

## ESSENTIALIZED REPRESENTATION OF THE EAST: A REORIENTALIST STUDY OF SELECTED PAKISTANI DIASPORIC ANGLOPHONE FICTION

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### ABSTRACT

*The present study is oriented to sift the theory of reorientalism that the Pakistani diasporic writers use as a tool to represent an essentialised and glorified picture of their native land. Unlike orientalism, reorientalism deals with how the East is presented as a spectacle of consumption in the West by the Eastern writers themselves. This study examines the issue of literary representation at the global level which goes through Western gatekeepers for publication. Pakistani diasporic writers are instigating a simulated truth instead of a holistic portrayal of 21<sup>st</sup> century Pakistan by culturally appropriating and mimicking their native cultural and regional aspects. This study proposes that these writers are marketed as insiders by the West but in actuality, they are outsiders as they have lost touch with their roots. The critique of the selected text highlights that contemporary Pakistani fiction requires radical epistemic delinking from the colonial matrix of power and aims to highlight the establishment of epistemic pluriversality and calls for an end of cultural and epistemic exploitation and hierarchies among several epistemologies*

**Keywords:** commodification, cultural appropriation, epistemic pluriversality, essentialism, misrepresentation, reorientalism

### INTRODUCTION

Pakistani literature written in English is not completely devoid of the after effects of colonisation. The Pakistani writers writing in English are actively attempting to impress the British readers and to gain access to a wider international readership. It is also believed that these writers are portraying the culture of difference in their novels for the European/foreign market. Culture of difference implies that they exoticise cultural and regional differences and attach essentialised values, beliefs, and behaviours with Orientals and it promotes alienation and gap amongst the nations. Another major issue with such writings is connected with nationalism as the negative portrayal of Oriental countries by their own writers negatively affects the nationalistic image at a global level. It raises the question of whether this is a political decision or simply something dictated by the publishing industry for the survival of Oriental writers. These concerns of representation at the global level led to the emergence of reorientalist perspective. It renders the question of authenticity of representation. This research also examines the concept of cultural appropriation and the role of the West in using the writers of Orient origin as tools to reinforce their superiority and hegemony. It also explores cultural essentialism that is seen in the writings of diasporic writers. The Anglophone diasporic writers have turned their profession of literary writing into a profitable business. They are tainting the image of Pakistan at a global level by narrating the incidents which they might have seen or heard about in their childhood and now only have a faint memory of them. They are unaware of the current scenario of social and political conditions of Pakistan but are writing about it as if they are presenting facts and reality. Anglophone writings receive more appreciation as it is the language of the colonisers so the elite class tends to take its full advantage by writing novels in the English language. This results in creating celebrity culture and they become more recognised in the West and receive literary prizes and awards. Although their writings do not hold much literary and aesthetic merit as compared to the native

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writers who are less recognised. They culturally appropriate their native society by exploiting its aspects and practices. The West promotes native writers to avoid being labeled as cultural appropriators. They bring insiders to appropriate their own land. These writers are generally liberal elites who are prejudiced as they are writing only that type of stereotyped fiction that is in demand in the Western market. So, they are also outsiders who are attempting to be a part of the Western culture. Secondly, they also get monetary benefits and recognition from Western readers which make them popular worldwide. This research article attempts to answer the following research question.

1. Is Pakistani diasporic writer used by the West as an insider to culturally exploit Orient through cultural appropriation?

This research on reorientalism is chosen as it is an emerging issue seen in the writings of diasporic postcolonial writers writing in English. Such a reorientalist and essentialised picture shown by the diasporic writers not only affects how the rest of the world sees us but also how it negatively affects our perception of ourselves.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Diasporic writers of Pakistan have long been contributing to English literature. However, after the 9/11 attack, a shift in the reading pattern was observed and Western readers grew more curious to learn about the culture and ideology of Pakistan. The growing recognition of the diasporic works led to the commodification of content which led to a compromise in literary and ideological merit of the content. Another shift observed was in the pattern of content being written and promoted by Oriental writers especially diasporic Pakistani writers. Their writings particularised the image of the Orient and they were also charged with the presentation of an essentialised and monolithic picture of their native country. This pattern of representation led to the emergence of the concept of Reorientalism. Reorientalist theory thus deals with the question that how the East is presented as a spectacle of consumption in the West.

### Previous works on Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers*

Nadeem Aslam, the writer of *Maps for Lost Lovers*, is a world-renowned author who also follows the trend of selling his work as a cultural commodity. One such research titled "A Female Perspective on Exile in Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers*" by Joanna Antoniak shows the struggles of women to adjust and learn English in the immigrated country. It inculcates trauma and isolation in them as they have to leave their homeland and move to a completely new place which distances them from their family members. Aslam himself had the experience of exile as his family moved from Pakistan when he was fourteen years old because of his father's political beliefs. The trauma of exile is shown comparatively more in women than males by Aslam. He has shown such female characters in the novel *Maps for Lost Lovers*. The female character Kaukab faced the issue of learning English in England and was alienated as she could not communicate with other people in their language. Women also have to protect themselves and their families from the negative moral values and religious differences of the West. It thus shows the trauma of exile is devastating especially for females who suffer to even communicate in a foreign language.

Female members of the minority community are not open to letting go of their native culture and are also reluctant to accept the new culture. Diasporic women are distanced from their native hometowns and self-isolated from the host culture. Furthermore, they have the fear of not being able to return to their homeland and also that they can be exiled from the new land. Antoniak further elaborates on the internal exile of the South Asian women; one of which is linguistic exile as discussed earlier. It is the inability to properly communicate in English which snubs their voice to have conversations freely with the members of the majority community. Another type of exile is social exile which the members of the minority groups face. They avoid assimilation in the new culture and are not social which is exemplified through Kaukab. But her daughter Mah-Jabin who was born in Britain did not face this issue. She considered Britain as her homeland, not Pakistan. In the case of Kaukab, self-isolation gives her psychological comfort and is a reaction to internal exile. It helps her to cope with the trauma of leaving her homeland and gives her the strength to survive in the dominant culture.

Another article titled "Existential Strain in Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers*" by Muhammad Nawaz and Muhammad Mehboob Ul Hassan discusses the theme of nothingness and existential crisis through the characters that are reluctant to follow Pakistani culture. Jugnu and

Chanda were living together out of wedlock and were murdered in the name of honour killing. A struggle is depicted between people and society so every chapter narrates the plot of a similar situation of different families. Similar to the situation of Jugnu and Chanda is the story of a Sikh girl who was not allowed to meet the person of her choice as he was a Muslim. Another narration is of a woman who was divorced by her drunken husband through no fault of her own. She was desperate to find another man who can marry her and then divorce her so she can remarry her ex-husband. Another one is of a woman who left her husband as he used to beat her but she could not tell anyone about this because society would consider her responsible for ruining their marriage. Another one is of a child who tries to get into medical college multiple times but fails every time and was encouraged by his white girlfriend to study arts. He could not pursue arts because of the preconceived notions of worth and respect is attached to the medical field in Pakistan and not to the field of arts.

Existentialism highlights the search for meaning in this meaningless life. People from a minority country like Pakistan moved to Britain for better socio-economic conditions but the murder of a young couple led to doubts and confusion in the minds of people about the meaning and purpose of their lives. After hearing the news of the death of Jugnu, Shamas laid down as if he were paralyzed which depicts his sense of fear, nothingness, and anxiety. Anxiety is a part of existentialism and like anxiety; conflict is also its part. In the novel two types of conflicts are evident. One is the conflict of man vs. society and the other is the conflict of man vs. nature. The killing of Chanda and Jugnu in the name of honour falls under the conflict of man vs. society. Nothingness is also an element of existentialism that happens when people feel helpless and fall into existential strain. It is seen when Kiran's father migrated from India to Pakistan and lost his family members during migration. He could do nothing at that time to protect their lives and his life at the same time. All these stories depict the sense of helplessness and nothingness in the lives of characters which leaves a void in them.

“Concept of Islam in Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers* (2004)” by Ahmad Ullah et al. illustrates the effects and changes in the lives of immigrant Muslims and Westerners after the 9/11 attack. The whole scenario turned against Muslims which is discussed thoroughly in *Maps for Lost Lovers* by Nadeem Aslam. It resulted in a negative representation of the Muslims and they were believed to be terrorists worldwide. The USA even passed the Act of Patriotism in 2001 which included the exile of immigrant Muslims from some of their states on the suspicion of being terrorists. Aslam believes Islam is not a religion of violence and makes extremist characters a spectacle of a laugh in his work. This research however elaborates how Muslims themselves are going against the teachings of Islam. By living in a foreign land, Muslims want to get rid of the restrictions imposed by their religion and seek freedom. They follow the cultural values of the West and have moved far away from Islam. The main characters Shamas and Jugnu were secular who did not hold any value for their religion. Shamas's wife was his exact opposite who blamed her father for marrying her with a secular person. She even wanted her children to stay away from their father because of his anti-religious notions and beliefs.

It depicts the influence of Western culture and ideology on the lifestyle and behaviour of immigrants who are attracted to its freedom. It is a grave concern that the young generation of Pakistan living abroad has rejected Islam. The characters in the novel believed in science as it could provide answers to their queries through scientific methods which are reliable for them. They were against the preaching of the Prophet (PBUH) and believed him to be an illiterate merchant which is completely a wrong notion. Aslam also criticises the so-called mullahs who preach wrong views and incomplete knowledge of Islam and do not allow immigrants to meet with or marry white people. They trap innocent people into believing that they can prevent them from “jinn” and black magic and physically abuse them. They are ignorant who deceive people in the name of Allah. They are responsible for making people turn away from this beautiful peace-loving religion. The superstitions of ignorant people are also explored which believe that the children born near the holy month of Ramadan are blessed ones and will grow up to be pious Muslims. Several other myths are mentioned which do not hold any significance or truth. Another character Suraya also held similar views about Islam. She was a divorcee who had to marry another man and only after that she could marry her ex-husband again. She seduced another man who was also married and exploited religion as well by spending several nights with him. Yet she believed that it was unjustified to her as she had to go through this procedure alone of marrying another man and the same rule was not applicable for her ex-husband. Through the examples of above mentioned characters, Nadeem critiques such secular

Muslims who are indifferent and uninterested in Islam. He defends Islam by portraying the evil deeds of such people to prevent their spread in society. He is in support of the true and real meaning of the religion Islam.

The present chapter gives a critical review of several research articles on various themes and perspectives on the selected novel. The issue of misrepresentation or reorientalism is not discussed in any of them, which this research aims to take under examination. The selected Pakistani diasporic writer is tainting the image of the Orient and creating simulated identity through the essentialised and stereotypical representation of his native homeland. This research seeks to thoroughly identify his role whether as a cultural informer or cultural exploiter. It will also highlight whether he is carrying the burden of positive and true nationalistic representation globally or not. This enables the reader to recognise the gap which the present research is going to fill up.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This research attempts to highlight the biasness and imbalance of artistic integrity of the Pakistani diasporic writer who is commodifying from his culture and identity in the name of showing the true and real side of his native society. The readers of the East believe that it is unjustified and unfair on behalf of a diasporic writer who belittles the values and traditions of the Orient and secondly a lot has changed since the colonial time which is not portrayed by him. The petty issues over honour and not giving women and girls their rights were the stories of the past. It cannot be denied that even now it might be prevalent in some very backward areas of the developing countries but this does not constitute the whole picture as the present situation in the urban areas has changed to a great extent. The writer does carry the responsibility of showing what is prevalent in the present times so that the voices of his own people are not snubbed and their identity is not essentialised. However, he is doing the opposite of this and reinforcing the preconceived inferiority of Pakistan through reorientalism.

After orientalism and neo-orientalism, reorientalism came to rise. It got prominence with the essay of Lisa Lau, “Re-Orientalism: The Perpetration and Development of Orientalism by Orientals” in 2009. A wave of the shift in writing perspective came with the emergence of Reorientalism. Before its emergence, Orientalism was in literary writings which involved the representation of the Orient by the powerful Western community. However, in contemporary South Asian writing, the role of the powerful is taken over by the South Asian writers themselves mainly by the diasporic writers. This process is known as Reorientalism. In contemporary times, reorientalism has highlighted the position of Oriental as the insider and the outsider. The Orientals are themselves responsible for self othering their own native culture, norms, traditions, and religion globally. They have skewed the image of the Orient and Orientals and confided them to the position of “the other” along with the problem of marketing their negative generalised and totalised image.

The theory of reorientalism deals with the issue of representation by Oriental writers. This theory is significant in the contemporary postcolonial era as it examines the issues of literary representation at the global level. It deals with various aspects related to education, literature, and representation. But the main focus is the overriding desire for approval which is not only seen in the diasporic writers but the native writers as well. Writers, by breeding the culture of otherness or difference, exoticise and glorify the differences and highlight the grave and dark issues of the Eastern society which paints a pitiable picture in the minds of the readers. It is ironic as the propaganda is the same as before but the mode of transmission is changed.

The parameter of judging the merit of a literary work is given to the West and Western readers by the Orientals themselves. This implies that the writings of the South Asian writers of the third world have to go through the Western gatekeepers which ensure the hegemony of the West. Whoever writes according to the demands of the West is given recognition and fame by the West. One such example of gaining commodity in the global market based on the demands of Western readers is the fame of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid. This novel got fame as it was published after 9/11. War of terror and Muslims were a controversial topic at that time so the notion of Muslims as terrorists got eminence. The theory of Reorientalism studies the competitiveness in the global capitalist market and its impact on the writing styles of diasporic writers who cannot survive based solely on the artistic merit and plot of their narrative. They have to keep in touch with the changing demands of the readers and market. Hence, they use reorientalist narratives to meet such demands.

This theory also covers the issue of distribution of the fictional works of diasporic writers by the Western publishing houses. Western publishing houses and agents make sure that only those novels get published which accentuate the “us” and “them” dichotomy. To be approved by publishing houses, Orient writers are bound to make their native land a spectacle for the Occident and turn it into a cultural commodity to be consumed by the global readers. They are forced on some level to create social, racial, cultural, and regional stereotypes which propagate reorientalist narratives. Whereas native or home authors who do not have access to these publishers and publishing houses or those who refuse to propagate such narratives lag far behind. This theory also highlights how this all contributes to the establishment of celebrity culture. The writings of famous writers sell extremely well rather than home authors because of the marketing attached to them. Western publishers and agents publish those novels that narrate stereotypes and stories of the miserable lives of the Orient to gain huge profits. It turns out to be fruitful both for the publisher and the writer as well. However, it does not mean that the writings of famous authors hold great literary merit or the writer has shown an extreme amount of literary talent. It is all just a ploy in the hands of the West which contributes immensely to their own capitalism. The writer thus, as Lau writes, “becomes a supplier and trader more than an artiste and would find it necessary to reorientalise in order to create an identity easily recognisable to its main audience” (2011, p. 27).

This research will also examine cultural appropriation in the selected text. Cultural appropriation is defined as borrowing, sharing, and taking inspiration from other cultures. It is a process that is occurring when distinct cultures first crossed paths. It is claimed that no culture is completely authentic as every culture is inspired by one another. The meaning of appropriation is to take for oneself or to take without permission. However, the actual interpretation of cultural appropriation is when people of a dominant culture imitate features of a historically oppressed or minority culture for their own advantage without considering the impact on the oppressed. This research explores how cultural appropriation represents a continuing pattern of oppression, where the culture that outlaws practices, exploits those same practices to benefit the privileged.

Pakistani diasporic writers living in America are contributing to cultural appropriation through their writings. They are aided and appreciated by American society because cultural appropriation deals with the concept of insiders and outsiders. With what power, what right, and what repercussions does someone represent another? Who is speaking on behalf of whom? When outsiders write about another culture, they cannot avoid accusations of misrepresenting it. But how can someone who has lived his life in another country, completely cut off from the soils of the country he purports to represent, be considered an insider? How can someone who has been assimilated into a dominant culture claim ownership of another culture? They only have one thing in common: they were born in Pakistan, yet they distort and misappropriate our culture as if it were their own. It is politics of representation, in which the West misrepresents the Orient through diasporic writers who are originally from the Orient.

Exchange, dominance, exploitation, and transculturation are the four types of cultural appropriation. *Cultural exploitation* refers to the appropriation of elements of a subordinated culture by a dominant culture without substantial reciprocity, permission, or recompense. When a cultural property is taken unfairly in a way that damages cultural members while benefiting the appropriator, this is known as exploitation. Appropriation hides power disparities by making it appear that society accepts the culture by selling and sharing cultural imagery and names, but in reality, these cultural materials may not correctly reflect the culture and, in many cases, do not benefit the culture financially. Exploitation theory is explored concerning reorientalism because it is useful in showing how situations, like appropriation, that may appear to be just can indeed be harmful.

Many concerns are linked with such appropriation, so steps must be taken to prevent it. The first issue to be concerned about is cultural degradation. The preservation of cultural aspects is the second concern. Deprivation of material advantage is the third concern concerning cultural exploitation. The fourth aspect of commodification is closely tied to the issues of material recompense, in which other cultures are employed in an endless production of differences required for the commodity machine's perpetuation. This research article aims to study the potential consequences of misrecognition, non-recognition, and exploitation. It offers a means of determining the harmfulness of cultural appropriation through the exploration of whether an instance of cultural appropriation

results in exploitation. Lack of recognition and exploitation can result in serious harm to cultures as they are silenced, made invisible, and are stereotyped.

This research works towards bringing awareness against the reorientalised narratives through radical epistemic delinking. It holds the possibility to delink us from the “colonial matrix of power” and to bring about dynamic changes in global power relations. The people of the Orient need to separate themselves from “Other epistemologies” and “Other knowledge” to undermine the hegemonic institutions of power and recognition. This is not purely an academic move; rather, it is a concrete political struggle against colonial epistemic violence. They need to figure out who has complete epistemic power? What knowledge has been included in the academic agenda? Who is the central figure? Who, on the other hand, remains on the periphery? They need to determine why the Eurocentric knowledge model, which establishes hegemony, has survived historic colonisation and is maintained till the present day.

Delinking from the colonial matrix of power does not mean that Orientals need to dismiss modernity as a widespread concept. It means that epistemic delinking acknowledges the Western corpus of knowledge but also recognises its limits as it can be problematic if it is assumed to be the only viable model of knowledge. Decoloniality presupposes a shift in the *geopolitics of knowledge* that leads to the establishment of epistemic pluriversality. It demands that the hierarchies between different epistemologies be abolished. It requires the creation of a society in which people are taught how to delink from the imposed forms of life from an early age through education, family, media, and social environment.

The next phase is epistemic reconstitution. To begin, Orientals need to understand their position in the colonial power matrix, where they have been located and classed. Second, they shall begin to act. A decolonial shift must be implemented, which entails a shift away from imperial/colonial epistemology. The liberation and clearing of the Coloniality of Being is the goal of decolonial philosophy. The imperial viewpoint was believed to be the only one that was valid and therefore superior. Delinking entails making coexisting models of thought evident after they have been repressed and disavowed. Delinking is likely the most critical and radical step towards new globalisation that must be taken. Delinking entails freeing oneself from tyranny and reinvesting in what has been silenced, making visible what has been rendered invisible, and affirming the presence of what has been deemed absent.

Chapter third of this research constitutes a theoretical framework that analyses the selected text through the theory of reorientalism. It elaborates the politics of representation by the Pakistani diasporic writer who is determined to exoticise and commodify from his literary work. He does not take the responsibility of carrying the burden of a positive nationalistic image at a global level. He is propagating what was prevalent in the colonial era. So, he must not be considered an insider only because he was born or lived for a few years in his native homeland. He is promoting an essentialist mindset and ideology and creating a simulated reality that is far from reality. His word does not hold much significance because he is not the light bearer and truth holder of the Orient. He is well aware of the market demands and is consciously exploiting his own culture. All this contributes to ensure the superiority of the West which makes the East “the other”. It is the propagation of orientalism in the postcolonial era which makes Orient a failed postcolonial state.

## DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the critical analysis of the selected novel *Maps for Lost Lovers* by Nadeem Aslam. The selected writer claims to be portraying the side of Pakistan that is unfamiliar to the Western readers but that side consists of only the negative and dark aspects of Pakistan. The writer presents a culturally essentialist picture of his native land. Although the selected text is highly acclaimed and famous in the West but it is far from reality and authentic representation of Pakistan. This chapter attempts to highlight those aspects which are deliberately written by the diasporic Pakistani writer to exoticise Pakistan and to cater to the demands of Western publishing houses and agents.

*Maps for Lost Lovers* written by Nadeem Aslam sheds light on the cultural and religious differences of the West and the East. The analysis of this novel highlights the point of view of a diasporic writer whose efforts are evidently to discourage and deviate Muslims from their religious path and enlighten them with the beauty of Western culture.

Nadeem Aslam starts his novel by citing the incident of a Sikh girl who wanted to marry a Muslim boy. At the very start, Aslam has set the background depicting that Pakistan is a country that is intolerant to religious and racial differences. Racial discrimination is prevalent in Pakistani society to the point that a Muslim girl was not allowed to even meet with her lover who was a Hindu. Her parents believed that she was possessed and had to be exorcised by a holy man. She was severely beaten, not fed with any food or water, and was not allowed to sleep for several days. The parents were well aware of all this as they were in the next room reading Koran for her. She was dead with legs and arms broken within a few days. There are also elaborate descriptions in the first chapter about how poor Pakistan is with its sad history of partition and the murders of several innocent people. The natives who are currently residing here are living their lives in punishment with no shred of happiness and dignity. Essentialised and exploitative notions are being made in the novel which is quite disrespectful and false.

There is a lot of storytelling by Aslam to propagate false notions about Pakistanis. One of which is that people had seen a couple by the lakeside. The stomach of the woman was glowing which people believed were the souls of Jugnu and Chanda with their unborn child. No one knew that with surety but the rumors were spreading like wildfire in the town. These stories are absurd and portray Pakistanis as ancient-minded people who believe that spirits come in the form of moths. He also mentioned that “women aren’t allowed to be present at the burial, and must come to the cemetery later” (Aslam, 2007, p. 209). It is not true as women are not allowed to be present at the time of burial and after the burial at the cemetery. Only men are supposed to perform the duties of burial. Several essentialised portrayals are seen throughout the novel. Such stories are added to exoticise our religion for Western readers.

The molesting of a child by a fifty year old junior cleric at a mosque is also elaborated. Although clerics are claimed to be pious men but the sexual motive of some of the clerics is highlighted to generalise their wrong character and misuse of position. He showed how the parents of daughters who face assaults, avoid reporting the matter to the police officers. They believe that it will ruin the chances of their marriage. It will also affect the lives of their other daughters. It is described in the novel that a seven year old girl was assaulted by a junior cleric. The parents were asked to go to the court for a hearing, but as the scandal was against an apparent holy man and all the clerics at the mosque supported him so the parents refused to make the case a spectacle for people.

A sense of extreme honour is associated with honour killing in Pakistan as elaborated by Aslam. People who kill in the name of honour openly confess their crimes because they get out of jail earlier than those who commit other sorts of murders. Such leniency is observed because their laws, customs, and religion allow them to restore their honour. Aslam believes as if every Muslim parent is proud of sons who redeem their family’s name by killing their sisters believing that “they were sinners and Allah used me as a sword against them” (Aslam, 2007, p. 188). However, it is not true as the law stands to provide justice to every alleged murderer regardless of the fact that it is done to save honour or not. The writer is giving the impression that only the justice system in England is fair and the courts in Pakistan let away murderers by being empathetic to them. Secondly, the murderers either choose to ignore or are ignorant of the fact that Allah forbids taking the life of any living being. The killing of one person is like killing the whole of humanity. Aslam has conveniently used Islam to justify every barbaric act of Muslims.

Oriental diasporic writers have distorted the real meaning of Islam. The writer has quoted several Quranic incidents that are not even true. He seems to justify every moment of his life by citing a made-up story that lags far behind the truth. Shamas openly criticised his conflicts in Islam in front of Kaukab who he knew was religious. When Jugnu brought his white girlfriend over to his brother’s home for dinner, Shamas voiced his views in a very subtle way saying, “Pakistanis are the most talkative people on earth. My goodness, we use seven syllables just to say hello: Assalamaulaikum” (Aslam, 2007, p. 49). Even Jugnu had similar views to Shamas. He believed that he was not given a choice to choose his religion. He was born in a Muslim family so he was a Muslim. If he were given a choice, he simply would have rejected. He even said, “Had I lived at the time of Muhammad, and he came to me with his heavenly message, I would have walked away” (Aslam, 2007, p. 49).

There are wrongly quoted teachings of the Koran in the novel, one of which is when the drunken husband divorced his wife. It is mentioned by Aslam that, “The husband – who was the only one in a Muslim marriage with the right to divorce” (Aslam, 2007, p. 171) is completely wrong

because the wife also holds the right to divorce her husband through *Khulah* in a Muslim marriage. Aslam has provided Islamic references to give the readers the impression that he is giving factual information. In actuality, these are wrong references. For example, he says that if a wife refuses to copulate with her husband, then his seventy two *houris* wives in heaven curse her all night. Another misrepresentation is of breaking the fast. Aslam tells that a wife is allowed to break her fast to taste the food while cooking for her husband. It will protect her from his beating if the spices are not properly added to give the right taste. This will count as her love for him. However, it is not allowed in Islam. No one is allowed to break their fast unless they have some medical emergency. Secondly, the love of our Creator holds the highest regard as compared to the love of any other object or person. The wrong description of slaughtering of animals by Muslims is also given that they are beaten to be unconscious before slaughter and blood flows out of them while they are alive. It is not true as the animal dies at the moment the knife cuts its throat. It does not go through any pain. Muslims do not believe in animal cruelty and do not slaughter them for pleasure.

Aslam has raised certain questions to create speculation and doubts in the minds of Muslim readers about Islam. He has narrated the incident that Allah blessed his creation with heaven. A child died in his childhood because Allah knew he would grow up to be a sinner so He saved him. It, however, raises questions that why did Allah let other people rot in hell and not have them dead before they became sinners. Shamas believed in science and argued with Kaukab that if circumcision proved to be unhealthy in the future, Muslims will not stop doing it. Western doctors prohibit first cousin marriages but Muslims do marry them. He believed Muslims have blind faith in Allah and in His teachings and he believed more in logical explanations which were understandable to the common man. His children also held similar views and left the home so they do not have to argue with their mother who held opposite views.

This chapter concludes by highlighting the hypocrisy of the diasporic writer who is motivated by financial gains and is not burdened by portraying a positive and peace-loving nationalistic image of Pakistan. The writer resides abroad and has the power of pen which is mightier than the power of sword so he must play an active part in demolishing culturalism and Western epistemic dominancy and create narratives that can be held equally valuable and authentic by every reader of the world. This chapter concludes by bringing the prejudiced writing of the diasporic writer to limelight and attempts to bring the Western readers as well as the Eastern readers an awareness of the true motives of the selected writer.

## CONCLUSION

The selected novel shows that the writer has abused his role as a cultural informer to gain fame and money in the West. Nadeem Aslam cannot be considered an insider as he has taken advantage of his position in the developed country and popularised the culture of difference by writing about those aspects which were in demand by the Western readers about Pakistani society, culture, and religion. So, he glorified and exoticised only the negative aspects. He has shown only the derogatory and dark aspects of Pakistan which cannot be generalised and culturalised as its true representation. Even today, the East measures the worth of its literary writings through the Western yardstick. The writers who receive Western literary awards and acclaim hold celebrity status. In this way, they are encouraged to write essentialised and exploitative scenarios of Pakistan to survive in the competing capitalist market. It shows that these writers have taken over the roles of their colonisers to maintain their submissive position in the global context. It is colonialism in the contemporary world that confiscates the identity and authentic representation of the minorities. The solution to contest and diminish this sort of style is through Epistemic Delinking. It involves demolishing epistemic hierarchies where Western episteme is regarded as superior to Eastern episteme. Diasporic writers need to play their part in demolishing this universalism as it does not give the chance of equal and fair representation to minority communities. Aslam is generalising such scenarios that are prevalent in some villages or small areas of Pakistan and are observed very rarely by some illiterate or ignorant people. Any event that used to take place ages ago is shown by him as a part of the present world. Most of the girls are now given proper education in Pakistan but this betterment or change is not mentioned anywhere in Pakistani Anglophone fiction. It is a disadvantageous element as the Western readers who are unaware of the authentic culture, religion, norms, and traditions of the Orient will not be completely informed through such texts. They have access to diasporic writings from which they



perceive simulated truth about South Asian society and its people. There will be added terrorised and horrified reception of Orient. If the representation is not just and positive, it will result in the construction of the negative image in their minds which will further increase the culture of difference. Pakistani diasporic writers must try to use their position abroad to change their stereotypical status, and shift the geopolitics of knowledge. Steps must be taken by encouraging Anglophone writers to establish epistemic pluriversality. It involves giving the literature of minorities an equal and fair representation worldwide. It will also result in challenging the supremacy of the West and eventually bring a change in the mindset of Western readers and practices of Eastern writers as well.

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