The Twilight of 9/11 and Altered 'Political Action': A Reading of Pakistani Anglophone Fiction

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Abstract

This paper explores the contribution of Pakistani Anglophone novel in the first decade of the twenty first century in the discourses of cultural and postcolonial critique of contemporary fiction. Taking V. S. Naipal's The House of Mr. Biswas as an example, Bhabha warns about the pitfalls of reading a postcolonial text in socially and historically mimetic perspectives, and takes issues with the reabsorption of such works in the English tradition[ii]*. In the same vein, I explore four novels by Pakistan's diasporic writers of the first decade of the present century. In an earlier study*[iii]*, The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007) by Mohsin Hamid, Home Boy (2010) by H. M. Naqvi, Burnt Shadows (2009) by Kamila Shamsie, and The Wish Maker (2009) by Ali Sethi are read as defining post 9/11 texts for South Asian literature. In this paper, I argue that these works challenge the centrality of Eurocentric literary parameters in terms of linguistic, cultural and capitalistic terms. Their narratives engage in a sort of contrapuntal denunciation of cultural, and capitalistic hegemony, which, Foucault terms as "truth games" or matrix of "technologies"*[iv]*. With the theoretical framework comprising of Foucault's theory of New Historicism and Bhabha's Hybridity theory, this paper traces the third space of enunciation as crafted by these Pakistani diasporic writers.*

Keywords: Hybridity, New Historicism, Capitalism, culture, Anglophone fiction, postcolonial writings

1. Introduction, Background, and Theoretical Framework for the Present Study

The writer cannot expect to be excused from the task of re-education and regeneration that must be done. In fact he should march right in front . . . I for one would not wish to be excused (Achebe qtd. in Ashcroft 125).

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One must know of what the soul consists. The soul cannot know itself except by looking at itself in a similar element, a mirror. Thus, it must contemplate the divine element. In this divine contemplation, the soul will be able to discover rules to serve as a basis for just behavior and political action. The effort of the soul to know itself is the principle on which just political action can be founded, and Alcibiades will be a good politician insofar as he contemplates his soul in the divine element (Foucault M. , 1997, p. 231).

The onerous "task of re-education" that Achebe speaks of in 1965, falls on writers all around the world belonging to all eras. This paper postulates that though apparently peripherally placed, the selected corpus of Pakistani diasporic fiction after 9/11 has contributed in the altered "political action"(Leitch, 2001, p. 1618) of the world, in linguistic, cultural, and capitalistic terms.

Paul Rabinow writes about Michel Foucault's experience of the Iranian revolution in the introduction of Foucault's posthumously published book, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth* (1997). Though causing a lot of uneasiness for the European Left, the demonstrations intrigued this French philosopher. He watched with fascination the political action of the underarmed civil society taking place in the streets in the `70's against the Shah of Iran. For Foucault, this powerful political action based on religion, seemed to question the famous dictum of Marx about religion being the opium of the masses. Contrary to Marx's axiom of "the spirit of a world without spirit" (Foucault M. , 1997, p. xxii), Foucault, translating these events in his theory, says, that for more than twenty five years of his life, his objective was to "sketch out a history of the different ways in our culture that humans develop knowledge about themselves: economics, biology, psychiatry, medicine, and penology" (Foucault M. , 1997, pp. 224-5). Therefore, Foucault links this political action to the questions concerning the realization of the self.

Foucault calls these questions concerning the realization of the self, as "truth games" or "technologies"; the most important technologies being the "technologies of power" and "technologies of the self"(Foucault M. , 1997, pp. 224-5). These technologies, Foucault believes, are "to serve as a basis for just behavior and political action"(Foucault M. , 1997, p. 231), resulting in an altered 'political action'. This altered state of affairs result due to the "diffusion of power through the "capillaries" of the social

system" (Leitch, 2001, p. 1618). Writing about Michael Foucault's essay, "Truth and Power"(1977), Leitch states that "[t]he modern world has repeatedly seen governments manipulate their populations by outright lies and cover-ups of the truth"(Leitch, 2001, p. 1620), that results in altered political action, one expression being what Foucault witnesses in Iran. This paper traces different manifestations of the altered political action in selected postcolonial texts of Pakistan's diasporic writers of the first decade of the present millennium.

The hegemony of British literary canon considered "as a touch stone of taste and value…[is a] cultural hegemony" that is waning. The possibility to "employ[] Eurocentric standards of judgment" (Ashcroft, 1989, p. 7) alone, on the postcolonial literature and post 9/11 literary texts, is now somewhat improbable. The "linguistic alienation [of] an imposed gap resulting from the linguistic displacement of the pre-colonial language by English" (Ashcroft, 1989, p. 10) was something overcome by the Indian writers like Raja Rao and Nigerian writers like Chinua Achebe. Besides this "linguistic alienation", there are additional alienating aspects displayed in the works of post 9/11 Pakistani diasporic writers; *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) by Mohsin Hamid, *Home Boy* (2010) by H. M. Naqvi, *Burnt Shadows* (2009) by Kamila Shamsie, and *The Wish Maker*[v] (2009) by Ali Sethi. These works seem to have taken a linguistic, materialistic and a cultural leap and become the embodiment of what Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin endorse in their book *The Empire Writes* Back (1989): "Marginality [of postcolonial literary canon] became an unprecedented source of creative energy" (12), which eventually "dismantle, some of the assumptions of European theory" (Ashcroft, 1989, p. 13). These Pakistani Diasporic writers have fused both the hybridization of individuals and nations and resultantly altered the worlds of literary as well as political action after 9/11.

Certain statements have held sway for some time now, as: "[t]he colonial mimicry is thus the mimicry of the original", "the peripheral lacks order because it lacks the power of representation…periphery as an area of nothingness". Spivak is also quoted in *The Empire Writes Back* that "[t]here is no space from where the subaltern (sexed) subject can speak". These opinions were resisted by Homi K. Bhabha who "asserted that the subaltern people can speak, and that a native voice can be recovered" (Ashcroft, 1989, pp. 89, 90, 175). This assertion is something which is borne out by post 9/11 Pakistani diasporic fiction written by Hamid,

Naqvi, Shamsie and Sethi. Alternately, it can be said that these hybridized diasporic writers have managed to push the centrality of "Eurocentric standard of judgment" to the peripheries, and become "the formative constituent of reality" (Ashcroft, 1989, pp. 7, 104). Their works may be regarded as the manifestation of Derek Wolcott's essay "The Muse of History" (1974) in which he gives "a plea [for]…a 'historyless' world, where a fresh but not innocent 'Adamic' naming of place provides the writer with the inexhaustible material and the potential of a new, but not naïve vision" (Ashcroft, 1989, pp. 34-5). It is this sort of adaptation or appropriation which is sought by Pakistani diasporic fictional writers. The textual analysis of the selected novels establishes the standpoint of these Pakistani writers as bearing Foucault's theory of New Historicism and Bhabha's conceptualization of Hybridity in their narratives.

2. Review of Related Literature

There is a substantial body of criticism on various Pakistani writers of the previous and the present century. Among the critical writings on contemporary Pakistani fiction, certain works stand out. I briefly talk about the works that take the collective body of writers for their analysis rather than the critique on individual Pakistani writers. In her earlier article[vi], Cara Cilano talks about the "tenuousness of Pakistani English - language literature's position", and "emerging position" of Pakistani writers and term them as "Asian global narratives" (Cilano C. , 2009, pp. 184-5). In her more recent book, *Contemporary Pakistani fiction in English: Idea, Nation, State* (2013), she explores "how literary texts imaginatively probe the past, convey the present and project a future in terms that facilitate a sense of collective belonging"(Cilano C. N., 2013, p. 1). The thesis point of her study, as she claims, is the failure of the concept of the idea of a nation state. While her book, looking at a wide range of Pakistani novel, traces the literary devices and themes used for portraying idea, nation, and state as a foundation for collective belonging, my research focuses on the subversive strategies adopted in the selected texts that result in altered political action.

My research bears more affinity with Aroosa Kanwal's book, *Rethinking Identities in Contemporary Pakistani Fiction: Beyond 9/11* (2015). The major premise of her book is about the writers 'writing back' to the dominant western discourses and her discussions mostly focus on providing "historical depth to current negotiations of national, Muslim and diasporic identities"(Kanwal, 2015, p. 2) and to look beyond the

stereotyping of Muslim identities beyond 9/11. Sharing one novel that is common between my and Kanwal's study, my research engages other works to trace subversive discourses and explores further, the extent of altered political action through my selected texts.

3. Textual Analysis and Discussion

It is seen that the postcolonial "imperial education system install a 'standard' version of the metropolitan language as the norm and marginalize all 'variants' as impurities" (Ashcroft, 1989, p. 7). This is something which is denounced in the narratives of Pakistani diasporic fiction. In *Home Boy* (2010), a character named AC calls the police names in Punjabi language (*HB* 101) which may be taken as a manifestation of the verse of Saadi Shirazi:کس زورم غلبہ صول علیٰ الکلاب / ﷺ*When a person is dejected, his tongue lashes out/ Like a treed cat aggresses on a dog*"(Shirazi, 1994, pp. 37-8). In the dramatic monologue, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), the protagonist Changez talks about the typical Pakistani food items with the poise of a royal emissary when he talks of "plate of jalebis" (*RF* 3). In *Burnt Shadows* (2009), Hiroko, nostalgically uses Japanese or Urdu terms for names of fruit like "Hong xao...[or] bair" (*BS* 207). Ali Sethi, in his novel *The Wish Maker* (2009), likewise, makes bold use of Urdu words like "halwa and sawaiyya,..matar pulao and biryani, and naan and kheervii…" (*WM* 184), quite explicitly. This uninhibited usage of non-English terms speaks of the "polyglossic" nature of these narratives as well as the usage of language as "an efficient tool for conveying cultural complexity". They have used English as a "versatile tool [which] is continually changing and 'growing'". 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, 1989, pp. 39, 40). Pakistani post 9/11diasporic writers address this "monocentric view of human experience" and instead, add a polycentric view of a post 9/11 world. In doing so, they negate the literary hegemonic standards which may be regarded as "a healthy repudiation of British and US hegemony…" (Ashcroft, 1989, p. 18). These diasporic writers have therefore, contributed their individual talent in the tradition of international literature.

In addition to a literary leap, Pakistani diasporic fiction has made a denunciation of capitalistic and cultural hegemonic features of post

9/11world power. They can be regarded as a century late echo of a prognosis of Joseph Conrad in his fictional work, *Nostromo* (1904), when he predicted this twenty-first century fact of American hegemony through a character of an American industrialist, Holyroyd: "We shall be giving the word for everything: industry, trade, law, journalism, art, politics, and religion ... if anything worth taking hold of turns up at the North Pole. And then we shall have the leisure to take in hand the outlying islands and continents of the earth. We shall run the world's business whether the world likes it or not" (Hamdi, 2003, p. 99). This century old fictional declaration is a reality today. The leisure, liberty and the license of running the world about which he speaks, has become a reality in the post 9/11world.

Similar words of Bertrand Russell's essay "The Future of Mankind" (19A0) about America becoming the "unitary government of mankind" (Russell, 1950, 1972, p. 37) is a reality of post 9/11 world. His auspice however, featured some prerequisites for his "constructive vision". According to him they were: "freedom of thought, freedom of inquiry, freedom of discussion and humane feeling" which, he thought, would "guard against three dangers: (1) the extinction of human race; (2) a reversion to barbarianism; (3) the establishment of a universal slave state, involving misery for the vast majority, and the disappearance of all progress in knowledge and thought" (Russell, 1950, 1972, pp. 37-42). Though, some freedom, as proposed by this 20th century philosopher in a pre 9/11 world, is lost when according to Kesler's article, "The Crisis of American National Identity" (200A), "[a]fter 9/11, we haven't heard much from multiculturalism" (24). Counterintuitively, however, the post 9/11 world has witnessed a degree of all the dangers that Russell wanted a guard against. There is the enactment (though partial) of the dangers of extinction of human race, a degree of reversion to barbarianism and misery of human beings, a pervasive reality of post 9/11 world. This enactment is also due to a universal slave state about which Russell warned against, something that urged these Pakistani diasporic writers to add polyphonically to this post 9/11 tableau.

American stance on the post 9/11 world scenario has been described in different ways. Carlos L. Yordan in his article "America's Quest for Global Hegemony: Offensive Realism, the Bush Doctrine, and the 2003 Iraq War" (2006), has termed American policy as "modified version of John Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism, which finds that great

powers' motivation is global hegemony"(Yordan, 2006, p. 125). Tahrir Kahlil Hamdi, in his article "Foreign Literary Studies and the Identity of the Postcolonial Subject"(2003), has called it "globalized western economic, educational, cultural and political hegemony"(Hamdi, 2003, p. 99). Thomas G West, in his work, *Leo Strauss and American foreign policy* (2004) has attributed American position as "benevolent hegemony [and] benign American imperialism" (West, 2004, p. 13). Similarly while discussing the etymological terminology for American line of argument, Noam Chomsky, in his book *Reflections on 9/11* (2002), foregrounds serious problems for US if it was to seek its allies in the Islamic world, because of calling it a "'crusade'". Chomsky then discusses another term. According to him "humanitarian intervention...was a standard description of European imperialist ventures in the 19th century,…but the pretext of humanitarian intervention cannot be used in the normal way in the present case…." Therefore Chomsky suggests the only possible line of action "is better to use a vague term, like 'war'… 'War against terrorism' is simply more propaganda, unless 'the war' really does target terrorism; [otherwise] it will reveal that the U.S. is a leading terrorist state, as are its clients" (Chomsky, 2001, 2002, pp. 14-6). All these terms used for American stance in the world's cultural and political scenario could have been taken as invidious understanding of the state of affairs, if only the global facts would have pointed otherwise. But unfortunately all these terms proved valid at one point or the other in the latest world scene of post 9/11 America. The offensive realism culminated into cultural, political and global hegemony with occasional deviants of "benevolent hegemony [and] benign American imperialism"(West, 2004, p. 13). Apart from discussing core issues as pointed out by Chomsky's austere comments in his book, these novels exhibit their linguistic freedom as discussed above, and are combating the stereotypical image of Pakistan and its people by denouncing the capitalistic, and to some extent, cultural hegemony of "modern power's capillaries" that have "alter[ed] the model of political action" (Leitch et al. 1618).

In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, while giving his interview for the job, the protagonist Changez is made consciously aware of the capitalistic hegemony when Jim, his interviewer and later boss, corners him by asking "And are you on financial aid" (*RF* 4)? Changez knows that "there were subjects interviewers were not permitted to broach—religion, and sexual orientation—and …financial aid…" (*RF* 5). Nonetheless he is grudgingly being made aware of his vulnerable position as a student on financial aid

and he has to acknowledge the deity of materialistic hegemony; because he is, as Jim had put it, "hungry" (*RF* 7). Changez is later made aware of this hegemony when he goes for a trip to Greece with his Princeton friends. He says that "I will admit that there were details which annoyed me. The ease with which they parted with money, for example, thinking nothing of the occasional—but not altogether infrequent—meal costing perhaps fifty dollars a head" (*RF* 12-3). This easy parting with money disturbs him and the thing which disturbs him further still is the haughty and domineering attitude of some of his fellows towards the "Greeks twice their age" (*RF* 13). His genteel manners and frugal habits are too strongly imbued in him to be denied when he says;

> I, with my finite and depleting reserve of cash and my traditional sense of deference to one's seniors, found myself wondering by what quirk of human history my companions—many of whom I would have regarded as upstarts in my own country, so devoid of refinement were they—were in a position to conduct themselves in the world as though they were the ruling class (*RF* 13).

It is quite disconcerting for a young graduate like Changez, that these nouveau-riches, as he calls them, get the license to do as they please just because they are moneyed. It is not only in Greece that Changez inwardly repudiates this hegemonic mindset; it is even in his hometown, Lahore, which displays an image of materialistic hegemony. Things like "tree-lined boulevards [etc] –… enforce an ancient hierarchy that comes to us from the countryside: the superiority of the mounted man over the man on foot" (*RF* 19). His job too, gives him the liberty to ensconce a typically happy-go-lucky attitude where money can buy anything. It is, as Changez puts it, "an activity classified as 'new hire cultivation'—and with impunity spend in an hour more than my father earned in a day" (*RF* 22)! Though he practically goes with this activity but his mind seems to refuse to accept this hierarchy. Perhaps this is the reason why, while during his trip to Philippines, he can understand the "undisguised hostility in [the] expression" (*RF* 39) of a driver of an adjacent jeepney when Changez's car is stuck in the traffic. He might not have understood the reason of that hostility at that time but in retrospect he can fathom the animosity of his gaze to be a result of the envy a member of "comprador classes" (Bhabha *Commitment* 2380) feels for another.

There are times when Changez seems to be sitting on the fence unable to decide which side to take really; whether to denounce the deity he is

working for, on account of "the place [he] came from … [being] condemned to atrophy" (*RF* A8) or "to regard [this thought] as misguided—or at least myopic…" (*RF* 58). He seems to be on the same kind of rocky terrain as when he was on the quest of his identity. He seems to have serious doubts when he sees that in his "firm's exhortations to focus intensely on work,…no thought was given to the critical personal and political issues that affect one's emotional present" (*RF* 87). This seems a far cry from the proposed "humane feeling" (Russell, 1950, 1972, p. 39) more than half a century ago. This suspension between two opposite poles of whether to or not accept the superiority of the hegemonic system he is working for gets expression in his own words on a number of occasions when he says:

> Of course I felt torn! I had thrown in my lot with the men of Underwood Samson, with the officers of the empire, when all along I was predisposed to feel compassion for those, like Juan-Bautista, whose lives the empire thought nothing of overturning for its own gain…Moreover I knew from my experience as a Pakistani—of alternating periods of American aid and sanctions—that finance was a primary means by which American empire exercised its power…I myself was a form of indentured servant whose right to remain was dependent upon the continued benevolence of my employer. *Thank you Juan-Bautista,..for helping me to push back the veil behind which all this had been concealed* (*RF* 92-4-5).

Thus at the end of his novel, it is seen that Changez throws caution to the wind and his bearing is a complete embodiment of denunciation of the materialistic hegemony that he has experienced during the course of his stay. Earlier, he had favored "benign American imperialism", for, he thought it was justified because it was to provide "security against foreign attack; [i.e.].. 'strategic benefits'[or] democratic reform of the rest of the world" (West, 2004, p. 13). But when his veil is pushed back with the help of a member of "comprador classes" (Bhabha H. K., 2001, p. 2380), he becomes somebody who rises from the level of subaltern and becomes courageous enough to record his dramatic monologue as an admonisher of a friend, or, as Oscar Wilde admonished *The Devoted Friend* (1888).

Denunciation of capitalistic hegemony assumes many forms in the picaresque tale, *Home Boy* (2010). The protagonist, Shahzad remarks at one point that his friend, AC, while working on his dissertation "was a

man possessed" (*HB* 16). This possessed man had "brazenly proclaimed" (*HB* 17) that his work was such that "would change the 'contours of modern discourse" (*HB* 17). AC is a character who is dissatisfied with the existing state of world affairs and therefore is aspirant of changing the contours of modern reasoning. He is aware of the changing terminologies like, "rebels, freedom fighters—Mujahideen—the Holy Warriors... We invited them to Washington and, ah, compared them to the Founding Fathers. They were the good guys, chum. Osama B. was one of them" (*HB* 10). On one occasion he calls "the 'tyranny of the third person [and] the pretence of objectivity' as epistemological dead end" (*HB* 33). At one time he declares that he had thought America "*was based upon freedom of speech / Freedom of press, freedom of your own religion / To make your own decision,…"* (*HB* 98) but he calls it "baloney" (*HB* 98), for he sees these slogans as a hoax. Seeing a discrepancy between speech and action, he, at this juncture, has the mettle to say for the echoing speech of the President of the United States that he doesn't "have to see eye to eye with this bastard….Cause if I gotta play by your rules, I'm bein' phony—" (*HB* 98)! AC sees American government playing by self-erected principles, which is not only hypocritical but also extremely fraudulent. This is one character who intelligently brings out the difference between a post-colonial and post-slavery situation, which is also spoken by Homi K. Bhabha in the work, *Surviving Theory: A Conversation with Homi K. Bhabha* (2000): "This brings me to the most significant difference between the United States and the United Kingdom on the matter of minorities and the culture wars waged in their name. It is the difference between being a postslavery society and a postcolonial society" (Bhabha H. K., 2000, 2010, pp. 369-79). Bhabha calling American stance as a result of post-slavery situation, is made apparent by AC calling American stance as pure "baloney" (*HB* 98). AC's stentorian comments show that at least, his subversion is on a different level than what Frantz Fanon spoke of in *Black Skin White* Masks (1970): "we are unable to accept as scientifically proved the theory that black man is inherently inferior to white". AC has certainly taken a leap too, from the man about whom Fanon had said that all he wanted was to "help the black man to free himself of the arsenal of complexes that has been developed by the colonial environment" (Fanon, 1970, pp. 22-3). A black man of Fanon's time had to put up the basic fight of existence. A man of today like AC or Shahzad after fighting for their identities are in a position to exhibit their feelings and later can proclaim the state of affairs as humbug.

The protagonist, Shahzad, shares AC's thoughts but he is not as clamant in his expression as AC is blatant in his statements. He belongs to a middle class background in Pakistan. Like every other Pakistani of the pre/post 9/11 decade, his mother (for she is his only family) is "cognizant that banking and 'aiytee' had displaced medicine and engineering in the last decade as coveted careers for able young Pakistani men" (*HB* 28). Both mother and son are ecstatic when Shahzad becomes a "*Wall Street son*, [because both know that] they make millions" (*HB* 28)! It is most natural to be "swept by the spirit of the age [because] the pursuit of happiness for [them] was material" (*HB* 28). Such material pursuit is a perfectly normal state of affairs in any society around the world; for, providing subsistence for one's existence is quite imperative for one's survival. The same applies to Shahzad but he starts to have second thoughts about his role in the whole fiasco when the same pursuit shows the tendency to throw the peaceful co-existence of the world order off balance. He gives in to this materialistic hegemony, when, to the demands of his boss he says, "Nodding, I would roll up my sleeves and dig in, feeling vaguely part of the secret, intricate, if procrustean machinery that made Capitalism tick. Even if I didn't buy it, I figured who ain't a slave" (*HB* 29)? The nagging feeling in the last part of his dialogue of becoming a slave to the materialistic deity is reminiscent of the character of Changez of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* as becoming a janissary (*RF* 91). Though Shahzad does not accept the supremacy of this hegemony but he keeps himself strongly rooted to his work routine. However this "go-to-guy" (*HB* 30) is soon fired due to the guillotine of the recession that swept after 9/11. He might never have figured out the menace in the whole hegemonic game if it hadn't been for his being given the sack. It is only after he has been laid off from his job that he realizes the full clout of the power of materialism which leaves him with "a clawing emptiness in your belly and your soul" (*HB* 127. Both Changez and Shahzad either come from the category of "*Summa cum laude*" (*RF* A) or are "[d]ependable [and c]onscientious" (*HB* 30) and therefore have denounced this hegemony after tasting its sour fruit. Similarly an implicit denunciation of materialistic hegemony is experienced in *The Wish Maker* (2009) by Ali Sethi but in a purely ethnic Pakistani society[viii].

In *Burnt Shadows* (2009) by Kamila Shamsie the denunciation of hegemony is not so much in the materialistic terms but is rather more so in nationalistic terms. The thoughts of the Japanese character and the protagonist, Hiroko, are recorded with a time gap of almost half a century;

one thought was in 1946 whereas the other but similar thought of hers is expressed around the end of the century before she moves over to New York around 1998. In 1946 while telling about herself to Elizabeth, her fiancé, Konrad's German half-sister, she speaks about a gentle American doctor who had been very kind to her and says:

> I worked as a translator for over a year. Made friends with one American nurse in particular, who took me to have my hair cut short like hers, and let me borrow her clothes when we went out to nightclubs together. I'd grown up in the war; these peacetime luxuries were all new to me. I didn't ever want to go back to Nagasaki, but I was content to be in Tokyo with the Americans. And then one day – near the end of '46 – the American with the gentle face said the bomb was a terrible thing, but it had to be done to save American lives. I knew straight away I couldn't keep working for them (*BS* 43).

Hiroko's sulking manner in her dialogue conjures up the imagery of a pouting teenager thumping his feet away from a thing detestable to him. However her mature musings after almost half a century about the American nation has an implicit denunciation regarding their haughty and domineering attitude. Looking at Harry playing with her son, Raza, she muses in these words, "Americans! she thought, watching Harry … In Tokyo, thirty-five years ago, she had decided their snobbery was not of class but of nation ('The bomb saved American lives!' Even now, even now, she could feel her face burning at the memory)" (*BS* 135). At this moment her thoughts are interrupted by Harry who says to her, "Partition and the bomb. The two of you are proof that humans can overcome everything" (*BS* 135). These words of Harry seem to jolt her out of her reverie like Changez or Shahzad who were juddered out of their trances by characters like Juan Bautista or after being laid off from their jobs respectively. Similarly, Hiroko denounces the American stance after listening to Harry's comment. She weighs Harry's words by repeating them in her head; "Overcome. Such an American word [and she says out loud that,] 'Sometimes I look at my son and think perhaps the less we have to 'overcome' the more we feel aggrieved" (*BS* 135). The amount of suffering, heartache and misery that go behind these words of Hiroko speak for the atrocities different nations had to bear symbolized in the characters of Hiroko as Japanese, Sajjad as Indian Muslim and Raza, a Pakistani—starting from the Second World War and ending after 9/11. It

is the disdainful and overbearing American "post-slavery" (Bhabha *Surviving* 369-79) stance that Hiroko seems to be denouncing.

The denunciation of this materialistic hegemony expressed in these novels leads to many futuristic manifestations due to the altered "political action" (Leitch et al. 1618) around the world resulting as an impact of 9/11. These futuristic manifestations are demonstrated in the narrative expressions of these novels in the form of abhorrence of ills; the changing scales of the balance between patriarchal and matriarchal societies; a heightened or otherwise sense of duty and belonging; and the integration of individualistic features of bildungsroman in the genre of novel.

There are many episodes in the retrospective journey of Changez in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* that tantamount for his futuristic reflective thought terrains. At one instance his boss Jim talks about the time of his own youth. He talks about the "stagflation of the seventies [when] the economy was in a bad shape" (*RF* A7) but Jim says "one could just smell the opportunity. America was shifting from manufacturing to services, a huge shift, bigger than anything we'd ever seen… Most people don't recognize that, kid…They try to resist change. Power comes from becoming change" (*RF* 57-8). The conversance of Jim's words about his yester days and Juan-Bautista's comments about janissaries[ix] makes Changez think about his future course of action because he thinks that his "arc of vision" (*RF* 87) has broadened as he says that these things "added considerable momentum to my inflective journey, a journey that continues to this day…" (*RF* 88). Changez realizes that in order to become powerful he has to adopt change as Jim had suggested and he has to continue his reflective journey for a considerable time to come. These reflections make him bold enough to openly abhor certain ills prevalent in the world scene and he feels "compassion for those, like Juan-Bautista, whose lives the empire thought nothing of overturning for its own gain" (*RF* 92). The blatant denunciation of the self-centered approach is the first plunge by this young Princeton graduate who was termed as a "shark" (*RF* 41) by his boss Jim and who adhered to an acute sense of duty to "*Focus on the fundamentals*" (*RF* 59). His trajectory of bildungsroman is like the flight of the youngest sea-gull in Liam O'Flaherty's short story, "His First Flight" (1937).

Home Boy (2010), by H. M. Naqvi is a coming of age story for the protagonist and his friends and is termed as the "smart and

sorrowful…bildungsroman"(Salvatore, 2009, p. 32). It can be considered smart because the protagonist Shahzad is made to denounce the hegemonic features in an intelligent appraisal of the existing scenario around his life depicted in the narrative. It is sorrowful too as Shahzad is made to express the abhorrence of many ills where he has little or no control over them. When he is reduced to a cab driver from having been a Wall Street investment banker (*HB* 28), he encounters many ills that leave an indelible mark on his personality and his ambivalent expression on this sorry state is narrated in these words: "…the most beautiful women in the world would chase after you in stilettos and states of dishabille at four, five in the morning. They would enter your place of business, leg first, handbag dangling, and make conversation. Some were known to bare flushed breasts for no reason whatsoever; others had bared their souls" (*HB* 62). The last part of this expression of the protagonist of baring their souls is perhaps an indication that the writer wants to perceive such state of affairs at a humanistic level. This humanistic level is the manifestation of the altered situation of the world's political action, at least, on the individual level in the lives of the characters of, not only of *Home Boy* (2010) but the other three narratives under discussion.

One facet of the manifestation which has "alter[ed] the model of political action"(Leitch, 2001, p. 1618) is the changing scales of the balance between patriarchal and matriarchal societies; for it is seen that the women characters in almost all the novels are influencing the lives of the protagonists in one way or the other. Changez in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) is simply "smitten" (*RF* 18) by his beloved Erica and it is not an infatuation that he feels for her but his is a deeply gratifying experience because he considers his relationship as a "marriage of true minds" (Shakespeare 1). That is why even after coming back to Pakistan he wishfully thinks that she might turn up at his place and he feels "no need to marry another [girl, for he is] content to wait" (*RF* 106). In *Home Boy* (2010), though Shahzad does not have a stable relationship but his whole life so far, has been influenced by his mother whom he calls his "hero" (*HB* 61) and wishes to "bury [his] face in the folds of her dupatta" (*HB* 189). She is the one person whose standards of expectations he has to meet; she is the one to whom he has to constantly send money and keep up the pretenses of still being a banker, when in actuality, he is reduced to be a cab driver. His mother's friends, Mini Auntie and Niggo auntie are the ones who become his shelter after he is released from the detention center. Similarly, the character of Hiroko in *Burnt Shadows*

(2009) is shown as a binding force between the two events of 1945 and 2001. She along with her German cum British friend, Elizabeth and her granddaughter Kim make quite an influential trio in the narrative who influence their men folk in making different decisions of their lives; Harry, Sajjad and Raza are all dependent on these women one way or the other. Thus the changing scales of the balance show a strong leaning towards a matriarchal scale as compared to the patriarchal one.

Altered situation of the world's political action also manifests futuristically in the political discussions which take place at Shahzad's aunt's place in New York. These discussions have a symbolic resemblance and non-voluntary allusion to the political turmoil depicted in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) by James Joyce. The subjectivities of the guests at these parties at Mini Auntie's place are highly emblematic of a futuristic course of action; the way a social and artistic movement in Italy, *Futurism* (1909-16), emphasized and glorified themes associated with contemporary concepts of the future, including speed, technology, youth and violence, and objects such as the car, the airplane and the industrial city etc. The futuristic manifestation of the discussions narrated in *Home Boy* (2010) are going to be different than all that has preceded in history as the adjoining factors of any phenomena play a pivotal role in determining the course of action of any event around the world. Since the incidents in *Home Boy* (2010) depict an epiphanic bildungsroman for the protagonist Shahzad in a post 9/11 world, a heightened sense of duty is acutely felt in Shahzad towards his friends; towards his cabbie comrades (*HB* 146); towards his friend Jimbo's family and even towards Abdul Karim, the man whose cab Shahzad and his friends take for their musketeering spree.

The characters of *Burnt Shadows* (2009) likewise, contribute for the analysis of the altered political action. The character of Hiroko is shown as a tower of strength for all the people associated with her life. Her son, Raza, after making the fateful decision of helping the Afghan mujahedeen tries to revert back to his old self of a happy go lucky teen. It is after going through the ordeal of journeying across Afghanistan that precipitate his bildungsroman or coming of age trajectory. Shamsie traces out this trait of Raza in these words, "it was only in Raza that Harry saw reshaping as a reflexive act rather than an adaptive response" (*BS* 212). This reflexive act makes him see the hardships that he faces in his journey "in the holds of ships, beneath the floorboards of trucks…[as a]… mass grave of Kosovo"

(*BS* 255). It is his reflexive arc again which makes him defy a natural inclination of selfishness and he helps his friend at the cost of his own life and ends up in a prison cell. His bildungsroman comes at a heavier price than the protagonists of the other two novels i.e. Changez and Shahzad.

To conclude, it can be said that these Pakistani diasporic writers have marked their place in the literary cannon, emblematic of what is written in *The Empire Writes Back* (1989): "Post-colonial literary theory, then, has begun to deal with the problems of transmuting time into space, with the present struggling out of the past, and, like much recent post-colonial literature, it attempts to construct a future"(Ashcroft, 1989, p. 35). The literature written by these post 9/11 Pakistani diasporic writers has certainly transcended the "Eurocentric standards of judgment" in making their literary mark and endeavored to construct a kaleidoscopic future. Though all these writers belong to a definite cultural background but their collection can be taken as small token of what Charles R. Kesler in his essay *The Crisis of American National Identity* (2005) has said about Euclid, Shakespeare, or Bach when he writes; "But, Euclid, Shakespeare, or Bach, for example, though each had a cultural setting, was not simply produced by his culture, and the meaning of his works is certainly not dependent on it or limited to it"(Kesler, 2005, p. 26). Similarly, the works of these Pakistani writers have delimited way past the borders of the cultures they belong to. Cara Cilano in her article "Pakistani English-language Fiction" (2009) has praised Shamsie for approaching "English language literary production from an international perspective". Cilano acknowledges the need for this praise so that the "dominant Anglophone literary traditions, that is, those of US and UK, need not circumscribe Pakistani English-language literature, thereby reducing all of this literary production to some staid notion of hybridity a mimicry or leaving these works vulnerable to charges of 'inauthenticity'"(Cilano C. , 2009, p. 183). Thus Pakistani post 9/11 writers such as Hamid, Naqvi, Sethi and Shamsie have taken the post-colonial discourse on the next level of literary prowess. They can also be termed as an assemblage of an "'organic' intellectual" as mentioned by Foucault in "Truth and Power" (1977). For, organic intellectual is someone (regardless of profession) who directs the ideas and aspirations of the particularly social class to which he or she "organically" belongs, as described by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci(Foucault M. , 2001, p. 1669). These Pakistani writers, organically belonging to Pakistan, have added to the literary tradition and extended upon the older models of critique.

The characters of these novels exhibit a denunciation of capitalistic, and at times, cultural hegemonic forces, which finally leads to their futuristic courses of actions. It is all because of the ways, as Vincent B. Leitch has explained Foucault's view point that "The modern world has repeatedly seen governments manipulate their populations by outright lies and cover-ups of the truth... Americans protesting the war in Vietnam saw the strategy of exposing government lies as crucial...Foucault argues, however, that 'truth' is always a part of a 'regime'"(Leitch, 2001, p. 1620). This implies that if truth is in the hands of any hegemonic regime it has different connotation as compared to the truth spoken by an "organic intellectual". Consequently, that is why Michael Foucault in his essay "Truth and Power" (1977) states: "Truth is a thing of this world; it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power". These Pakistani diasporic writers are part of this world and after going through several forms of constraints and adversities depicted through their characters, come up with truths which endorse the power of their viewpoint. They have implicitly, as well as explicitly, expressed through their narratives, working on this principle of Foucault that "It's not a matter of emancipating truth from every system of power...but of detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony" (Foucault M. , 2001, pp. 1668-70). It was perhaps the urge of separating truth from its hegemonic forms that inspired Bob Dylan to write the lyrics "Blowing in the Wind" in 1963 which attained the status of anthem for US civil rights. These post 9/11 Pakistani diasporic writers have attempted likewise to limn the hegemonic features of a post 9/11 world. Camille Paglia writes for Edward Said's book, *Culture and Imperialism*: "Literary criticism, which is struggling to bridge the gap between art and politics"(Said, 1994). These post 9/11 Pakistani diasporic writers have likewise modestly endeavored to bridge the gap between art/literature and politics in their narratives.

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End Notes:

[i] I cite and use this term as theorized by Michel Foucault. See *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth* (1997) p. 231 where Foucault uses this term and *Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (2001)p. 1618, among several other places of these two books. In *Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (2001), while discussing the role of power in Foucault's theory of New Historicism, Vincent B. Leitch writes in the introductory passage for Michel Foucault, thatthe "diffusion of power through the "capillaries" of the social system alters the model of political action" (1618).

[ii] See *The Empire Writes Back* p. 33, also cited in bibliography.

[iii]See my paper "Post 9/11 Pakistan's Diasporic Fiction: Redefining Boundaries of South Asian Literature" in *Kashmir Journal of Language Research (KJLR)*. Dec. 2016. ISSN 1028-6640 Volume 19. Issue No 1. 169-179. One of the arguments of this published paper is that the thematic issues of Pakistani post 9/11 novel, are adding new dimensions to the major thematic concerns of the contemporary literary world, and therefore these prima indicants are redefining the boundaries of South Asian literature.

[iv] These phrases are taken from the chapter, "Technologies of the Self" in the book, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth* by Michel Foucault, which is the first Volume of *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault: 1954-1984*, a series, originally published as *Dits and Ecrits, 1954-1988*, in 1994 by Editions Gallimard, Paris.Published in the United States by The New Press, New York Distributed by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York in 1997, with Paul Rabinow as series editor and translated by Robert Hurley and others.

[v] Since they are my primary texts, I will use the initials of the titles of these novels henceforth. Therefore, for *The Reluctant Fundamentalist,* I use (*RF*), for *Home Boy (HB),* for *Burnt Shadows* (*BS*), and *The Wish Maker* (*WM*).

[vi]Cited in one of my research paper mentioned in end note 3.

[vii]Mentioned in one of my other papers, unpublished so far. Since this novel is discussed in detail in my other paper under consideration for publication, I will refer to this novel only in passing to avoid repetition.

[viii] See the detailed discussion about this novel in my other paper titled, "The Dawn of Twenty first Century and Pakistan's "Cultural Complexity": *The Wish Maker* (2009) by Ali Sethi", currently considered for publication.

[ix] This concept is discussed in detail in two of my other papers.