manifested in the loss of identity which travels through generations as a sense of loss is the major theme of Kiran Desai’s second novel *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006). Desai, an accomplished writer and daughter of Anita Desai, another established writer, has received the National Book Critics Circle Fiction Award (2007) for *The Inheritance of Loss*. The novel revolves around the post independence theme of “desire for migration...for the coveted green card and the lure of prosperity that America represents. ... [It] is a meditation on many aspects of contemporary life, including questions of (post-) imperialism and nationhood, race and ethnicity, multiculturalism, identity, class, modernization and globalization...” (Hamilton, 2010, p. 94).

Similarly, Vikram Chandra’s latest novel *Sacred Games* (2008), a voluminous novel of 928 pages traces the divergent themes of organized crime in contemporary India as well as violence of 1947 partition of India and today’s nuclear terrorism (as per perception of the writer). A critic describes it as, “about the nether world of crime and corruption, about the cat-and-mouse game played by criminals and the police” (Agarwal, 2007, pp. 56, 57). Pankaj Mishra, a dynamic essayist and novelist, wrote his novel, *The Romantics* (2011), an ironic tale about people who long to find fulfillment in other cultures other than their own. His latest work *Temptations of the West: How to be modern in India, Pakistan and Beyond* (2011), basically a kind of travelogue, explores the political themes. The works of both Chandra and Mishra project a political leaning suitable to the place of their births.

From the discussion above, three main thematic strands emerge in the writers writing post 9/11. The first major thematic string discussed by these writers is their **ethnic background**. Writers like Ha Jin, Sherman Alexie, Daniel Alarcon, Adichie and Vikram Chandra all have portrayed the places of their roots in their works in one light or the other. A **subgroup** in this first group of themes is the writers **who have a longing for belonging** for their ethnic background depicted in their writings. Nafisa Haji and writers like Azhar Abidi belong to this subgroup within the main group portraying their ethnic backgrounds. The **second major set of themes** in the post 9/11 writers is the **issue of identity**. Most of the writers have written about the individual or familial identity issues. Writers like Monica Ali, Jhumpa Lahiri and Pankaj Mishra can be grouped in this thematic group. There are, however **some writers who belong both to the group writing about ethnic background as well as discussing the identity plight**. Sherman Alexie, Daniel Alarcon, Adichie and Kiran Desai all have written not only about their milieu but also taken up the identity issues in a post colonial perspective as a background for their writings. **The third and the final thematic strand** is the discussion about the **impact of 9/11**. It is interesting to note that all five writers, discussed above, who talk about the issue of 9/11, are American. They may have talked about different dimensions or different levels of the impact but the fact remains that all of them i.e. Don DeLillo, Foer, Updike, Ignatius and Shteyngart have written about the impact of 9/11 in their novels. In fact it is the Pakistani writers, who will be discussed shortly, and American writers who have written about the direct impact of this event at a considerable length.

The corpus of Pakistani writers post 9/11 comprise of many names. These writers are writing on a variety of themes. Bina Shah, for instance, in her novel *The 786 Cybercafe* (2004), discusses personal relationships. Similar theme of familial and personal relationships is explored in Sehba Sarwar's debut novel *Black Wings* (2004). Sorraya Khan's debut novel, *Noor* (2003) "is both courageous and remarkable because it breaks a long literary silence and is the first Pakistani English novel to focus on East Pakistan during the war of 1971 and comes to terms with its brutality" (Dawn, 2003). Ali Sethi's debut novel *The Wish Maker* (2009) is "about contemporary Pakistan. [He] joins Anglophone Pakistani writers Mohammad Hanif and Daniyal Moeenuddin as new voices that express the complex nature of a region long defined by the literary accomplishments of Indian Writers" (Hannan, 2009, p. 69).

Findings and further discussion:

Among all the writers around the world writing in a post 9/11 decade there are upcoming writers of only Pakistani origin who have the credit to have integrated all three thematic strands in their novels namely;

1. **portrayal of ethnic background**
2. **identity issues**
3. **impact of 9/11**

Mohsin Hamid's second novel, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), H. M. Naqvi's debut novel *Home Boy* (2010) and Kamila Shamsie's fifth novel *Burnt Shadows* (2009) are the three works that have integrated all the major three thematic strands, that are being discussed in this genre of post 9/11 fiction in English; of portrayal of ethnic background, identity issue and impact of 9/11 at a considerable length. Ali Sethi's debut novel *The Wish Maker* (2009), however, entails the portrayal of Pakistani ethnic background with a meticulous attention to detail. Sethi has given a vicarious understanding and integration of the other two thematic strands, namely; identity issue and impact of 9/11.

Mohsin Hamid's second novel, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) is on the list of twelve recommended novels with the related themes of 9/11 in the 5th September 2011 issue of *New Statesman* (Barrow, 2011). In this novel Hamid has discussed the impact of 9/11 explicitly in addition to talking about his milieu of the city of Lahore as well as the issue of identity. It can be called "an uncommonly moving novel about the world today, the power of the tale's obvious symbolism matched by the artistry of its author" (Greenya qtd. in Kerschen n.pag.). Similarly, H. M. Naqvi in his debut novel *Home Boy* (2010), has depicted a familial attachment with the city of his birth i.e. Karachi, the illations about the issue of identity and the whole spectacle of 9/11 unfolding before the eyes of the reader. The author of *Absurdistan* (2006), Gary Shteyngart, praised the novel in these words, "*Home Boy* bursts with intelligence and energy and pathos. I haven't read anything like it" (Shteyngart, 2009). Kamila Shamsie's novel, *Burnt Shadows* (2009), is "a departure from Shamsie's previous novels [as it has an] epic plot" ("Kamila Shamsie", 2011). She has synthesized the three thematic strands of depicting the surroundings, tackling the identity issue and addressing the 9/11 impact together with a holistically historical perspective. Michele Norris, while interviewing Shamsie, remarked that, "Kamila Shamsie loves

books that intertwine the personal with the political, and her latest novel, *Burnt Shadows*, is exactly that kind of story. It spans over half a century and travels from Nagasaki to Guantanamo Bay to Delhi” (Norris, 2009). For *Burnt Shadows* (2009), and discussing the major themes of identity, ethnic background and impact of 9/11, Shamsie may be regarded as the literary Florence Nightingale of Pakistani diaspora in the twenty first century.

Hamid, Naqvi and Shamsie have, therefore, taken the post 9/11 fictional writings to a new level of literary discussion with the following three main indicators:

1. **By integrating in their writings, all the three thematic strands emerging in a Post 9/11 literary milieu, discussed so far.**
2. **Manifesting Bhabha’s theory of hybridity in their narratives they have further pushed the centrality of the nucleus of “Eurocentric standard of judgment” (Ashcroft et al. 7) to the peripheries.**
3. **Applying some features of Foucault’s theory of new historicism, the narratives of these texts are combating the stereotypical image of Pakistan and its people and have become “the formative constituent of reality” (Ashcroft et al. 104).**

Lee Siegel, a New York writer and a cultural critic praised Naqvi in these words that “You won’t even notice that H.M. Naqvi has redefined South Asian Literature” (qtd. in Naqvi n.pag.). Thus it may be deduced that by delimiting the boundary of literary discussion, post 9/11 Pakistani fictional writers of the first decade of this millennium, like Hamid, Naqvi, Shamsie and Sethi, in a very subtle way, are redefining South Asian Literature.

This emerging position in the world’s literary scene, which these Pakistani writers writing post 9/11 occupy, can be validated from some findings that Professor Cara Cilano has made. While she grants “[t]he tenuousness of Pakistani English - language literature’s position” (Cilano, 2009, p. 184), she believes that Pakistani writers “occupy an ‘emerging’ position” (Cilano, 2009, p. 184) and therefore, should be termed as “Asian global narratives” (Cilano, 2009, p. 185) and be taken as a separate entity to any other of its more influential counterparts. Professor Cara Cilano concedes though, that it is quite a daunting task:

...getting Pakistani writers and their work out from under the shadow of India while also highlighting how this body of work connects to the larger subcontinent, to multi-lingual cultural life within Pakistan, and to the concerns—both national and international—...[is a difficult task; because] Pakistan seems to occupy less cultural space than its larger sub continental neighbor, India” (pp. 185-186).

Pakistan’s English-language fiction is therefore a distinctive body of Anglophone writers set to condition a “worldwide anglophone audiences” (Cilano, 2009, p. 186). The exploration of this variant, anglophonic “self contained world” (Allen, 1983) of the genre of novel penned by Pakistani diaspora provides opportunities for further exploratory studies in this genre.

It can further be deduced that in addition to the post-colonial perspective, the post 9/11 Pakistani diaspora of fiction exhibit some elements of new historicism in its narratives. New historicism has many features overlapping with Post Colonialism because, “Post-colonial writing and literary

theory intersect in several ways” (Ashcroft, 1989, p. 155). Derived from Foucaultian discursivity, new historicism theory “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, 2001). Therefore this paper has discussed the selected corpus of the present Pakistani fiction through an analysis of the force of 9/11 that inspired these writers to give their individual talent in the grand narrative of literary tradition.

Michel Foucault “stresses [that] modern power’s capillaries... [Or in other words]...micro techniques [have] ubiquitous [(omnipresent)] reinforcement [which] work[s] upon docile bodies [of the society. Resultantly] the diffusion of the power through the ‘capillaries’ of the social system alters the model of the political action” (Leitch, 2001). Though this paper hardly can incorporate the detailed analysis and discussion of this aspect of new historicism, it would do for now to say that through their characters, these selected works exhibit how the modern power of the event of 9/11 has permeated the capillaries of the narratives of Hamid, Naqvi and Shamsie. The plots of these novels manifest the way micro techniques orchestrate identity issues resulting in a “hybridity” of identity for the different characters of these narratives. Borrowing Foucault’s term of the docile bodies i.e. the characters and the events in the narratives of the novels under study it is seen how these docile bodies of characters and events act/ react, as well as direct not only themselves as well as their habitats towards an altered political action of the social system. An in depth exploration of these narratives also entails the causes of the change in political systems of the milieu of the characters thereby identifying the extension and continuation of the impact of the post-colonial perspective as well.

4. Conclusion:

These selected works may thus be taken as indicative markers for the discussion of the most pertinent issues of the post 9/11 world in the genre of novel writing. Writers of contemporary works of fiction writings around the world have dealt with one or two of the major thematic strands at a time in their works. However it is only these selected Pakistani novelists who have incorporated all the themes raised as current concerns of the contemporary world. *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) of Hamid, *Home Boy* (2010) of Naqvi, *Burnt Shadows* (2009) by Shamsie and *The Wish Maker* (2009) of Ali Sethi are therefore representative of the three main thematic strands of portrayal of ethnic background, issues of identity and impact of 9/11, a major concern of the post 9/11 literary criticism. While portraying their ethnic backgrounds and dealing with identity issues these selected works exhibit relevant features of theory of hybridity by Homi K Bhabha. An explicit manifestation of Bhabha’s definition of hybridity as new, neither the one nor the other, which is struggling to free itself from a past ancestry, is depicted through the characters of these novels, consequently replacing “a temporal linearity with a spacial plurality” (Ashcroft, 1989). Similarly the discussions of the impact of 9/11 as depicted in these novels ensconce Michel Foucault’s theory of new historicism. Borrowing Foucault’s terms it is manifested through the narrative of these novels that the micro techniques of 9/11 create docile bodies depicted as different characters of these novels which result in an altered political action of the social system of the world’s political and consequently its literary discussions. Therefore, as according to the aforementioned endorsement of Professor Cara Cilano, it may be deduced that by incorporating, “as an imaginative alternative” (Cilano, Idea, Nation, &State, 2013), the major thematic concerns

of the contemporary world, these prima indicants are redefining the boundaries of South Asian literature by imparting their individual talent in the grand narrative of literary tradition.

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