

***Epistemology of Humanism: A Multipronged Analysis of the  
Select Works of Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie***

(Thesis submitted to Nagaland University in partial fulfillment of requirements for  
award of Ph.D. degree in English)

Submitted By

**Soyimla Akum**

**Regn. No. - PhD/ENG/00040 (w.e.f. 21/08/2017)**

Under the supervision of

**Prof. Nigamananda Das**



Department of English

School of Humanities and Education

Nagaland University

Kohima Campus: Meriema

**2022**

**CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION**

I, Soyimla Akum, hereby declare that the subject matter of my thesis entitled *Epistemology of Humanism: A Multipronged Analysis of the Select Works of Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie* is the bonafide record of work done by me under the supervision of Prof. Nigamananda Das and that the content of the thesis did not form the basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis or any part of it, has not been submitted by me for any other research degree, fellowship, associateship, etc. in any other university or institute. This is being submitted to the Nagaland University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English.

21<sup>st</sup> February 2022

Soyimla Akum

Regn. No.- PhD/ENG/00040 (w.e.f. 21/08/2017)

Countersigned by:

Supervisor

Head



Nagaland

University

(A Central University established by the act of Parliament, 35/1989)

*Department of English*

Kohima Campus, Meriema, Kohima-797004, Nagaland, India

NU/ Eng/2022/

21<sup>st</sup> February 2022

***SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATE***

**This is to certify that the thesis titled *Epistemology of Humanism: A Multipronged Analysis of the Select Works of Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie* is the bonafide record of research work done by Soyimla Akum, Regn. No. PhD/ENG/00040 (w.e.f. 21/08/2017), Department of English, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema during 2017-2021. Submitted to the Nagaland University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English, this thesis has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or other title and that the thesis represents independent and original work on the part of the scholar under my supervision. This is again certified that the research has been undertaken as per UGC Regulations May 2016 (amended) and the scholar has fulfilled the criteria mentioned in the University Ordinances for submission of the thesis. Plagiarism test of the thesis has been conducted and 4% of similarity has been detected which is permissible under the UGC regulations 2018.**

**Dated the 21<sup>st</sup> of February 2022**

**Kohima**

**SUPERVISOR**

***Prof. Nigamananda Das***

**Department of English**

**Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema**

**Kohima-797004, Nagaland, Mob.- +919436608904**

**Email - [nmdas69@yahoo.co.in](mailto:nmdas69@yahoo.co.in)**



Nagaland University  
 (A Central University established by the act of Parliament, 35/1989)  
 Department of English  
 Kohima Campus, Meriema, Kohima-797004, Nagaland

---

### PLAGIARISM TEST CERTIFICATE

Name of the Research Scholar	Soyimla Akum
Ph.D. Registration Number	PhD/ENG/00040
Title of Ph.D./ M.Phil. Dissertation	<i>Epistemology of Humanism: A Multipronged Analysis of the Select Works of Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie</i>
Name & Institutional Address of the Supervisor	Prof. Nigamananda Das Department of English, Nagaland University. Kohima Campus; Meriema.
Name of the Department and School	English. School of Humanities and Education
Date of Submission	17 <sup>th</sup> February 2022
Date of Plagiarism Check	17 <sup>th</sup> February 2022
Percentage of similarity detected by the URKUND software	4%

I hereby declare/certify that the Ph.D. Dissertation submitted by me is complete in all respect, as per the guidelines of Nagaland University for this purpose. I also certify that the thesis/dissertation (soft copy) has been checked for plagiarism using URKUND similarity check software. It is also certified that the contents of the electronic version of the thesis/ dissertation are the same as the final hardcopy of the thesis/ dissertation. Copy of the Report generated by the URKUND software is also enclosed.

Date:

Name and signature of the Scholar

Place:

Name and Signature of the Supervisor with seal



**Plagiarism check Proof: Urkund Report**

Fwd: [Original] 4% similarity - [nndas@nagalanduniversity.ac.in](mailto:nndas@nagalanduniversity.ac.in)

Inbox



**Nigamananda Das**

Feb 17, 2022,  
4:25 PM (1 day  
ago)

to me

----- Forwarded message -----

From: <[noreply@urkund.com](mailto:noreply@urkund.com)>

Date: Thu, Feb 17, 2022 at 4:17 PM

Subject: [Original] 4% similarity - [nndas@nagalanduniversity.ac.in](mailto:nndas@nagalanduniversity.ac.in)

To: <[nndas@nagalanduniversity.ac.in](mailto:nndas@nagalanduniversity.ac.in)>

Document sent by: [nndas@nagalanduniversity.ac.in](mailto:nndas@nagalanduniversity.ac.in)

Document received: 2/17/2022 11:33:00 AM

Report generated 2/17/2022 11:47:01 AM by Ouriginal's system for automatic control.

Student message: Plagiarism Test

-----  
Document : Soyimla Akum Ph.D. Thesis.docx[D128117064]

About 4% of this document consists of text similar to text found in 120 sources. The largest marking is 80 words long and is 96% similar to its primary source.

PLEASE NOTE that the above figures do not automatically mean that there is plagiarism in the document. There may be good reasons as to why parts of a text also appear in other sources. For a reasonable suspicion of academic dishonesty to present itself, the analysis, possibly found sources and the original document need to be examined closely.

Click here to open the analysis:

<https://secure.urkund.com/view/122225451-472119-126442>

Click here to download the document:

<https://secure.ouriginal.com/archive/download/128117064-259206-544150>

## Acknowledgement

The development of this thesis, from a minuscule concept into to a full-fledged work, could not have been possible without the help, support and guidance of many individuals who have extended their service during the preparation and completion of this thesis.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Nigamananda Das, for his infinite patience in helping me develop this thesis. His knowledge and guidance have been invaluable. A scholar could not have wished for a better supervisor.

I would also like to thank the faculty and staff members of the Department of English, Nagaland University, for their support.

To my family and friends for their constant encouragement and support, I thank you. Above all, I am eternally grateful to the Almighty God for His wisdom, patience and love.

Kohima, 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022

Soyimla Akum

Research Scholar

# CONTENTS

	Page
Candidate's Declaration	I
Supervisor's Certificate	II
Plagiarism Test Certificate	III
Plagiarism Test Report	IV
Acknowledgement	V
Abstract	
Chapter-1: Introduction	1
Chapter-2: Quest for Humanism in the Select works of Taslima Nasreen	21
Chapter-3: A Multicultural Study on Kamila Shamsie's Select Novels	50
Chapter-4: Feminist Analyses on the Select Works of Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie	76
Chapter-5: Poetics of Culture in the Select Works of Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie	124
Chapter-6: Conclusion	144
Works Cited	151

## Chapter one

### Introduction

South Asian literature refers to the literary works of writers from the Indian subcontinent and its Diaspora. The countries that come under this are India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar and Maldives. The works written in national and regional languages are also known to come under the canon of South Asian literature. When it comes to South Asian Writing in English including the Diasporas, the names of writers that crop up are Salman Rushdie, Ruskin Bond, Michael Ondaatje, and V. S. Naipaul, etc. Apart from male writers, we have women writers like Anita Desai, Arundhati Roy, Bapsi Sidhwa, Kunzang Choden, Taslima Nasreen, Kamila Shamsie and so on. The first among the Indian women to write poetry in English can be Toru Dutt (1855-77). Krupabai Sathianandhan (1862-1894) is considered as the first women novelist, writing in English. Kunzang Choden is the first women novelist from Bhutan with her novel *The Circle of Karma*. Writers like Bapsi Sidhwa and Taslima Nasrin also deal with the trauma of partition. In the midst of chauvinism, women are the worst sufferer who not only suffers physically but psychologically. The characters in their novels are not individuals but of types representing the lives of thousand women who have similar experiences.

Men were the first to try their hand at writing in English when the trend began to emerge. Women were denied the privilege because their responsibilities were thought to be limited to the four walls of the home. Women's writing is increasing in tandem with the current generation. Previously, women's writings were not intended for public consumption or publication. Women from affluent backgrounds were encouraged to read but not to write. They were not authors, but rather readers. Women's literature followed the rapid readership trend. Women were stereotyped as being an object to be dominated by. The stereotyping of women was that they are an object to be dominated. Writers like Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie of Bangladesh and Pakistan respectively write boldly speaking about the state of women in the male dominant society which is dictated mostly by religious fundamentalists. The writers present a visual reality to the readers through their works. Their works are not just mere fiction but the incidents they mention are in

some way related to them as it is that predicament which drives them to praxis. Mary Wollstonecraft in her book *A Vindication of The Rights of Woman (1792)* argues that if a woman is given education like man, then they would also be equal and surpass like men. Subcontinental writers have proved her theory applicable through their remarkable works which not only disturbed the peaceful existence of patriarchy but also encouraged women to stand for their rights. Women folk deserve to be treated with respect and they also need to do away with the inferiority complex which was instilled in their minds.

The term “Pakistani Literature in English” was introduced by Alamgir Hashmi in his “Preface” to his pioneering book *Pakistani Literature: The Contemporary English Writers*. Following his lead, the term was later established as an academic discipline in the world and at present widely a popular field. Pakistani English Literature stands for literature that has been evolved and developed in Pakistan. Some of the prominent figures are, Maki Kureishi, Alamgir Hashmi, Tariq Rahman, Bapsi Sidhwa, Fahmida Riaz, Muneeza Shamsie, Kamila Shamsie and so on. It includes the people from Pakistan as well as members of Pakistani Diaspora who write in English language. Hence, Kamila Shamsie who is a Pakistani- British also comes under this category of writers.

Bangladeshi English literature or Bangladeshi writing in English as the name suggests, refers to the body of literary works written in the English language by Bangladeshi in Bangladesh and by Bangladeshi diaspora with the expression of Bangladeshi ethos and culture. The literary canon of Bangladesh contains works of prominent writers like Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Rabindranath Tagore, Sean Dean Mahomed, Begam Rokeya, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Tahmima Anam, Monica Ali, Zia Haider Rahman and so on. These writers use English as a medium to connect to the larger readership of world literature. Any study on Bangladeshi literature would be incomplete without a mention about the epoch-making writer and Islamic feminist Taslima Nasrin. She takes up the cause of thousands of Muslim women in Bangladesh, mistreated in the hands of violent religious fanatics. Unlike Kamila Shamsie, Taslima Nasrin’s works come under Bangla Literature or Bangladeshi Literature. The texts used in the thesis are translations from Bangla to

English by several people. Therefore, it does fall under Bangladeshi Writings in English since the translation was not done by the author herself.

Pakistani writing in English in the field of academic in India is introduced through writers like Bapsi Sidhwa. Her book *Cracking India* or *Ice Candy-Man* is studied as part of their course work by students while her novels have been adapted into film. *Lajja* is also being studied in Indian Universities. Their writings introduce to the readers the horror and effect of communalism between Hindus and Muslim and in this tension how women struggle to live. Not only the partition of nation is discussed but human emotion which is innate in every individual is also brought about. The communal disharmony between Hindus and Muslims erupt time to time as people are divided in the name of religion. The Muslims ill-treat Hindus in Bangladesh and some minority Muslims in India has to bear the consequences. The recent news being the situation where a Mosque and some shops vandalized and two shops gutted in Panisagar, Tripura during a rally organized by VHP against attack on Durga Puja pandals in Bangladesh. The incident took place in Bangladesh on October 13, 2021 where least three lives on and the reaction is seen in India on 27 October 2021. According to CCTV and police investigation the spark of violence by an act of a man who placed a copy of the *Quran* at Nanua Dighir Par puja mandap (*Nagaland Post*). It was an act of a one person but it led to deaths and violence which extended even to neighbouring country. This kind of hardship often serves as a subject for many writers who speak out for justice.

### **About the Authors**

Taslima Nasreen also known as Taslima Nasrin born on 25 August 1962 is a Bangladeshi-Swedish writer. She is an award winning novelist, feminist, social rights activist, humanist and popularly known for her unflinching criticism towards Islam and oppression of women. She is living in Exile after the publication of her novel *Lajja*. Multiple Fatwas has been issued against her because of her criticism of Islam and religious fundamentalism in many of her books. She is banished from Bangladesh and her adopted home of West Bengal, India. Her book *Lajja* (1993) and her series of memoirs are banned in Bangladesh because of her reckless comments on Islam and hurting the sentiments of the Muslims. She is an advocate of humanism, freedom of thought and boldly writes about women. She attacks on

misinterpretation of religion and exposes the fundamentalist activities. The works of Taslima Nasreen to be studied for the proposed research are:

*Lajja* (1993),

*French Lovers* (2001),

*Meyebela: My Bengali Girlhood* (1998) and

*Exile: A Memoir* (2006).

*Lajja* (1993) a name which is very popular when it comes to writings about communal riots and violation of Human Rights. A novel borne out of the incidence that took place in India – destruction of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya and showing the after-mate effects in Bangladesh. The novel is divided into thirteen parts and each part dealing with despair and disappointment of the Dutta family. The novelist implies stream of consciousness technique to bring in the political situation of liberation war which the Dutta family has survived. The recall is not of happy but of terror. Through this technique Nasrin gives a detail account of the Dutta family and their outlook towards the world. The backbone of the novel is the persecution of Dutta family along with the other Hindu families though they are patriotic and have secular outlook. It is a dilemma of Hindu-Bangladeshi who loves the motherland at the same time finds it difficult to live. Along with the development and confusions of the characters, the novelist brings in facts in the form of journalism. The incidents of blunder, riot, killings, abductions etcetera are presented to let the readers know of the situation. The novel can be seen as fact-fiction as it contains the elements of fact as well fiction in the form of Dutta family. Suronjan who was optimistic of the situation finally loses his trust in the nation sinks in despair and decides to live for India. Maya and Kironmoyee asked Sudhamoy and Suronjon to leave Bangladesh but the patriarch figures were adamant. However, after Maya being abducted not to return their trust and humanistic view failed them and finally Suronjon asks his father to leave to safety.

*Meyebela: My Bengali Girlhood* (1998) traces her autobiography from her birth to Childhood around thirteen years. The book begins in 1971 with the resounding success of the Bangladesh Liberation War and ends with what was

perhaps the most critical turning point in a young nation- the assassination of *Bangabandu* (friend of Bengal) Sheikh Mujib and his family. The narrative moves between multiple chronologies as the writer travels back and forth to describe about her birth, parents' childhood and her growth. As a child she witnessed religious extremism, superstitious, irrationality and women's submission while growing up. In the book she is frank about her father's extramarital affairs and her mother's blind religiosity. She brings in the dark secrets of her family. Her abuse as a child is also recorded in her autobiography. She narrates the circumstances and incidents truthfully. In one of her interviews, she says:

It was the story of millions of women. I was painting a social picture of the times I grew up in. it was important to keep doing that because many related to my story as their lives had also evolved in a similar way. The younger generation, which had not seen war, was able to familiarize itself with that history. (Manral 1)

Nareen's bold writing brought in the many hidden talk like child abuse and domestic violence. Society knows but keeps it silence to let it die on its own time. The book after its publication was banned in Bangladesh on the ground that the content might hurt the social and religious sentiments of the people. Taslima writes about the injustice and darker side of life and present it to the people which many people fail to appreciate and deny accepting the fact.

*French Lover* (2001) is a story of Nilanjana who is in search of true love and liberty in a new city Paris. She shifts to Paris after her marriage to Kishanlal. Kishanlal owns a restaurant and a luxurious apartment with all the amenities. The excitement of marriage and new city didn't last long since she felt caged. She became emotionally and socially deprived confining her to household works and mechanical sex. The novel covers the journey of Nila towards self-assertion and freedom. During the process of self-discovery, she falls in love with a blonde Frenchman Benoir Dupont but their relationship didn't last long as Benoir's first priority is himself and not Nila. The novel depicts the deep level of the psyche of woman and her struggles against the threats and attacks of hostile world. The novel also brings in controversial topic like homosexuality and female sexuality. The present South-East Asian countries are not open to this idea and that it is seen as a



taboo. After failed marriage and relationships Nila realizes that women do have land or motherland of their own. Nasrin presents Nila's journey to be complete when she writes 'Danielle, time is never wasted. This time was spent in acquiring wisdom and I needed it. Or I would have spent my life under a misconception' (291). At the end of the novel Nila finally realized that the fact that the restrictive society has irrationally seized her freedom and consequently she lost her freedom. This realization paved the way to emancipate herself.

*Exile: A Memoir* (2016) as Taslima Nasrin says in Preface that she was to launch the book in 2011 at Kolkata Book Fair but it was delayed and finally published in 2016 because her name was banned in West Bengal. Armed with a fatwa from their ideologues, the mob demanded that Taslima Nasrin leave the city immediately. *Exile: A Memoir* gives a series of events leading to her ouster from west Bengal, then Rajasthan and eventually India. She writes about the days she spent in house arrest, government safe house and where she wasn't allowed even to meet people or have conversation to outside world. She was made to stay in an obscure and undisclosed location and there were constantly phones calls and threats to leave the country. She depicts on the book of how secularism and democracy bow before religious fundamentalist and politics. She was kept in government safe house under so much pressure so that the mental trauma will force her to leave India which they finally succeeded. She was made to stay in the room without any people to talk to and no social interactions. Her friends were the only two lizards and she with closed window making it difficult even to breathe. While some intellectuals believed and applauded her writings some criticized her for writing about oppression of women as un-Islamic. In the memoir, Nasrin shows how the system of government works where everyone takes order from the higher authorities. Instead of people taking protest against rape, violence, riots, people instead staged protest to send innocent out of the country. Religion is such that it unites at the same divides people. It is in that name that many countries fight and loses innocent lives.

## **Kamila Shamsie**

Kamila Shamsie born on 13 August 1973 is a Pakistani and British writer and novelist who come from a family of intellectuals in Pakistan. Her mother is journalist and Editor Muneeza Shamsie, her great-aunt was writer Attia Hosain and she is the granddaughter of memoirist Jahanara Habibullah. She is a fellow of Royal Society of Literature and the author of seven books each receiving one or the other award and latest *Home Fire* entering the long listed 2017 Man's Booker Prize. And the following year in 2018 won the Women's Prize for Fiction. Three of her novels have received awards from Pakistan's Academy of Letters. She moved to London in 2007 and is now a dual national of the UK and Pakistan. Shamsie considers herself a Muslim and through the reading of her novels we can see their family's outlook is liberal and secular. It is because of their positive lens towards the society that she is now a successful writer. And her mother and other women around her have their individuality. Her liberal views are reflected through her characters who are progressive and self-assertive. Her upbringing can be seen in the characters that are not typical and sees a room of improvement in themselves. The works to be discussed in this thesis are:

*Salt and Saffron* (2000),

*Broken Verses* (2005),

*Burnt Shadows* (2009),

*Home Fire* (2017).

*Salt and Saffron* is a beautifully knitted novel dealing with the life and love of a young Pakistani girl living in America. An enlightened and education woman yet falls into the thought of family myth and history. Through Aliya the novel traces the history of Dard-e-Dils and the social changes they acquire in the course of history. As an aristocratic and eccentric clan, the family has many secrets and stories. As the story unravels as a Pakistani writer Shamsie brings the topic of partition where families were separated into two different nations. The novel is short and simple yet packed with many complex topics like class system, honour, treatment of women and so on. Shamsie has keenly observed Pakistani Society

where she manages to bring all the essence of a society like in a dish starting from simple and available salt to exquisite and valued saffron. The female protagonist Aliya and Mariam defies the tradition of family of nobility and decide to live their life on their own terms without worried about class structure. The family fears of bringing misfortune by not-quite twins who at the present story is Aliya and Mariam. However, she tries not to be like Mariam who falls in love with their cook but later falls in love with Khaleel from a lower class. The 'misfortune' as introduced in the family can perhaps be the symbol of freedom and deciding their own choice.

*Burnt Shadows* is a novel about a woman Hiroko Tanka who loses her father and fiancé on August 9<sup>th</sup> 1945 Nagasaki bombing. In grief, Hiroko travels to British India to visit the Konrad her fiancé's half-sister Elizabeth and her husband James Burton. As Shamsie's characters are progressive and influences others, Hiroko's arrival not only affects the relationship between the Burtons but also their employee Sajjad Ashraf. Hiroko unlike other people does not see difference in culture and race as a hindrance in her love life. Despite critique of their cultural differences, Hiroko and Sajjad start a new life after the Partition of India. Along with Hiroko Shamsie takes the readers to different places and historical events of the world. The shadow of personal and political history unravels as they are transported from Japan to India, Pakistan, New York and Afghanistan. Hiroko does not stick to the rules of the society but she searches to find meaning in life. Though she is seen as scientific curiosity and given the name 'hibakusha' meaning explosion affected person. It was the fear of reduction rather at first that drove her out of Japan to India but in order to take that step courage is needed which many people lack. She is seen travelling alone to Delhi from Bombay which James Burton found it difficult to understand. The story is filled with emotions and beauty which makes it interesting for the readers.

*Broken Verses* centers on the lives of three modern and educated women belonging to the upper stratum of the society: Aasmani Inqalab, Samina Akram, Shehnaz Saeed and their struggle with life and society. It is largely a mental mapping of Aasmani who is struggling with tragedy. Her mother Samina, a women activist has been missing for 14 years along with the country's revolutionary poet who is presumed to be murdered. Aasmani could not accept the tragedy that her mother committed suicide. As Aasmani got hold of the secret codes used by her mother and

the poet she starts her investigation on those codes by interacting with Shehnaz. It is through the search for truth and hope that her mother and the poet might be alive that the story continues. With the search the topics and characterization raise pertinent questions regarding the status of Pakistani women in contribution as a member of a society. The characters do not comply with the norms of the society and stereotypes and hence Samina Akram despite not marrying the poet follows him even to the exile. She is being despised and contemned by society but she did not let that affect her relationship. Shehnaz on the other hand is a popular actor but she is again accused by society for neglecting her duty as a mother. Both the mothers in the novel were judged by society with a role expected of a mother but society and their family failed to see them as an individual and a women struggling within themselves. They did not conform to the patriarchal society and raised their voice of dissent and express their rage and frustration with their conditions. Since Shamsie's character try to mend their situation, the characters attempt to establish themselves as free individuals who can defy restrictions imposed upon them. Shamsie has introduced authentic female characters in the novel who stands to transcend the damaging roles assigned by media and society. *Broken Verses* breaks the stereotypes of a mother and wife and asserts her autonomous and in a beautiful way brings an unconventional love story of Shamina and the Poet.

*Home Fire* the latest novel of Shamsie published in 2017 is a contemporary adaptation of Sophocles' *Antigone*. The story takes place in London in the Pasha family, a Muslim-British living in the shadow of the father's terrorism history and the politics of the powerful who consider them as threat. Isma the eldest sister takes care of the twins Parvaiz and Aneeka after their mother and grandmother's death. She kept aside her academic career and took up job to look after her siblings. Later Isma after her siblings started to stand on their feet restarts her academic dream while on the other hand Parvaiz attempts to follow their father's footsteps by joining ISIS in Syria who soon realizes his mistake. Meanwhile Aneeka attempts to bring his brother back with the help of Eamonn Lone the son of the Home Secretary. The effort to bring Parvaiz home fails as he was shot while trying to escape ISIS. His body was also not allowed to bring to London as her sister Isma reported to the state of Parvaiz joining the terrorist group so that they will be clean with the government. His body was sent to Pakistan instead of his home in London. Aneeka goes to

Karachi to retrieve his body and Eamon while following her falls into a terrorist attack. They both embrace each other and die peacefully in bombing. The two families who tried to protect their loved ones indirectly became a reason for the lost of their lives.

The dissertation entitled *Epistemology of Humanism: A Multipronged Analyses of the Select Works of Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie* is devoted to study the knowledge of human milieu in society. The writings of Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie are examined in order to find a common ground between them. Since the authors are from different countries, each character is distinct from the others, resulting in a unique experience that is lumped into the same category. The term "epistemology" refers to a branch of philosophy concerned with knowing. The study as a whole is about people and their circumstances. The discussion of the topic revolves around human beings and human rights. The multipronged assessments represent the various viewpoints from which the works are examined. Since the shared threat of the human center ties the texts, knowledge under humanism binds entire chapters and perspectives.

Nasreen and Shamsie write not only for amusement, but also to address social issues. Nasreen's works are affected by the events that occurred in her life. She writes about those who lack access to written materials and are victims of a variety of conditions. These are not just her thoughts; they are based on what she's heard from others. The autobiographies are unvarnished and present a harsh reality that many people will find repulsive. People prefer to read books that are pleasant, therefore the dark side of human society is generally overlooked. Nasreen's writings, on the other hand, shock the mind and awaken people to harsh reality. Kamila Shamsie, who comes from a well-educated family, uses her novels to show the world the upper-class society and its struggles. She portrays the situation of women in such a subtle way that the readers are engrossed in the storey while also being impressed by her characters. Her female characters make an impression on the readers, implying that a woman can make her own decisions. What makes the difference is the characters' willingness to say "yes" to themselves. They stayed true to themselves and exorcised patriarchy by "spinning through the male maze."

Good deals of works have been done on Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie's writings and there are some which are related to their writings. Some of the few books are selected which are related to the various issues discussed in the following chapters. Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of The Rights of Women* (1798) talks about women's education and how it will lead them to have a reasoning mind rather than depending on men. In her "Introduction" she says, "My own sex, I hope, will excuse me, if I treat them like rational creatures, instead of flattering their fascinating graces, and viewing them as if they were in a state of perpetual childhood, unable to stand alone" (4). She does not blame men alone for the cause but also advises women to reason things without just simply following. She expresses the problem which arises when women are together. In group the problem of marriage becomes more visible as the women tend to compare. Some of Sidhwa's women characters are analyzed in parallel to what Wollstonecraft has written.

A radical feminist Mary Daly's book *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (1978) concerns on women's journey to the background which she says is hindered by the deceptions of the foreground that is patriarchy. She writes on how a woman should exorcise patriarchy from within by herself so that she can enter to the realm of the wild. The realm of wild is considered to be the point where a woman is free without the control of patriarchy. The women characters in the select novels undergo the 'spinning process' to emancipate themselves overthrowing the shackles of patriarchy.

Tony Davies in *Humanism* (1997) gives wide understanding of Humanism as the term has been adopted for a variety of cultural and political purposes and contexts over the centuries, definitions of humanism as an educational movement, philosophical concept, or existential 'life stance' have evolved, and reactions to humanism have contributed to movements such as structuralism, postmodernism, and postcolonialism. The book contributes in understanding the concept of humanism and how it fits into the works of the authors discussed.

Claire Colebrook in *New Literary Histories: New Historicism and Contemporary Criticism* (1997) opines that New Historicism studies "the relation between text and history" where the interaction between: the text and the world, materiality of the text and meaning produced and art and history should be the object

of investigation in any critical practice. Non-discursive forces created a dynamic relationship between the text and its historical context, making history not just accessible but also the text. The circumstances and material effects produced by the text and its phenomena are used by supporters of new historicism to support their claims. Gallagher takes a new historicist method to reading literary texts, which involves reading both literary and nonliterary texts as well as historical discourses both inside and outside the text. In the course of their investigations, New Historicists are given permission to go beyond the textual boundaries that divide different disciplines.

*Split: A life a sequel of Meyebela: My Bengali Girlhood* of Taslima Nasreen is one reason why she was exiled and this is documented in *Exile: A Memoir*. The book gives an account of Taslima Nasreen's free thinking and unconventional way of living. The book forms as a basis to study her works and humanistic outlook. The book helps in understanding Nasreen's outlook and what made her a name banned by two countries.

*Twentieth Century Literary Criticism* by Bijay Kumar Das brings in different theories of various critics and their works. The book furnishes perceptive discussion of the various chapters discussed in the thesis. The book features a compilation of essays resting primary on the discussed topics like Feminism and New Historicism. In particular, the essays "Feminist Literary Criticism: An Overview" and "New Historicism: An Appraisal" give a comprehensive understanding of feminist ideology, feminist writers and an overview of New Historicism. These essays provide important theoretical and historical background information which greatly supplements critical studies of chapters that has these aspects as its thematic concerns.

*Taslima Nasrin- A Committed Humanist* by Mihir Dave renders a very important critical discussion by bringing in the topic of humanism. The text carries critical discussion of Nasreen's works both translated and written in Bangla. The book paves way to approach humanism as a philosophy and analyze in literary works. He has referred to Nasrin's Novels, Poems and short stories.

Irene Oh in *The Rights of God: Islam, Human Rights, and Comparative Ethics* sees Islam as a religion often misinterpreted by people as a religion violating human rights. The book can be seen as a defender of human rights in Islam apart from terror in the name of religion. This misconception leads Irene Oh to look at Islam and human rights from the lens of religion and not as political. Islam also teaches humanism and to bring the concept of human rights she draws reference of three Islamic scholars Sbul A'la Maudidi, Sayyid Qutb and Abdolkarim Soroush. The book offers a light to Taslima Nasrin's ideas where she voices out against fundamentalist Islam and the religion as a whole. Religion, culture and Politics drive the mass and it is difficult to separate politics and culture from Religion. They are interconnected and Oh in her book makes an attempt to understand and study the obstacles in course of history which acts as a barrier between religion and culture.

*The Qur'an* a new translation by Tarif Khalidi serves as a basis of argument of Taslima Nasreen's work as she is popularly known for her criticism towards Islam. Both Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie belong to Islam and the works are set in Muslim family and society. Nasrin sees religion as an agent of oppression and injustice towards women. *The Qur'an* helps in understanding her arguments and helps in approaching the text in a broader way. Even though the topics in the book may vary immensely, it provides critical analysis and study of the discourse.

P. R. Dubashi in "Review: Taslima Nasrin's *Lajja*: A True Assessment" writes that the history as presented in *Lajja* is notable from its insight and the documentation is accurate. He stated that readers who find the novel uninteresting have a lack of comprehension of the book's essence. It's more than a novel: it's also a political history of Bangladesh after independence, as well as a record of events relevant to the core issue of that history. The plot of the work is set against the backdrop of history and a timeline of events. The history is famous for its insight, the documentation for its correctness, and the novel for portraying a human tragedy in a dramatic manner.

The *New York Times* calls Kamila Shamsie's novel *Home Fire* "ingenious" and "love-struck," as well as "the novel that takes flight." The author appears to drive the glistening machine home in such a way that it might be described as smashing if the readers were not familiar with aeroplane analogies.



Charlie Lee Potter in *Independent* comments that *Burnt Shadows* is a giant of novel striding purposefully across Japan, India, Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan and America. And the characters are to be countless, the language as myriad and the timeframe as huge. He continues to state that her command of the language, the delicacy with which she expresses herself, and overall sheer grasp of world events are all impressive. Family ties, national allegiances, betrayals, and our sometimes-misguided desire to protect our children from the reality are all crucial details. There is no book that compares or discusses the topics raised in the works of the selected writers and their works separately. Hence the proposed work is a fresh selection and will positively contribute to the creation of new knowledge in this field.

“Resonance and Wonder” by Stephen Greenblatt gives a clearer definition of New Historicism, an approach in which the works of Nasrin and Shamsie will be looked upon. The text discusses on how the artifact of history does not stay in one place. It exists in time and are often a symbol of difficult moment for instance the hat of Cardinal Wolsey as symbol of political power. The emphasis of the essay is a text is not taken only as a text but the culture which influences the man. One cannot detach himself from the history and similarly Greenblatt views that the present period seemed to have strong connection with the past. The works of both the writers are also an influence of that part of history and contemporary history. the history which echoes the struggle and victory of the people. He sees New Historicism as an attempt to reduce the isolation of individual "masterpieces," to illuminate the conditions under which they were created, to reveal the history of their appropriate and the contexts under which they came to be displayed, and to restore the tangibility, openness, and permeability of boundaries that enabled the objects to come into being in the first place (530). The stories in the novels reflect the circumstances which paved the production of literary pieces.

In Ali Rattansi's *Multiculturalism: A Very Short Introduction*, the writer rises questions on whether has failed and poses question as to whether it is time for detachment from multiculturalism. She traces the origin of the concept in the context of different cultures ethnic cultures in different countries especially in Canada and America. He explores on policies so that it will help the ethic cultures and will prove advantageous. He also discusses on issue of multiculturalism on women. The

existence of forced marriage and still exist in the society which prove that in order to maintain a multicultural society, this is also accepted as part of preserving culture. He also writes in women support where women should be recognized as possessing human dignity same as men. The book helps in deeper understanding of the multicultural approach in the research. In a topic on Multicultural epistemology Rattansi brings in the support on equality and human rights.

“Politics of Identity in Kamila Shamsie’s Novels” by Surya Kiran discusses on Kamila Shamsie’s ability to handle her characters with the topic of nationalism, politics and internal conflicts. He focuses on the theme of identity in three of her works, *Burnt Shadows*, *Kartography*, *Offence: The Muslim Case* and *Salt and Saffron*. The view point is on the female characters and their fluidity of gender roles. The work sheds light on the politics of identity and the socio-political history of Pakistan.

The thesis attempts to analyze the subcontinental women writings with special reference to the selected works of Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie. The subcontinental women experiences are not same as they are from different diverse cultures. Yet, the common thread that binds these women is the fact that they are looked upon as inferior to men. They are not given the authority to take decision for themselves. It is the men who decide and have a heavy influence over them. The research is not against the men folk, as the tradition was passed down through generations but it seeks a solution to lessen the rigidity of the trend. The selected works are compared with similar works of other authors to deliberate more upon the humanist concerns which will be the bedrock of the destined exploration.

By guiding the nature of the present study on the knowledge of Humanism and different aspects under it, the framework chosen to analyze the works of the said writers have included analytical methods prescribed under the theories of Multiculturalism, Feminism and New Historicism and the like. An attempt is made to use Close text reading method of New Criticism with the help of Researcher’s individual critical perspective in consonance with the used critical perspectives. Necessary information available in the secondary sources will also be used in the study to support the researcher’s analyses for presentation of findings. Besides that, relevant critical theories and researcher’s probe into the area and critical perspectives

on the work will also be incorporated in the findings. The works of Taslima Nasreen *Lajja*, *Meyebela: My Bengali Girlhood*, *French lover* and *Exile: A Memoir* and Kamila Shamsie's *Salt and Saffron*, *Burnt Shadows*, *Broken Verses*, and *Home Fire* will serve as the primary texts in this research. Secondary sources include books, reviews, and critical writings on the mentioned texts. Latest citation skills will be used as per *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

Some of the feminist texts like Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of The Rights of Woman* and Mary Daly's *Gyn/ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*, *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir are applied to analyze the situations and the works placing side by side. According to Elaine Showalter it is the woman writer who can depict the woman character the best. And hence, Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie's portrayal of women characters are not simply imagination but as woman voicing out for another woman. Throughout the history women has been portrayed by men as seductress, instigator and as a force of negative impact. Here, the writers have shown that women are not what men assume to be. They write about women from the perspective of men thereby creating misconception among the general public. The research anticipates an outcome of Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie's deliberation on similar experiences of Muslim women in their works and recognizes humanism as the real religion and as a need of the hour for peace and progress of the nations.

Humanism in the context of this thesis is more from a humanitarian view where the needs of human beings are placed above any religion or society. The select novels as a whole have different interpretations. However, the discussion on women characters is a common motif that runs through the novels of Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie. The different aspects present and its relevancy in the modern times will be discussed in this dissertation. The study is into six chapters.

Chapter One is the introductory chapter. Chapter one discusses in brief about South East Asian writings, Pakistani Literature, about the authors and their works to be analyzed. It highlights the issues to be discussed in the following chapters.

Chapter Two titled "Quest for Humanism in the Select works of Taslima Nasreen" where the works of Taslima Nasreen is analyzed from humanistic

perspective and how human rights of an individual are violated in the name of religion in times of communal riots. In this midst, the minority group suffers in the hands of the majority. In the name of religion, people kill and plunder the house of their neighbor with whom they have lived for many decades. In her works especially in *Lajja* she calls for humanism to replace the religion. The other texts also imply and call for equal treatment of an individual as a human being and not based on gender or religion.

Chapter Three titled “A Multicultural Study on Kamila Shamsie’s Select Novels” will focus on the characters acquiring multicultural identities in the midst of their journey towards self-discovery. Kamila Shamsie’s characters are not fixed to a particular place but they are placed in different countries. This chapter will explore the multiculturalism aspect where diverse cultures including racial, religious, or cultural groups are manifested in her select works. Shamsie plots are not set in a particular place but it is set in different countries. The characters acquire and change their identity in course of course.

Chapter Four titled “Feminist Analyses on the Select Works of Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie” explores the theme of feminism in the select works of both the writers. It also explores on feminism and their religion having an influence over their writings which bloomed in the form of literary pieces. A brief discussion on feminism and its form is also discussed to know on which type of feminism the writers can be categorized into. There are authors like Taslima Nasreen who has been through different situation where she faces discrimination and oppositions. While writers like Kamila Shamsie also indulge in writing who are inspired and influenced to write about women issue though she has not much of lived experience other than being a woman. They deal with women characters voicing out for them so that society’s prospect towards women change slowly.

Chapter Five titled “Poetics of Culture in the Select Works of Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie” looks into the work of art from historical perspective and its influence over it. This chapter concentrates on how the authors have been influenced by history of their respective nation and how it culminated into a piece of work. Through fictional investigation this aspect of characters and their conditions in

an within the societal structures, the spectrum of discriminatory and oppressive nature towards women in particular to Muslim families is revealed

Chapter Six which is the concluding chapter encapsulates the arguments that have been built in the preceding chapters. The chapter will summarize the findings of research in regard to the two chosen women writers. This chapter will further discuss whether the objectives are being fulfilled and hypothesis is achieved. It will also present suggestions regarding the future prospect and the socio-cultural relevance of the research conducted.

The thesis is analyzed from the multipronged perspective of Humanism, Multiculturalism, Feminism and New Historicism. Humanism has been considered a 'worldview,' a 'lifestance,' a 'attitude,' a 'style of life,' and a 'meaning frame,' among other things. All of these phrases include elements that make them appealing. However, at this point, it will be more advantageous to focus on what 'humanism' actually entails. Humanism has been polished and defined over the course of a century by proponents and opponents alike, giving it clearer boundaries and more substance. Humanism is a democratic and ethical life stance that affirms that human beings have the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape to their own lives, according to a 'minimum definition' agreed upon by humanist organizations from more than forty nations. Humanism is seen as a democratic and ethical life philosophy that asserts that people have the right and obligation to define and control their own lives. It advocates for the creation of a more compassionate society based on a moral code based on human and other natural values, as well as a spirit of reason and unfettered inquiry through human capabilities. It is not theistic, and it rejects supernatural interpretations of reality.

Multiculturalism as an approach suggest on acknowledging differences and diversities. From the sociological perspective it refers to plurality of ethnicity and hence, in the chapter of the thesis it is studies from the view of society and cultural diversity. The concept of 'melting pot' to represent monoculture brought about together to form a heterogenous society with an influx of different cultural backgrounds and culture. The American society refers it to 'salad bowl' or 'mosaic' where each society functions as an important ingredient with distinct taste to make the bowl as complete whole. Similarly, society and different cultural people make a

society a multicultural one. It is a process of assimilation and integration of immigrants into different field in a state. The thesis focuses on the problem of multiculturalism where the attention is the question of promotion of rights for different cultural groups. Cultural diversity in the name of multiculturalism has often been taken into consideration in order to answer ethnic clashes. Multiculturalism in the name of diversity in some case pave way to segregation rather than unification.

Feminism is a much talked and discussed topic when it comes to works of women writers. The theory is a product of women movement started in 1960's which sought equal rights, opportunities and freedom for women. In the political arena the demand for equality started in late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century with the focus on women's suffrage. Feminist theory in the field of literary scenario started with women critics and writers defining themselves rather than accepting the androgenous definition of women. Feminism in simplest can be seen as a capsule holding numbers of social, cultural, political, economic movements and ideologies dealing with gender inequality. Feminism takes the shape of socio-cultural movement that seeks to liberate women from oppression. It was cry for justice from a woman who has no power other than her pen and put it in motion. In common when we say 'feminist' people often associate that it will a woman but a feminist can also be a man.

New Historicism as implies in the research refers to parallel reading of text and non-literary text of the same historical text. The term 'text' in contemporary setting refers to anything that serves as a source of information rather than just printed materials. A text can be music, paintings, spoken verse etc.. New Historicism as applied by Stephen Green Blatt refers to the study of text along side the historical data. The interest of New Historicism lays in history as written history. The work of the past replacing the world of the past. It stands to find meaning of the text giving importance to the work created within the framework of ideas and historical era. When a piece of art is studied, some readers tend to give more importance to the background of the art rather than appreciate the literary form. This can be as Old Historicism but in New Historicism both the literary product and the non-literary product are given equally importance. It is the past that influence the present allying with Eliot's thought in "Traditional and Individual Talent".

Each approach is devoted to separate chapter in the study of the two authors. The chapter on humanism is studied on Nasreen's works alone and Multiculturalist approach on Kamila Shamsie. The two chapters on Feminist analyses and Poetics of culture are analyzed together so as to bring comparison and its relevance in the study. The epistemology of humanism as the topic suggest is on human relations and not just on ideas and philosophies. The central study of humanism is human being and the superior origin of mankind over other things. The research attributes its importance to human reason and human rights. Whether it is in the field of multiculturalism, feminist criticism or new historicism the bases of analyses of literature is the condition of human being. The characters are in one or the other way related to the reality in which we live. In understanding humanistic approach Andrew Copson is of the opinion that we are unmistakably of this world since we are the result of purposeless natural processes over billions of years of evolution and change. Humanist philosophy is seen to provides a moral foundation for democracy, vital philosophical underpinnings for social fairness, the rule of law, and human rights, and support for any social or political undertaking that will gradually free humanity from chaos which is justified in the works of Nasreen.

## Chapter Two

### Quest for Humanism in the Select works of Taslima Nasreen

“Let Humanity be the other name of religion”

Taslima Nasreen (1992)

#### Introduction

The Chapter aims to explore the theme of humanism in the select works of Taslima Nasreen and how the writer voices out for human rights. It also brings in the violation of human rights and its influence over the writing. The chapter begins with a discussion on humanism and its origin. A brief paragraph on Renaissance and Secular humanism are discussed followed by chapter analysis of *Lajja*, *French Lovers*, *Meybela: My Bengali Girlhood* and *Exile: A Memoir*. Mihir Dave discussed on six senses of man and how this has led to many changes and revolution. He beautifully puts in to define humanism as:

In human society, one man helps another and there begins the concern and love for human being which we call “HUMANISM”. Humanism prompts the privileged ones to stretch their helping hands to other human being who are not only underprivileged but handicapped too. (Dave 1)

Hence, through the writings of Nasrin the call for humanism will be brought out. It is the nature of human to sympathize with people when they see them in trouble but applies to only few to empathize. Humanist identifies himself/herself with the sufferings and experiences of others. The writings of Taslima Nasreen especially *Lajja* will show how Nasrin identifies with the Hindu families in Bangladesh. In *Exile: A Memoir* she draws the attention of the people to empathize with her pain and identify with her cause. As an advocate of Human Rights, she not only spoke about humanism in her books but also added on how with the journey to humanism she was condemned and banned. She uses literature as a medium to reach the people of different sections of society. People assumed the communal riot in Bangladesh as public cause and public welfare but Nasrin saw it as personal cause and person welfare. Humanists work for public cause out of enlightened rational



self-interest according to Mihir Dave. Though Nasrin's quest for humanism led to bitter personal consequences, she is happy and contented to have voiced out in writings and let the world know the situation from an insider. *Lajja* (1992) can be seen as her breakthrough from fundamentalist and oppression which she has been keeping suppressed as a humanist. Subsequently many of her writings were banned and multiple fatwas were issued in her name both in Bangladesh and India.

Taslima Nasrin though born into a Muslim family renounced her faith and declares to be an atheist. She does not believe in the doctrines of the fundamentalist Islam as they are more towards the oppression and cruelty committed towards women folks. She condemns the rigidity of Islam for which she has been highly criticized. She claims her good deeds as an action of being human. She does not attribute her works to any religion. Her works question religion which has lacked tolerance and the rise of communalism. Islam as a religion is focused in most of her works as she has seen both the good and bad influence. It is not that she is against Islam as a whole but she criticizes the fundamentalist Islam who create havoc and indulge in violence in the name of 'Allah'. Nasrin believes in freedom of expression and it is this that which rendered her homeless from both Bangladesh and West Bengal. However, she is in the minds of the people who love her.

### **Definitions of Humanism and Humanist**

The word "humanism" is used to denote an attitude to life emphasizing on the autonomy and dignity of man and the value of "humane" relationships between men. It is a defense of man which lays dignity on man and human values as in the view of Georg Henrik von Wright. Humanist ideas are considered to be part of a long tradition of skepticism, atheism and belief in a non-religious basis for morality. Humanists are not born as a separate entity but it is the society and the environment which give birth to them. They might have been a member of one or the other religion but the forces of negativity which they experience lead them to distance themselves from religion. It is that moment where they start giving importance to human as the sole importance with reason. Whatever action they do is directed to the welfare of humanity as being 'humane'.

The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines 'Humanism' as "a system of thought that considers that solving human problems with the help of reason is more important than religious beliefs. It emphasizes the fact that the basic nature of humans is good". Alongside 'Humanist' mean "a person who believes in humanism" (760). Corliss Lamont defines the philosophy of humanism as representing "a specific and forthright view of the universe, the nature of human beings, and the treatment of human problems" (Lamont 12). And further defines twentieth-century humanism as:

I would say that it is a philosophy of joyous service for the greater good of all humanity in this natural world and advocating the methods of reason, science, and democracy. While this statement has many profound implications, it is not difficult to grasp. (Lamont 13)

He believes it as a credo for ordinary men and women who want to live happy and helpful lives, rather than a method of thought reserved for professional philosophers. Further it can be seen as an approach that makes no attempt to appeal to intellectuals by claiming great originality, or to the masses by promising the easy fulfilment of human desires, either on Earth or in some supernatural dream world. Rather on the other hand, allows for the various aspects of human nature. Though it regards reason as the ultimate arbiter of what is true, good, and beautiful, it insists that reason acknowledge the emotional side of human beings which is reflected in the novels. An individual is responsible for one's action and everything that happens in his life. Humanist focuses on one's faculty of reason rather than to faith and emphasizes that reason should be exercised to understand and tackle problems. Humanism depends on reason, science and individual's freedom to search the truth.

In modern parlance, a 'humanist' is a supporter of human rights and a defender of values such as human dignity and achievements. It is a philosophical position associated with humanism that emphasizes individuality and human agency. Humanism differs from religions and many nonreligious ideologies; in that it begins at a certain moment and has a name that originates at or shortly after the creation of the ideology. Humanism has been seen and variously termed as an approach to life, world view, attitude, life stance etc. but in the chapter the main focus is on human being and their rights.

### **Origin of the term 'humanism'**

The term humanism is myriad and each age draws its meaning according to the epoch of time. It saw appearance in the works of 19th-century German author F. J. Niethammer (1808) who drew inspiration from Cicero's *sc. Studia humanitatis* to designate the Renaissance emphasis on classical studies in education. These studies were pursued and endorsed by educators known, as early as the late 15th century, as *umanisti*: that is, professors or students of classical literature. The word *umanisti* derives from the *studia humanitatis*, a course of classical studies that, in the early 15th century, consisted of grammar, poetry, rhetoric, history, and moral philosophy. The *studia humanitatis* were held to be the equivalent of the Greek *paideia*. Their name was itself based on the Latin *humanitas*, an educational and political ideal that was the intellectual basis of the entire movement. Renaissance humanism defined itself as an aspiration toward this ideal of virtue and wisdom.

*Humanitas* meant the development of human virtue, in all its forms, to its fullest extent. The term thus implied not only such qualities as are associated with the modern word humanity--understanding, benevolence, compassion, mercy--but also such more aggressive characteristics as fortitude, judgment, prudence, eloquence, and even love of honour. Consequently, the possessor of *humanitas* could not be merely a sedentary and isolated philosopher or man of letters but was of necessity a participant in active life. Just as action without insight was held to be aimless and barbaric, insight without action was rejected as barren and imperfect. *Humanitas* called for a fine balance of action and contemplation, a balance born not of compromise but of complementarity. The goal of such fulfilled and balanced virtue was political in the broadest sense of the word. The purview of Renaissance humanism included not only the education of the young but also the guidance of adults (including rulers) via philosophical poetry and strategic rhetoric. It included not only realistic social criticism but also utopian hypotheses, not only painstaking reassessments of history but also bold reshaping of the future. In short, humanism called for the comprehensive reform of culture, the transfiguration of what humanists termed the passive and ignorant society of the "dark" ages into a new order that would reflect and encourage the grandest human potentialities.

The wellspring of humanitas was classical literature. Greek and Roman thought, available in a flood of rediscovered or newly translated manuscripts, provided humanism with much of its basic structure and method. For Renaissance humanists, there was nothing dated or outworn about the writings of Plato, Cicero, or Livy. Classical philosophy, rhetoric, and history were seen as models of proper method--efforts to come to terms, systematically and without preconceptions of any kind, with perceived experience. Classical virtue was not an abstract essence but a quality that could be tested in the forum or on the battlefield. Humanism looked forward to a rebirth of a lost human spirit and wisdom. In the course of striving to recover it, however, the Humanists assisted in the consolidation of a new spiritual and intellectual outlook and in the development of a new body of knowledge. The effect of Humanism was to help men break free from the mental strictures imposed by religious orthodoxy, to inspire free inquiry and criticism, and to inspire a new confidence in the possibilities of human thought and creations.

Humanism in English Literature started with the emergence of Renaissance where the focus of the art was shifted to human and intellectual development. With the coming of science and technology, importance was given to reason rather than to superstitions. Human beings became the subject of interest. The belief in God existed at the background of the art yet the philosophy of Humanism encouraged free spirit of critical thinking in the quest of truth. The main focus of the writers became human centered where they emphasize on wishes to give. Humanism believes in the point that one should live life and make the most use in term of creativity and happiness. Happiness comes from within and one does not need supernatural power to experience this but rather focus on using their own reason and intelligence. Humanists reject external heavenly influences and accept the world as real and consider man the central of all. Humanism does not attribute its good contribution to religion. It believes that a man can develop humanist view and build a good moral character without depending on religion. The term had come to mean primarily approaches to life – and the people who followed them – that were distinguished by valuing human beings and human culture over gods and religion, and by affirming the effectiveness of human reason applied to evidence over theism, theological speculation, and revelation.

## Types of Humanism

Humanism in general believes in application and spirit of scientific temper to train mind and solve problems.

**Renaissance humanism:** It derived its belief from the study of ancient poets, writers, historians and philosophers. It developed during the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries, and was a response to the challenge of scholastic university education, which was then dominated by Aristotelian philosophy and logic. Renaissance Humanism was seen as a protest against the attitude and rebirth of individuals against mediaeval Christianity, a turning point away from personal immortality and toward making the best of life in the world. It resulted in intellectual, religious and social changes of the society. Renaissance writers like Rabelais and Erasmus gave eloquent voice to this new joy in living and to the sheer exuberance of existence. For the Renaissance the ideal human being was no longer the ascetic monk, but a new type—the so-called universal or “Renaissance man,” who was a many-sided personality, delighting in every kind of this-earthly achievement. Artist like Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo emerged to typify this ideal of human importance (Lamont 23). Some of the writers of literary history are Erasmus, Thomas More, Sir Philip Sidney, Shakespeare, Milton etc. Georg Henrik Von Wright The humanism of the Renaissance had acted as midwife for the new science of nature. In a somewhat analogous manner the humanism of the Enlightenment laid the foundations of a new science of man (Wright 16). And further comments “The humanists of the Renaissance put emphasis on the dignity of man and on his independence of received authority in matters of truth” (Wright 18). The Renaissance was also a rebellion against the Catholic Church's control and religious knowledge restrictions. During this time, the most powerful figures began to place a greater emphasis on reason rather than faith. It was a moment when humanity's vitality and intellect were celebrated. Corliss Lamont suggests that present day humanism should inherit the feature of permanent value in Renaissance humanism where the spirit was its perseverance on getting away from religious control of knowledge and focuses on intellectual vigour (*The Philosophy of Humanism* 22).

**Religious Humanism:** it refers to an integration of humanist ethical philosophy with congregational rites and community activity which center on human needs, interest, and abilities. They regard the humanist life stance as their religion and organize using a congregational model. Andrew Copson opines that we need to deal with two further uses of the term "religious humanism." Both are uses of the term by humanists who are humanists in the sense of this book: people who hold the views that make up a humanist approach to beliefs, values, and meaning – and who do not hold any competing religious beliefs. The most prevalent usage of the word 'religious' is to communicate either that humanism is their religion, or that they are using the word 'religion' rather archaically and expansively, as George Eliot, Julian Huxley, or Albert Einstein used, to denote a person's core perspective, or that they themselves join in humanist organizations in a congregational fashion, similar to how a religious follower may engage in such a community. (“What is Humanism?”)

**Secular Humanism:** Secular humanism as a philosophy which embraces human reason, ethics, social justice, and philosophical naturalism while rejecting religious dogma, supernaturalism, and superstition. Secular humanism posits that a man need not rely on religion as he is capable of being ethical and moral without it. Rather, the humanist life stance emphasizes the unique responsibility facing humanity and the ethical consequences of human decisions. Secular humanist adheres to the notion of universal citizenship. It sees religious fanatics and tensions arising because of man's blind faith in religion. Secular humanism or just Humanism rejects supernaturalism and accepts the world as real and live towards making it a better place. It depends on rationalism and scientific temper in nature where it is logical and open to correction, improvement and alteration. Humanism is concerned with the plan to bring about harmonious, happy, egalitarian, just and progressive human society. It tries to focus on humanist values like democracy, knowledge, justice, affection, joy etcetera. Humanist believes service to people valuable, in itself and gains personal satisfaction in helping without any selfish motive.

The chapter discusses on how Taslima Nasrin raise her voice for humanism through her select works. She is not in favour of any religion but she raises her cry for the minorities. Her writings are claimed to be used by the fundamentalists for political propagandas. For instance, when *Lajja (Shame)* 1992 was published, the

Muslim fundamentalist did not take it positively and accused her of hurting Muslim community while in India the Fundamentalist Hindu fundamentalist took it in favour of them to criticize Muslims. In that way her work has been derived for own purpose to lit the hatred of communalism. In her opinion the various governments are using religion to get votes and thus leading to Islamization in Bangladesh (NDTV-The Big Fight-Islamic Radicalization). If people tend to use religion as a tool to create disharmony among the people of the nation, then the quest for humanism will remain as a mere quest without any answer. She is of the view that many other religions like Christian and Hindus have allowed criticism so Islam should also welcome criticism. She says "Islamic countries must separate state from religion," (*The Hindus*). Her writings are mostly directed to Islam as she grew up in a Muslim family.

### **Lajja**

Nasrin's first novel *Lajja* created a huge cry as the fundamentalists Muslim took it as against their religion. She was accused of being paid by RSS to write against Muslims. The fact was that, she was voicing out justice for the Hindus who suffered aftermath of the destruction of Babri Masjid in India. In *Lajja* she describes how Human Rights was deprived and murdered along with many Hindu families in the name of communalism. The book is a result of her denial to accept the sacrifice of human's happiness against any religion or community. She has exercised her freedom of expression and sought justice for those who suffered without any fault but became victim in between power hungry political groups.

The UN is the world's largest intergovernmental organization where the membership is open to all peace-loving states which accept the obligations contained in the present Charter, in the judgment of the Organization, and are willing to carry out these obligations. As such, Bangladesh willing to be part of peace countries became a member on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1974 after two years of its independence. However, she failed to maintain the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights' which was adopted on December 10, 1948. The violation of 'Human Rights' is clearly depicted by Nasrin in *Lajja*. The basic civil, economic, political, social rights and freedom of every person was suspended during the turmoil in Bangladesh. Babri Masjid is located and destroyed in India but the consequences were borne but the Hindus living in Bangladesh who has never heard or seen as to how it even looks.

*Lajja* is a work of fact-fiction as the events recorded are real. The family in the novel represents many Hindu families who considered Bangladesh as their motherland and never wished to separate from her.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights lays down Thirty (30) Articles for its member nations to follow among the people of member states themselves and among the people of territories under its jurisdiction. In *Lajja*, Nasrin lays of how even the first article was in threat. The statement as laid in Article 1, “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood” (Lahiri 30) did not help the Hindus in Bangladesh as the sense of ‘brotherhood’ was replaced by ‘hatred’. The incidents mentioned in the novel are the houses of the Hindus ransacked and looted. The writer describes as:

...They entered the Kali temple established in 1801, the Bengali year of 1208, and beheaded the image of Goddess Kali and went away with her silver crown and gold jewellery.

...They burnt whatever they could not carry away, and left behind houses reduced to ashes, and silent, half burnt trees. (*Lajja*, 136)

The people who lived together for decades became enemy in the name of religion. The humane aspect of an individual was replaced by the sense of religions sentiments. They lost their virtue and responsibility towards their neighbor. People are sentimental towards religion and hence it becomes divergent when their faith is under threat or criticized.

The right to life, security and liberty of a person was taunted when the majority Muslims became a threat for the minority Hindus. The Hindus no longer placed their faith in government as the later was formed by the fundamentalist and what worried them was to keep their votes intact. Taslima Nasrin in *Split: A Life* views that Christians has the same principle as the Islam in spreading their religion. Most monotheistic faith has a terrible history yet the people have not managed to become human. She raises question as to why Muslims held to slaughtering the other, and gives her own answer as “[B]ecause most Muslim nations are yet to embrace secularism, like most Christian nations have” (361). The novel not only



serves as a piece of fiction but reflects the cruel reality. Through the character of Maya, the daughter of Sudhamoy we see how right to life was taken away from her. She was the one in the family who really wanted to live and constantly begged her brother Suronjon to do something. To do something that Suronjon knew is to take them to Muslim friends' house to hide. Both the father and son truly trusted in nationalism than communalism that leaving for India never crossed their mind whatever the situation may be. She knew something terrible might happen if they wait too long. Her premonition proved right as we know that she was taken away from her house in front of her parents and never to be found. Though not clearly stated but the readers are made known that she had been killed and her body floating in the pond.

The security of an individual is lost when family like of Sudhamoy in *Lajja* whose faith in government could not help them to find their daughter Maya. Sudhamoy and his family are not radical Hindus but the people around them look at them as 'Hindus' and someone who is different from them. The writer mentions an incident where Maya comes home crying as the girls in her school were making fun of her being Hindu. To calm her Sudhamoy says, "You are a human being. There is nothing greater than a human being in this world" (*Lajja* 180). The state of being human being as the greatest was challenged and ultimately Religion came victorious. When the communal rights arose the Hindus were seen not as human beings but as 'Hindus' who share the same religion with the people in India who destroyed the Babri Masjid. The nation started with a secular ideas and principles but later with the replacement of secularism principles with absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah multiplied the fear of the minority Hindus. However the nation as a secular state was restored in 2010. The minorities were also part of the liberation movement against West Pakistan and so they also have equal rights as a citizen. The liberty as a citizen was reduced: when daughters, sisters and mothers were abducted, raped and killed, the shops and houses owned by Hindus being burnt and neighbours looting innocent neighbours. Suronjon as a young man has been keen in shaping his country but it did not turn as he wished to be. He did not believe in religion but the people see him as part of one religion because of his name. Suronjon says that he was a human being and a humanist but the Muslims did not let him remain as one. When Kironmoyee sat sobbing, Suronjon remarked that "She is a Hindu, after all! Does she have a

choice” (*Lajja* 236). This statement sums up the situation of helpless Hindu mothers who wails at their condition.

Talima Nasrin celebrates freedom of speech and true to her ideology she writes and describes the incidents that took place in Bangladesh and how people suffered brutality. Article five (5) of Universal Declaration of human Rights says, “No one should be subjected to torture or cruelty, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment” (Lahiri 31) but *Lajja* shows how the article remains a mere statement:

Ten thousand families homeless in Bhola. Seven hundred houses burnt to ashes in Chottogram. Temples destroyed in Kishorganj. Section 144 imposed in Pirojpur. Seven hundred houses set on fire in Sitakund Mirsoria. (*Lajja* 179)

The complaints lodged by the Hindus were not taken into consideration. The police led off the accused after instructions came from a higher level. Where would the Hindus go for help when its Motherland fails them. They were treated as the second-class citizens. The author writes, “Riots mean fights – a conflict between one community and another is called a riot. But we could not call these riots – these were attacks by one community on another. Torture. Persecution” (8). And hence, it was right: the Hindus did not do anything destructive back against the Muslims but they continue to be the victim.

Sudhamoy and Suronjon are the mouthpiece of Nasrin and their suffering can be seen as her suffering. As humanists see people’s sufferings as theirs, Nasrin can also be seen embracing the suffering of Hindu families during the riot. A conflict between humanism and fanatic communalism is seen in the novel. The author searches answers to the cruelty and life of fear lead by the Hindus. There was violence and what happened in Bangladesh as the text says is something different. In a riot both the parties fight and are aggressive but here it was one way slaughter.

Nasrin writes in *Spilt: A Life* that she has told the story of a young progressive educated Hindu family of Bangladesh in *Lajja*. She continues on how the young man has been victimized to communal violence who later becomes a fundamentalist and gets destroyed. She speaks out the truth for the minorities who are living like second class citizens in their own country. She writes, “Why should I

not speak the truth? The truth will always be valued” (371). Humanists are of the opinion that human beings must themselves give meaning and form to their life. They proclaim the need of liberation from all ecclesiastic dogmas and so Nasrin’s fight for justice did not stop when she was threatened or abused. Free thought is essential to the ideal of humanism and we see her expressing her thoughts without thinking of what the government or the religious people will react. Her bold writings are asking justice and freedom to express. L. J. Elders in his essay “Humanism: Its Roots and Development What humanism consists of” (4) says that those who sympathize with what the French call *laïcité* seem to share these views in their refusal to ascribe any role to religion in public and sometimes even in private life. And so Nasreen also shares the view of *laïcité* where she wants the religion to be separated from the state. The problem and tension arise when religion tries to control the nation based on its principles.

Taslima writes that Lajja is not the result of a single emotional outburst. It’s a chronicle of our defeat, a confession of our collective shame and humiliation. This setback is extremely tragic for any decent and rational person. Whether a human being like Suranjan converts to Hinduism or a Muslim like Haider, both instances are as despicable. When she observed religion taking precedence over people, I felt compelled to speak out (*Split: A Life* 373). She further adds that she has not made up anything about the detail descriptions of riots, rapes, murders and demolition of temples. The sense of Hindu-Muslim prevailed during the independence movement of 1971 with the slogan of Democracy, Nationalism, Secularism in the air but was soon forgotten where Islam became the state religion there by bringing a gap between the two communities.

Humanism as in the words of Dilip Vedalankar is “the philosophy of the collectivity to work for individual welfare. It aims at the entire race as a whole and wants to serve the individual through collective efforts” (Vedalankar 30). However, in the case of Nasrin we see her alone standing and raising voices against violation of being ‘humane’. Her struggle to bring individual welfare for the minorities in Bangladesh paved way to her exile. The feeling of humaneness stooped to a greater power that is communalism. In her works Nasrin focus on intimately related to all

humans and their collective perception for good for which Dr. S. Radhakrishnan's expression:

“Humanism is a legitimate protest against those forms of religion which separate the secular and the sacred, divine time and eternity and break up the unity of soul and flesh. Religion is all or nothing. Every religion should have sufficient respect for the dignity of man and the rights of human personality.” (Radhakrishnan 32)

ally to her works. Through *Lajja*, we see Nasrin protesting against the system which places the religion and state together. She writes on how the folks of one religion disrespect the dignity of human personality. She writes, “It is impossible for Hindus to survive in this country unless it becomes a secular state” (200). Humanism stands for human good; however, Nasrin's humanism through her writings was not welcomed by some fundamentalists not only in her nation Bangladesh but also in West Bengal.

The treatment towards the Hindus was not only of second-class citizen but some people resorted to forced conversion of Hindus to Muslim. Some fanatics saw forceful conversion as a victory. The police instead of protecting all citizens were pious and took sides with the hooligans. The law was seen turning as the perpetrator of the act instead. Nasrin records it as:

A drunk Romesh Chondro Ojha of Mirakathi village, in the sub-district of Jhalkathi of Jhalkathi district, was forcibly made to change his religion. Romesh Chondro's wife, Minoti Rani, and his older brother, Nirod Ojha, were also pressurized to convert. When Minoti Rani complained about this matter to the eminent people of the locality, they threatened her and told her that there would be beastly torture coming her way. Minoti Rani ran for her life and is still on the run. In Jobai village in the Kochua sub-district of Gopalganj, a sacked policeman called Sultan raped Sudhir Baidya's wife, she was so ashamed that she went into hiding, and Sudhir Baidya received threats to his life. (67)

Suranjon on following his father Sudhamoy's path has never visited temple nor prayed in his life. He has delivered speeches in the streets, put his effort to bring

socialism, and attended meetings to support the cause of farmers and labourers. He has also lobbied for the socio-economic upliftment in the country but all in vain. He and his family are labeled as Hindus and local boys chasing him. It is pathetic that his works and deeds become insignificant in front of religion. Only his Hindu name is important to the Muslims though he is an atheist. People label him as a Hindu and not as an atheist. During that time, it was either Hindu or Muslim.

Sudhamoy influences his son Suronjon in his view on religion. When Suronjon was young he bought for him books on the lives of Einstein, Newton, Galileo, or books on French Revolution etc rather than fancy clothes. His motto was to raise his son with distinction with secular education and freedom of thought. Suronjon was brought up in a humanist outlook which shaped his personality. Later this humanism made him a misfit in the society where he lives. His knowledge and free thoughts did not find place in a society filled with violence and riots. Suronjon has always told his friends that he is human being first and then a Bengali by race but his idealistic view did not make place in Bangladesh. The unity that the people sought was based on religion and not people of the same nation. Suronjon lost his trust in humanism when his neighbours and friends betrayed him. Even his close friend Haider let him down by not disclosing the identity of one of Maya's kidnappers though he knew. Even friends turned into foe in the name of religion. Islam which claims to be a peaceful religion was seen at its worst spreading terror, riot and killings. Sudhamoy realizes his helplessness after Maya was taken away. He sighs that he is not safe in the country in spite of the fact that he is a citizen and have been part of the language movement and was a part of the war to chase the Pakistanis in order to liberate Bangladesh. We see Sudhamoy's view on leaving the country: "Sudhamoy consoled himself with the thought that it was not about Hindus and Muslims but about the weak torturing the weak whenever possible" (26). However he is forced to change his view on the so called riot. The father and the son knew the harsh reality yet was reluctant and not ready to accept.

Sudhamoy and Suronjon consider themselves as human being and not a Hindu but people tag them as Hindu though they do not pray go to temple. In the name of riot the politics to drive out Hindus from Bangladesh was being carried out. The neighbours looting neighbours, capture their properties and finally chase them.

At the end of the novel, we see a ray of hope when Sudhamoy agrees to go to India. He says, "Let's go away" and when Suronjon asked in Surprise "Where shall we go?" he replies 'India'. He was ashamed to say it and his voice trembling. The writer says, "Sudhamoy was ashamed to say it, his voice trembled, yet he spoke of going away because the strong mountain that he had built inside him had gradually to crumble" (320). Nasrin along with the many families of Hindus had to flee the country for advocating their cause. She brought to light the principles of humanism but like Dutta family her thoughts did not fit it to the world of religious fanatics. The voices of the free minded people were suppressed as it was a complete catastrophe in the name of Religion. The fundamentalist won over thousands of Hindu families but it was a shameful victory as they had to lose free thinkers like the Dutta family. Like the Dutta family Nasrin also sacrificed her happiness and human rights on the altar of fundamentalist Islam and unhealthy social system. Taslima Nasrin stands with the view of humanism which draws especially upon laws and facts of science who believes in human beings' evolution of the Nature and that we are a part of it. Her works can be seen as an adherence to the philosophy of humanism which bestow an individual's faith in humankind and that we have the potential to solve our own problems through reliance on reason and scientific method.

### ***French Lover***

In *French Lover*, Nasrin's humanist proposition is seen giving the valuable status to human life rather than to biological attribution of gender, race and class. She also focuses on freedom from superstitions beliefs, taboos and religious authority in making decisions. She emphasizes on the use of science and reason to reach the peak of human potential. Nasrin's works are attributed mostly towards the plight of women, the weak, marginalized and can be seen against religion which in some or the other plays a part. She places human being before religion, race and gender. The realization of we feeling as a human in the novel is portrayed through the character of Nilanjana. The characters of her novels become her mouthpiece to reach the mass and protest the injustice.

Nasrin leveled the world into a nest where injustice, intolerance and good happen everywhere no matter in which places one live. It is the humanist view of life that human being can solve the problem of various aspects of racism, negative

attitude and prejudice etc. The first importance to be taken into account is human being before race, creed or any other form. It is the call of the writer to unite the people of the world to one platform i.e the floor of humanism where people will be considered as human being first before cast, colour, creed, religion etc. She views that race, religion and caste is an irrational agent to divide without rational base. She is against the religiosity of the people that blinds them so much so that it people forget to rationalize things and lose respect towards humanity. This alludes in the readers mind Rabindranath Tagore Poem No. XXXIV

Where the Mind is without Fear and the head is held high;

Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been broken up  
into fragments by narrow domestic walls;

Where words came out from the depth of truth; (Tagore 38)

Taslima Nasrin like Tagore searches for a world that is united by humane actions. She is against the established ideas which strict human being from thinking. Her mind is without fear of voicing out towards injustice and she lives with her head held high even though she has been exiled from her country Bangladesh and West Bengal. There are many people who acknowledge her work and also many who do not accept her works and call it as blasphemy. It is difficult not only for Nasrin but also will be hard for anyone to break through the established patriarchal system which has been instilled in the minds for many generations.

The character of Nila can be seen as the voice of Taslima Nasrin voicing out for many women who are stuck in lifeless and unhappy marriage. Many South East Asian women are made to compromise with marriage and accept it as their fate. However, we see Nila challenging this norm and free herself of the system to discover herself. Corliss Lamont's proposition in the humanist philosophy says "Humanism, having its ultimate faith in humankind, believes that human beings possess the power or potentiality of solving their own problems, through reliance primarily upon reason and scientific method applied with courage and vision (14). In parallel to his view Nasrin presents Nila with the potential to solve her problem of marriage and relationship through her world view and experiences. She is an emancipated character who goes through reactions like in a catalyst. Unlike conventional character she stands the safeguard of her own self interest. Nila is a free

spirit girl waiting to take flight to discover the world and its beauty. However, the hindrance is her husband who sees her as a prize to be displayed when his friends come to his house. She is reduced to a position of a child, maid and a sex object. He sees her as a child bearing machine to give him an heir and not as a companion. Nila's zeal for freedom can be seen when she says:

You feel you're looking after your wife, doing your duty. But it comes with a price. I have to live according to your wishes because you are the master, you are the boss; without you my life is pointless and I am a mere servant who'll clean your house, cook, serve and provide sexual gratification at night. Is there any role in which you see me? (79)

Nila wants to be accepted as a human being and loved. She desires to be seen as an individual rather than an object. She wants to be freed from the gilded cage in a luxurious apartment with all the modern machines. This compressed inner suffocation of being deprived of the right to freedom takes an explosion in the form of an extra-marital affair with Binoy Dupont. Her justification can be seen when she talks back to her husband Kishandas that she doesn't even have the right to have friends even though she has to give up her food habit and adjust herself to be his wife. She says "I cannot survive within so many restraints and strictures" (80) and left the house the next day to a door of freedom with Danielle.

Towards the end of *French Lover*, we see Nasrin's humanist view when Marilu warned Nilanjana (Nila) that Sandani was not a good locality. She added that there people are unemployed: there are robbery, theft, drugs, murder and that it was chock full of black people. On hearing that Nila replies:

'Look at my skin – is it very white? In a way it's black. Is it only the unemployed people who rob and steal? Those who have jobs, get fat salaries, don't they steal? So what if it is chock full of black people.

Murder? Tell me, is there a good place on this earth? (293)

And asks Where would she say there is total safety. And further adds whether there are no addicts in Manila Robbers, or murderers. She sadly makes it clear that there is poverty, sorrow and superstition in India as well as in Paris. The country has racism, so does India. She brings in the condition of India to compare and draw analogy that women are at the receiving end wherever it may be. She makes her stand when she



asks this Rue de Vouyere, where only white people stay, do you think murders never happen here? Of course they do. One could have happened just today!’ (293)

The questions of Nila itself answer to the question. Human can overcome the problems of racism if humanistic approach is applied to solve the cause. The important outlook needed at present is ethical and rational outlook and not colour, race or anything that distinguishes one group from the other. There can be one race which can perhaps be of humanism. Taslima Nasrin breaks the barrier with her writings and calls to break free from barriers which hinder rational reasoning and freedom to human being. It is rational and applicable to contemporary India where on one hand people celebrate diversity and on the other discriminate based on race.

The protagonist is determined to start her journey to self-discovery. She exercises her right to abort her pregnancy through a friend. During her dilemma she remembers Simone de Beauvoir who fought for women’s rights to abortion in Paris during the fifties. She is aware of her rights and is happy that she will enjoy the fruit of the revolution in the same city. She becomes a victim to patriarchy that her character becomes a paradox character. A contradiction in Nasrin’s view on humanism is seen where she speaks through the character of Nila to Danielle: Do I have a land of my own? If your own land spells shelter, security, peace and joy, India is not my own home...Danielle, do women ever have a land of their own or a motherland? I really don’t think so” (291-292). Nasrin believed in humanism and a common world where it is about the importance of human being. However, through these lines, we see her losing hope in humanity when she asks and alienates herself from India and Paris. Nila thinks that whether it is India, Paris or any other country women are seen as women, an inferior being and not as an individual with the same right as the men. Nasrin in a way brings in the question to patriarchy as to why women do not have a country of their own. The statements evoke to the readers to ponder and decide why and how are we lacking humanness in us. This question may perhaps be the Harold of her later book *Narir Kono Desh Nei (No Country for Women)* 2007. With many trails and turn of events in the novel we see Nilajala the main protoagonist excel in asserting her life as an individual deciding her future though she is unsure of how to start. She leaves Benoir with whom she discovers her sexuality. Mihir Dave writes that to humanism it is a blunder to forego these - worldly pleasures in order to keep the soul pure so that it would be admitted into a

paradise that, in any event, does not exist. The ethical right to enjoy to the fullest the goods of present existence is upheld by the humanist. Business, politics, and international relations are equally as vital as sex in the humanist ethic. (*Taslima Nasrin- A Committed Humanist* 95). Hence in *French Lover* we see Nila fitting in to the frame of humanist ideology. She does not to be caged but enjoys in the city streets and to be loved. Nasrin's portrayal of sexual contents in her writings does not suggest that she is promoting pornography. In fact, she presents the reality and the minds of many unhappy marriages. Humanist ethics as Mihir Dave suggest liberal view on sex relation, so we see Nila being presented accordingly. However, the slide variation is Nila not confining to the institution of marriage and having an extra marital affair with Benoir. Nila's role suggests that sex education should be given to children rather than consider it as a taboo. To be able to exercise the free thoughts of humanism one must be exposed to the world with free thinking without prejudices and hindrance. She lived a life of restrictions and in shackles where she is bound to the institution of marriage. She cannot live life in her way or wear the clothes she wants. She wants to have financial independence where she doesn't have to beg pocket money from her husband like a child for that she took up part time job. While she was yearning for acceptance and being treated as an individual on the contrary Kishan wants to take control of her life. He thinks from his view and makes decision for Nila based on his opinion and not hers.

Nasrin's humanist view is depicted through Nila and it is because of this free and liberal expression on sexuality and homosexual that her works are termed as obscene. The episodes in the novel can be approached through humanistic view where humanism welcomes all life enhancing and healthy pleasures from simple gratification from sports, literature, music, art, appreciation of beauty etcetera. Humanist believes in beauty of love and hence Nasrin shows the short episodes of love in the life of Nila. It is because of her experiences either in pain, rejection and love that she metamorphosis to be a better human with enlightened thoughts.

### ***Exile: A Memoir***

Taslima Nasrin wrote freely exercising her freedom but restrictions were brought about when she started writing about the bitter truths of her society which resulted to discomfort among some sections of society. Her writings about the

oppression of Muslim women were considered un-Islamic. Taslima writes that the attacks and insults she faced from all quarters stem from one simple fact- that is she spoke the truth on how she was kept under house arrest for month away from people she loved. She was mentally and emotionally tortured. The reason stated for her arrest was for her safety but it added more depression (*Exile: A Memoir* 16).

In the book *Exile: A Memoir*, Nasrin describes of how she had to live a life confined in the four corners of the walls. Her name and books being banned in West Bengal. She was denied expression and liberty to live freely. She was constantly under surveillance and threat. Article nine (9) of Universal Declaration of Human Rights suggest “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile” (*Police Handbook* 31). We see the violation not only in her fictional works but also through her autobiography: which adds to her health. She finally decides to leave India because of her poor health. What made her take this decision was:

Besides affecting my eyesight, irregular blood pressure is causing the walls of my heart to harden. One fine day, all my primary organs will stop and I will die in the safe house. I have never had such health concerns before this exile! Before this ordeal began, never in a million years has my blood pressure been a cause for alarm. (*Exile: A Memoir* 304)

With the publication of *Dwikhandito* the third volume of autobiography of Nasrin a huge roar arose which led to banning of book by both Bangladesh and West Bengal. The book after many years of ban is finally translated to English and published by Penguin in India in February 2018. Shirbnarayan Ray in regard to *Dwikhandito* says, “I must say that I consider Taslima, much like French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir, an exception” (qtd. *Exile: A Memoir* 27). The book gave rise to different types of readers. Nasrin says it outlawed a method of thinking, polarized readers in favour of or against the prohibition, and fueled fear about the ramifications of questioning religious doctrine. It also tapped into people's fears and anxieties about communal upheaval, as well as concerns about governments' efforts to satisfy Muslim voters, since many claimed the ban was justified since the book insulted the Prophet. (*Exile: A Memoir* 29)

Her bold writings did not please all sections of the society which lead to her exile. She was kept far from the reach of friends, media and people. This gave rise to

her book *Exile: A Memoir* which describes the incidents of how she was taken under house arrest and has to go through emotional and psychological trauma. She grew up free spirit but the world did not allow her to be herself and bounded her with different chains which remind the readers of Jean Jacques Rousseau's statement, "Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chain." Article Nine of Universal Declaration of Human Rights could not be achieved as she was exiled from her motherland. India which is also a part of UNO also failed as a member when she could not protect Taslima Nasrin and banned her from West Bengal. Wole Soyinka views that Nasrin's voice is the voice of humanism everywhere. Her poems, novels, essays and autobiographies all reflect her humanist thought.

The right to life, security and liberty of a person was taunted where the writer was kept in a room where she was not even allowed to open the door and the windows barred. She writes "No human, not even a humanoid is allowed to enter this room. I live in a room where I often have trouble breathing" (137). Nasrin believed in Indian Secularism and sought shelter in West Bengal but it failed her. Exiled in a room far from outside world for speaking the truth. She expresses her anguish as:

The room is silent, except for the occasional sound of someone desperately banging their head against wall. There is no one to take note, except for the lizards who keep staring. I often wonder if they feel sad for me —perhaps they do. Do they cry, when they see me cry? I live in a room where I don't want to be, where I am forced by democracy to spend my days in darkness, uncertainty and anxiety. In this room, secularism is killing me, bit by bit, every day. My beloved India has forced me into this room. (138).

In the midst of political parties and religious fundamentalist, Nasrin was forced to be exiled for she has disturbed the peaceful life of people who were comfortable with the system. She demanded justice for people who were considered and treated like the second-class citizen in their own country. The course of her exile was not made known to many. She became a troll of political parties using her as an excuse for vote banks. She was silenced as she did not have communication with outer world but later after the release, she voiced her suffering and pain in books. She expressed her freedom without fear of any political parties or religious group for she was standing with truth.

Nasrin loses her sense of security as an individual. Her distress can be seen when she declares she was human, had family and dreams. Her simple humanist life is seen from her interest in maintaining terrace garden, making friends and going to market. And in a blink, she says because of some handful people she is reduced to a forbidden object. Her yearning for freedom is expressed when she writes “There is not a single soul or a single loved one that you can reach out to—you cannot even choose to live your life according to your wishes. You are someone else’s property now whether you admit it or not,” (125). Like in *Lajja* the Right to recognition as a person before the law became void and null as her fight was with religion.

Taslima Nasrin upholds freedom of speech strictly and says “Freedom of speech cannot exist without the freedom to offend” (*The Hindus*). Her works have attracted much criticism especially from the religious groups. Her work *Spilt: A Life (Dwikandito)* attracted opinion which is insulting and gave her different names. She writes about her life as a doctor struggling with her profession and a life where she writes her thoughts. The readers did not take well bold writings about her multiple affairs with different men. In *Exile: A Memoir*, Nasrin says she has written *Dwikandito* about her fight against patriarchy and the oppression of women and religious minorities, but the only thing that caught people’s attention was her sexuality. She writes “I cannot write just for the sake of good literature. I value honesty too much to do so” (*Exile: A Memoir* 15). Her honesty was frowned and was rejected with contempt. In her interview with *The Hindu's* Diplomatic Editor Suhasini Haidar expresses on how everyone should have the right to offend others there by making it limitless. This is of Taslima Nasrin is what makes her different from the rest. This is not only her opinion but she puts it into practice.

Her books *Meyebela: My Bengali Girlhood*, *Spit: A Life* and *Exile: A Memoir* are few works where she boldly writes about government, intellects and religion which most people would avoid to be on the safer zone. She is a humanist who does not take turn for the wrong doers but stands for the just and oppressed. When Suhasini Haider asked about which is worrisome: politics or politics of religion, Taslima seemed to have replied: “It’s about secularism vs fundamentalism, rational vs irrational, innovation vs tradition...” (*The Hindus*). Humanist believe in secularism and hence what Taslima Nasrin sees around her is fundamentalism overtaking secularism. Nasrin writes, “I keep dreaming that for an honest, secular

writer, Indian is still the safest nation in the subcontinent” (*Exile: A Memoir* 93). However, this dream of being secure was shattered when she was attacked by Radical Islamic activists during the launch of Telugu translation of *Shodh*, one of Nasrin’s works. Since she has been accused as anti-Islamic by the Islamic fundamentalists it did not take the time for her to be attacked. Nasrin says Neither a life built on atheism, secularism, humanism, and a keen scientific outlook, nor my sensitivity and humanity- nothing can expunge the stubborn stain of my alleged anti-Islamic tendencies from the minds of the people (*Exile: A Memoir* 38). During the event of book release, she was suddenly attacked by group of men ‘chanting and shouting in Telugu’ without any reason. The slogan that reverberated was “Taslima Nasrin Murdabad” (*Exile: A Memoir* 40). After that incident she was led to mental trauma constantly in a fear of being attacked. The cause of that incident was out which brought no surprise as it was a result of religious politics wherein the local MLA sent the goons to boost his political party. D.E. Smith in his essay “India as a Secular State” states “It is not the function of the state to promote, regulate, direct, or otherwise interfere in religion. Similarly, political power is outside the scope of religion’s legitimate aims” (*Secularism and its Critics* ed. 180). Here the two entities are seen functioning for own interest. Smith regarding to ‘Citizenship’ says “The secular state views the individual as a citizen, and not as a member of a particular religious group. Religion becomes entirely irrelevant in defining the terms of citizenship; its rights and duties are not affected by the individual’s religious beliefs” (179). This view when seen in Taslima Nasrin’s predicament, her citizenship from Bangladesh was denounced as she was not a member of religion which the majority citizens follow. An atheist writing about Muslims was not taken well which led to her exile. Smith further adds that “The closer the connection between the state and a particular religion, the greater the danger,...”(180). This statement is well suited to Nasrin’s condition where the state and religion blended in Bangladesh and her freedom and rights as a citizen was distorted. The government did not pay heed to her appeal and her works were banned. Her freedom of expression was under surveillance and her movement constantly scanned. She says the worst kind of censorship is self-censorship (*The Hindus*). The combination of state and religion threaten her ‘right to life, liberty and security’ as a person. State governs the affairs of the people while religion deals with the beliefs of the people. In a nation where

religion plays a major role like Bangladesh, it becomes difficult for authors who openly exercise their freedom and for the minorities. Religion and Politics are two different entities where one deals with the supernatural beliefs and the later is a course of action in which the state as an organized group of society governs the people. When these two forces meet it creates havoc and confusion like witnessed in *Lajja*. The hand of political parties strengthened the religious fanatics to destroy and create terror. On the nutshell the whole incidents mentioned in *Lajja* and the other works of Taslima Nasrin might seem as a work of imagination but the backdrop remains that it is people like her who has witnessed the whole riots. The incident divided the people into 'us' and 'them' where the Muslims were 'us' and the Hindus as 'them'.

### ***Meybela: My Bengali Girlhood***

In *Meybela: My Bengali Girlhood* Nasrin exposes the evil turn that people resolve to in the name of religion. She brings into contrast fatalism and humanism. Humanism draws special concern to science and facts which believes in evolution, nature of law and gives importance to reason. Humanism has faith in humankind and that everything revolves around human beings' power, ability to solve problems through reliance on science and reason. The faith on oneself is juxtaposed to fatalism in the form of Nasreen's mother who became victim to blind faith and superstitions. She becomes a devotee of Amirullah who controlled her mind in every possible way. The family witnessed their mother become a religious fanatic who saw her husband and children as infidels. She stopped eating food on the dining table considering it as sinful to eat like the 'Jews' and 'Christians'. Nasreen's mother was dejected and frustrated of her life that instead of trying to solve and make her life better she accepts that it was her fate and gives up to religion without reasoning. So much so into religion that Ma counts her beads, "Anyone who isn't a Muslim is a kafir - Hindus, Christians, Buddhist, all of them" (139). Religion has made her lose her sense of logic thinking. Whatever she does was in the name of religion and that Allah will be pleased with her. Nasreen comments that her mother did not stop at repeating what she had heard from the peer. Mother tried constantly to impose her belief upon the children especially Nasrin. Nasrin writes:

She was desperate to indoctrinate me, although she did say, every now and then, "You must choose your own path, my job is to guide you, give you

advice, and that's what I am doing. When Allah asks you on Judgment Day, "Did anyone ever tell you about me?" you'll have to admit that someone did, won't you? The truth is that what I tell you about Allah and the Prophet is something Allah wants to tell you, He just uses me as his medium." (142)

The fact is blind religiosity stops one from becoming a human being. We see in the character of Ma how she forgot many things including her childhood friend Amala who is a Hindu. Without analyzing the context and the Quran, Ma follows everything demanded by religion. She stopped reason and there stopped herself from knowing who she is. She is a human being too but driven by religion and acts like a puppet. She exerts her freedom of expression to the extent that she indirectly brings out the misdeeds of her uncle. The practice of giving *naseehat* which in Urdu word, means 'advice', 'counsel' or 'admonition' turned terrible for Mubashwera. Young Nasrin narrates of how an innocent soul was turned to a victim. Mubashwera, a sweet innocent girl was chosen to offer *naseehat* to her uncle. A story came up that while giving advice to her uncle a *jinn* which is a spirit of lower rank than angels who can change forms to humans and animals, and often possess humans possessed her. Later after her death, Nasrin's father told that Mubashwera was pregnant and that her death was caused because she tried to get rid of the fetus using the root of some plants (278). Nasrin leaves the matter to the readers to decode the untimely death of her cousin Mebashwera. The *jinn* which they claim possessed her only after she started giving counseling her uncle Sharaf. While the men walked on moon, evil spirits (*Jinns*) inhabited the trees and there started the oppression of Mebashwera. She writes:

This *jinn* was different from any other. It made its victim sit alone under a tree and weep. She told no one why she was weeping. She lost her appetite, complained she was feeling nauseous, gave up doing namaaz. All she did was look for a suitable tree to sit under. The *naseehat* sessions began to be ignored. (276)

Mubashwera's silence can perhaps mean the act of protecting their family from shame. It was considered improper for a girl to talk about sexuality openly. So she might have suppressed it to herself and handled the shame of being pregnant by weeping. She cannot share with anyone as she will be seen as shameless and sinner. Sharaf did not figure in the case but the readers are aware of how Nasrin was



sexually abused by Sharaf. Sharaf decides to receive naseehat to love and turn to Allah but he failed. Mahatma Gandhi exhorts that, "To love human beings is the first step to develop love for God and his universe" (*Vedic Humanism: Path to Peace* 34). Hence, Sharaf who failed to see his niece as a human being failed to love God. After Mubashwera death, Sharaf is known to turn back from Allah to his old lifestyle. For some take advantage of religion and burn down neighbours' houses, looted their property out of jealousy while others take advantage of innocent children. And Sharaf is no such exception. His act of turning to God was for his selfish motive.

Nasrin's thoughts allude to the readers of Tagore's poem, "Leave this Chanting" where the author asks the readers to step out of chanting and reading prayers in a closed room, and see the world outside. Nasrin's religion became 'Humanism' when she decides the set of room without rules. She relates herself with of the cause of every human without being selfish. She asks questions about religion which some people manipulate it for their interest. She is not a puppet like Ma as seen in *Meybela: My Bengali Childhood*. While young Nasreen in her innocence enquired why Allah did not ask men to wear burkhas, her mother gray eyes glowed ominously like two balls of fire and said "You must learn to obey what Allah has said. He has ordered women to wear burkhas. He said nothing about men. You must accept that without question. It is a sin to question and to doubt" (143). Here we see how the mother implies her forced religion on the young mind. Nasrin is not allowed to question or have doubts about Allah. Whatever the religion says is the ultimate truth and there is nothing more than that. This shows how the inquisitive mind is blocked in the name of religion. If she questions and tries to reason it will mean she is doomed. Every religion says they practice peace and tolerance but when we see it was in the name of religion that thousand were separated, killed, tortured and is still suffering. In the mullah's home young women are brought and kept prisoner with windowless room with unbearable heat and humidity as punishment by their father. They are kept there for their bad behavior or believed to possessed by jinn. The mullah's officers beat the girl or visit them back door to cure them. The visitors of mullah brings money, food, massage his body and take his every word of abomination, warning of damnation to heart. They are to do everything without a question. This was not accepted by Nasreen as it was hindering a human being from expression their freedom of thought and reason. The world is a global village

connecting every nook and corner with technology and science yet Nasrin views that religion (Islam) has not undergone any changes and it still lacks change. The religious belief that existed thousand years back is still the same though people and their mindset have changed. A huge difference lies between growing technology and people's psychology. In her books we see how she views and questions religion of being calculative and dominating. It is for their interest that they do not allow science to enter their arena as they know that science will break the religious illusion which had been set up comfortably for many decades. Her empathy to perfect human relationship let her out of her country. They do have any explanation for science and they do not want their world of fantasy to shatter.

The contradiction of religion and science is portrayed in the form of Young Nasrin and Ma- the question of creation or evolution, religion and science. When Nasreen asks about the creation of Adam and his life, Ma instead of explaining to her and making it clear the concept said, "Get out of here, go! Every word written in that book is a lie. What Allah has said is the only truth. Nothing else matters" (184). Ma is also confused and unaware like young Nasrin but she doesn't give herself to question and reasoning as she has accepted her fate. And she doesn't want anything of human reason beyond her blind faith. The rules of religion bind an individual from the spirit of free thinking, self love, and emancipation of oneself. The replacement of scientific temper with religious temper is clearly portrayed by Nasreen in her works. The Bangladesh government has banned her books based on the allegation that she writes blasphemy against Islam and pornography. However, when we analyze her Autobiography *Meyebela: My Bengali Childhood* we see her bold decision to write about sexual abuse which he had undergone during her childhood. Humanist believes in self-love and human being as the center of the cosmos. And hence, Nasrin's embracing of self-trust does not hesitate to describe sexual act in detail which many female writers will often ignore. She no longer confines to the rule of religion which forbids women from talking about it.

In *Meyebela: My Bengali Girlhood*, young Nasrin innocently describes of how people like her father who does not do the Namaz or believe in Allah was considered as kafir. Her mother says, "Anyone who isn't a Muslim is a kafir- Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, all of them" (139). Her mother's view reflects the

mindset and opinion of many Muslim mothers. Nasrin also did not believe in Allah and so when the two forces of religion and state combined against her she could not help but give in to their demand and leave her homeland Bangladesh. She gave in to the interest of some few people thereby sacrificing the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law. She was reduced to a threat to religion which indirectly controls the state. And the government filed a criminal case against her in July 1994 accusing her of hurting the religious feelings of the people (Taslina Nasrin: "They Wanted to Kill Me"). Nasrin opines:

I think the Qur'an is, like all religious scriptures, out of place and out of time, totally irrelevant for our era. Nothing will be gained by reforming the Qur'an; instead, what is needed is a uniform civil code of laws that is not based on religious dogmas, and that is equally applicable to men and women.  
(Interview with MEQ)

### **Conclusion**

Taslina is a humanist and doesn't believe in Islam since her childhood though the realization and open confrontation took place later. Her believe in Humanism and not believing in any religion has a clear reason as seen in her works. One instance can be lost of humaneness in term of nation turmoil a seen in *Lajja*. She dislikes religious rituals and ceremonies but the only thing she liked was sitting outside with bucket full of meat and distributing to poor beggars. She is sensitive towards people's suffering and is ready to extend help. It is this responsibility which she takes over herself that landed her into exile from the Country.

She is against any religion which allows the persecution of people of different faith, if any religion keeps women in slavery, if any religion keeps people in ignorance. She states Religion is a big factor in putting women into their house-cages (Interview with MEQ). If religion is separated from the state and irrationality replaced by rationality nothing of the sort like that happened in Bangladesh would have taken place. The Hindu fundamentalist in India destroyed Babri Masjid and in Bangladesh the Muslim fundamentalist destroyed many Hindu temples and raged fire in Hindu residence. They destroyed temples, shops robbed, ravaged and finally burnt. In the Quran it says, "O believer, fight the unbelievers near you, and let them

find you harsh, and know that God stands with the pious” (158), so the Muslims who were driving their neighbors did not feel it as going against humanity as they find it as protecting their religion. It was like as if the Muslims were waiting for an opportunity to chase the Hindus from Bangladesh. The Hindus were helpless in their own motherland. “Kartik Ray of Boultoli village of Boultoli Union of Gopalganj lost his life to the Muslims of his neighborhood when he tried to protect the paddy that was growing in his fields. His wife, Renuka, was forced to say that his brutal murder was a natural death” (68). On the surface, it was made to appear like the work of few people and the situation not that crucial and under control. When we look closer it was the situation where the family faces fear and insecurity. The family and houses destroyed and they were forced to leave their country. What is the meaning of the law when it cannot protect its citizen? Hindus were asked of when they will leave. The slogan that reverberated all over Bhola was “Hindus, do you want to leave? Then it is Bangla that you must leave! Go away to India!” (246). Suronjon, depressed over her sister’s abduction thinks, “What was the point in staying alive? There was no reason to be alive in Bangladesh if you were a Hindu.” (227)

Taslima Nasrin through her writings demands for justice and freedom of an individual. She writes, “I write about freedom and rights and I believe in what I write” (*No Country for Women* 37). Her bold voice calls out for freedom but society does not allow her as she is seen as a threat. She asks, “Do we exist for society or does society exist for us?” (*No Country for Women* 34) thereby encouraging people to come to realization based on reason and not false thinking. When religion and state intertwine, it hampers the freedom of any individual where humanism seems to disappear. Taslima Nasrin in the preface says that the incidents in *Lajja* are repeated over and over again in Bangladesh. One of the characteristics of Humanism is that it cannot tolerate discrimination against any people or nation and this is clearly seen in Nasrin where she criticized her people on wrongdoings. *Lajja* was written twenty years ago and even now the Hindus in Bangladesh are tortured and many leaves for India because they feel insecure (x). The book vividly reports the incidents where many Hindus faced discrimination based on their religion. Nasrin stood with the viewpoint that people have one life to lead and should make the most of it and this is represented through her characters.

## Chapter Three

### A Multicultural Study on Kamila Shamsie's Select Novels

The aim of this chapter is to explore the novels of Kamila Shamsie from a multicultural perspective. It also explores on the novel being influenced by multicultural nationality of the author as reflected in literary pieces. The chapter brings in the discussion of Multiculturalism and how cross-cultures are depicted in the novels. A brief discussion is added on Multiculturalism in Britain and Pakistan, and the predicament of the immigrants. The discussion on Multiculturalism is used to analyze the novels and how the author has placed the characters amidst the cultures. Culture as a concrete entity is pertinent in an individual's life and the research through the novels seeks to rediscover the ethnicity and cultural identities to create awareness to cope with other diverse culture: to promote and participate to access the equal resources in the society. The chapter brings an analysis of the character placed in multicultural situation and their ability to co-exist without losing the essence.

Multiculturalism in general refers to multiplicity of cultures in a peaceful co-existence. The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines 'Multicultural' as "for or including people of several races, religions, languages and traditions:" and "Multiculturalism" as "the practice of giving importance to all cultures in a society" (1005). Kamila Shamsie who is a Pakistani-British speaking English and Urdu and practices her religion in a different society lives in a multicultural society. The characters in her novels are not set in a particular place or culture but she places them in multicultural settings and depicts their journey in the course. Multiculturalism stands for co-existence of diverse cultures, where culture includes racial, religious, or cultural groups and is manifested in customary behaviors, cultural assumptions and values, patterns of thinking, and communicative style. Multiculturalism is seen as a democratic policy response to copy with growing cultural and social diversity in any society. Multiculturalism is a systematic and comprehensive response to cultural and ethnic diversity with the addition of educational, linguistic, economic and social components and specific institutional mechanisms which has been adopted by a few countries, notably Australia, Canada

and Sweden. The embracement of multiculturalism gained its discourse in the late 1960's and early 1970's when countries like Australia and Canada allowed new immigration from countries other than European countries. They supported and discarded the idea that Asians and Jews were inassimilable. An official recognition was created in 1971 to start multicultural society which declared "Immigrants were encouraged to 'Integrate' rather than required to assimilate. This meant that they were to be enabled to retain elements of their 'home culture', and ethnic community associations were seen as important vehicles of integration" (*Multiculturalism, A very Short Introduction* 8). It refers to acknowledgement and promotion of plurality of ethnicity, cultures, language, language etc. In the words of Ali Rattansi, "Multiculturalism entered the public vocabulary only in the 1990's with demands for cultural recognition in school and university curricula by these non-white ethnic groups" (11). Multiculturalism has been present in every society but as a study it came into limelight recently. It not only to study the celebration of diversity and pluralism of cultures, race, ethnicity, religion etc. but it addresses the issues of inequalities between majority and minority of ethnic groups, race and language of a nation or society. Laura Muchowiecka in "The End of Multiculturalism? Immigration and Integration in Germany and the United Kingdom" remarks

One can only say that this descriptive of multiculturalism as characteristic of societies in which different communities live 'side by side but separately' is a result of normative dimension. In other words, certain policies (or lack of them) encouraged immigrant groups to stay among themselves and not to view themselves as part of the host society" (2).

Multiculturalism is a systematic and comprehensive response to cultural and ethnic diversity, with educational, linguistic, economic and social components and specific institutional mechanisms. It has been adopted by a few countries, notably Australia, Canada and Sweden. The term multiculturalism can be perceived as the best way of reacting on cultural differences. It works on an assumption that minority groups are not treated on the same level as other citizens. Multiculturalism also serves as an instrument of political and economic interests. Some critics contend that the multicultural argument for the preservation of cultures is premised on a problematic view of culture and of the individual's relationship to culture. Cultures

are not distinct, self-contained wholes; they have long interacted and influenced one another through war, imperialism, trade, and migration. In the latter respect, multiculturalism is closely allied with nationalism. It is the co-existence of diverse cultures, where culture includes racial, religious, or cultural groups and is manifested in customary behaviours, cultural assumptions and values, patterns of thinking, and communicative styles. In recent time, nationalization of international images and internationalization of national images go side-by-side. Border crossings eventually lead to the by-production of hybrid culture and the multiple forms of hybridity are the ways of celebrating empirical reality of the pluralism of human cultures in particular and all social activities in general.

Thus, multiculturalism addresses the dilemma of cultural diversity brought about by the movement of people within and without the nation state. Almost every part of the world is occupied by significant groups of strangers with cultural and ancestral links to the places outside the place of their current residence. Such a movement of people across the globe, for permanent settlement or for temporary travel, form a strong basis for the rise of cultural diversity worldwide. Many conflicts are arising day-by-day and different cultural formations and social relations are developing within and outside.

### **Multiculturalism in Britain**

Britain has always been a diverse culture when we look into its history, from the coming of different ethnic groups to form the present Britain as we know of today. It has been diverse in the form of religion, ethnicity, culture and people coming from different nations where by the country composed of different settlements over centuries like Celts, Normans, Vikings, Huguenots, Jews, French, etc. At Present UK serves as a home to the largest Pakistani community in Europe making them second largest ethnic minority in the United Kingdom (“British Pakistanis”). Since the Author also stands in Multicultural backdrop, the research not only studies the celebration of diversity but also the predicament of the minority community in a multicultural country. The concept of Multiculturalism in Britain is clearly and explicitly accepted and is expressed through the then Home Secretary Roy Jenkins in 1966:

I do not regard it [integration] as meaning the loss, by immigrants, of their own national characteristics and culture. I do not think that we need in this country a 'melting pot', which will turn everybody out in a common mould, as one of a series of carbon copies of someone's misplaced vision of the stereotyped Englishman . . . I define integration, therefore, not a flattening process of assimilation but as equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance. ("The End of Multiculturalism?" 104)

It shows how the country believes in integration of the people rather than expecting them to assimilate and forget their root. In here, they give equal importance to the entire citizen whether native or immigrants. They did not agree with the American idea of Melting pot but rather agreed to the phrase 'plate of salad' where each ingredient is given importance whether their presence is felt at great or small. Similar like in a plate of salad, the significant of spices and some herbs are not seen but they play an important role in contributing to the plate. This example reminds the analogy of Eliot in his essay "Tradition and Individual Talent" where he talks about the role of an individual in creating a work of art. The celebration and presence of multiculturalism can be narrowed down to the use of catalyst by Eliot. The involvement of some ethnic culture might not be as clear and prominent like the majority culture but its presence makes the society a multicultural one. Eliot's writing "The combination takes place only if the platinum is present; nevertheless, the newly formed acid contains no trace of platinum, and the platinum itself is apparently unaffected: has remained inert, neutral, and unchanged" (185) shows how each element plays a prominent role in creating something. Like the chemical experience society also goes through different experiences and changes in course of time. Some ethnic culture assimilates while some integrate.

The idea of multiculturalism in Britain has been accepted and it has seen the arrival of immigrants from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Caribbean islands which were once a part of British colony. After the World War II, Britain saw a huge flock of immigrants from British colonies which contributed to large and heavy influence to British Society. It has been observed that approximately 5, 00,000 migrants without any relatives in UK entered the country from 1949 to 1962. It was



then that the 'coloured people' were viewed as threat. It was this growing numbers that which gave rise to unfavorable mood towards the non-whites. It became the issue similar to that of postcolonial discourse of 'us' and 'them'. Following this detainment the government imitated certain policies for immigrants, for instance every Pakistani entering UK to make deposit to cover the cost of their return. Once celebrated diversity, as a form reached its peak which began to create problem. Keeping the wellbeing and identity of the whites, UK gradually tightens the control of post-colonial immigrants. Not only the commoners but important figures of history like Conservative P Enoch Powell and Margaret Thatcher also saw the liberal idea of multiculturalism as a threat to their British identity and culture. Over the period the origin of Multiculturalism is perplexing and becoming a turning point. With the immigrants increasing in number, the concept of Britishness is also emerging to define 'us' from the 'other' i.e. non-whites. They are left in paradoxical situation where they welcome immigrants yet not willing to see paradigm shift from the British culture which were seen as superior than other culture to a multiethnic culture where other cultures are increasing their dominance in terms of language, religion, practices etcetera. It has been noted that east and south London are inhabited by people of African ethnicity, Hammersmith, a London borough with high population of Polish migrants and west London by the Indian leading to Britons leaving London and moving to countryside or expensive and friendlier suburbs. It has also been reported that "During the last decade London has lost more than a third of its UK-born residents who were replaced by immigrants" ("Britons Flee London to be Replaced by Immigrants" 3). This shows Multiculturalism which was a policy to equal human recognition declining as it did not combat with the consequences that would follow. Immigrants were given and encouraged to integrate with the host nation rather than assimilation but this integration took a different turn as the host nation became an extension of the nation which they left behind. Some population assimilated with the host country while some did not. The freedom to retain to their own home culture and tradition which was part of multiculturalism later became a problem to the host nation. Many of the scholars' research on the overgrowing population of the immigrants in Britain and questions whether the state is going under ghettos. Britain has been and is a multicultural state where immigrants are

offered equal opportunity at the same time concerned about the loss of being 'britishness' of the people.

There are many citizens who abide by the rules of the host country but again with the topic 'integration' the negative aspect has been seen where the growing population is advancing in terms of population and job opportunities. Integration was questioned and debates on multiculturalism were formed with London bombing of 7 July 2005 also commonly referred to 7/7:

On that day four Islamic suicide terrorists detonated three bombs in subway trains and one in a bus, leaving 52 people dead and over 700 injured. The attacks which struck Britain were different from the terrorist attack of 9/11 in America in that way that 9/11 has been officially interpreted as an attack of a foreign terrorist group, whereas London bombers were British citizens brought up in the UK." ("The End of Multiculturalism?" 21)

This incident drew the attacks of many commentators to pick the issue of Multiculturalism leading to revise the policy of multiculturalism. Britain in respect of every individual allowed the immigrants to practice their culture and traditions however, this leniency backlashes in the form of immigrants practicing their culture which was unaccepted in Britain and against human rights. Multiculturalism is celebrating and accepting diversity but in diversity some practices are unaccepted like forced marriage, taking law into their own hand in the name of honour killing, radicalization of religion, rise in terrorism etc. Many immigrants enter Britain to escape the sufferings and pain of their country but after entering the host country, instead of integrating in a positive way, some try to build that same society from where they were trying to escape. They try to form the same societal rules and culture but in a different country. They fail to accept the host country as their own which sometimes leads to lack of patriotism. For instance, in the case of Muslim population, many immigrants entered Britain to get away from the rigid rules, war poverty, etc. however, after entering Britain majority of the population want to continue their Islamic rules for themselves. Some people integrate and assimilate with the host country while some demand a separate power of themselves. This can be seen when some social survey research was conducted where "A poll conducted in 2006 for the Telegraph reveals that four out of ten British Muslims

want sharia law to be introduced into parts of the country where believers in Allah are predominant population group” (“The End of Multiculturalism?” 20). Coming to the view on Homosexuality, Muchowiecka writes that 100% of the people interviewed from British Muslim view it as intolerable and unacceptable according to their law bringing in the concept of multiculturalism as failing to uphold its principles. It may be noted that England and Wales became the first countries in the UK to pass marriage equality in 2014.

The discussion on multiculturalism in the novels of Kamila Shamsie is from the lens of the characters who are immigrants and travel along with the writer's thoughts. The novels are all set in different places and different time zones each revolving around the lives of Pakistani culture. Kamila Shamsie as a diaspora writer talks about issues related to nationalism and multiculturalism where the identity of an individual sometimes gets mixed and disillusioned. When one talks about multiculturalism the topic of hybridity, ambivalence, assimilation, diaspora, construction of identity comes in and this will be seen in this chapter. The need for social stability which is an urge of every individual has compelled the characters to adapt into different domains. Kamila Shamsie in her select novels presents the journey of the characters wherein the characters travel for better prospects and aspirations. Multicultural in this chapter is used from the demographical descriptive usage referring to the existence of ethnically or racially diverse segments in the population of a society or State.

### **Multiculturalism in Pakistan**

A nation's development and achievement are known to people outside through media and circulation of news. In an honest thought when a person hears the name 'Pakistan' the immediate image is of a man wearing kurta pyjama, terrorist, inequality, violence etc. The image is built by media and long stereotypes passed down from generation to generation. Similarly, when one talks of 'Multiculturalism' most common countries that are reminded are like U.S, Canada, U.K, Australia etc. which in common are Western countries. In terms of diversity India is also counted but coming to Pakistan, not much is known except for negative images inbuilt upon the people. From an Indian perspective many Indians grew up hearing and watching Pakistan as the villain. The media shows it and the people believe it and vice versa.

Multiculturalism also a term is usually seen in the west. However, in developing countries it is not much prevalent as they are the people migrating to advanced nations for better prospect. In the case of Pakistan many people are of the opinion that it is controlled by the state and only one group of people inhabits the nation. In Pakistan, Islam functions as the dominant religion but when it comes to ethnicity it is diverse multicultural. Nadeem F. Parachu in the article "Multiculturalism will Eat Itself" is of the view that "Multiculturalism is an almost entirely post-modernist idea that advocates a departure from a homogenized and singular nationalistic, ethnic and religious idea imposed upon a society and polity. It encourages the recognition, respect and institutionalization of cultural diversity" (3). And this departure from singular ethnicity is seen in Pakistan. The nation has different ethnic groups consisting of major groups like Punjabis, Pashtuns, Sindhis, Saraikis, Muhajirs, Baloch, Paharis, Hindkowan, and other smaller groups. Smaller ethnic groups also exist which include Kashmiris, Kalash, Chitralis, Siddi, Burkusho, Wakhis, Khowar, Hazara, Shina, and Baltis. Apart from these groups, Pakistan also serves as a home to more than 1 million Afghanistan refugees.

For long Pakistan has been trying to unify the nation under one ideology based on Islam but slowly it is taking the shape of multiculturalism with the slow return of democracy and people's participation. The idea threatens the fundamentalist who uphold the Pakistani Ideology but the world will see the change in its own time. With the distortion and ghettos by multicultural ideas, multiculturalism in Pakistan is a hope and not an adopted idea. The country itself is a paradox as many of the outsiders are skeptical of the policies and functioning of the nation. Though Pakistan has people from different ethnicities, the common thread that binds them is religion. The concept of being different in religion or ethnic is seen in Pakistan as the cause of conflict. The participation was made based on religious difference and so likewise it works to bring the people into one common ground. The country as can be seen as lacking 'multiculturalism' as it fails in religious tolerance. According to the Dawn news reported on 13 May, 2014 the rights of the minority Hindu religion is threatened when their religious texts are burnt and prevent them from practicing their religion. Following the consequences, it was also reported that 5000 Hindus are migrating to India from Pakistan every year. The idea of multiculturalism to demonstrate and welcome cultural diversity and draw from

various cultures the finest essence lacking as citizens belonging to minority religion are seen migrating to other countries.

### *Salt and Saffron*

Kamila Shamsie being a British-Pakistani writer brings in the concept of multi-ethnicity in her novel. When one talks about multiculturalism the issues of diaspora, shift in identity, assimilation to new environment and hybridity come in wherein the individual experiences a paradigm shift in new life. In *Salt and Saffron* the multicultural environment is brought through the character of Aliya and the progress in the story as she unravels the myth of the Dard -e-Dils. Shamsie brings in the distinction of east represented by Pakistan and west by America. The idea of multiculturalism as integration is brought in through the usage of English language for the wide readers and use of local language. Shamsie in "Tri-Sub-Continental" writes

A mulberry was never a mulberry to you when you ate it. It was always its Urdu self; always shaitoot. Shaitoot, I say out loud. The word drips — ripe and purple — from my tongue... Colonialism meant that language and ideas from far away entered and became part of subcontinental life. And so, if I have a character who throws Urdu words into English sentences, refers to Ghalib in one breath and Shakespeare in another and Charlie's Angels in another, it's not because of some East-West clash but just an expression of the kind of Pakistani she is — the kind of Pakistani she could be without ever leaving Pakistan. (89-90)

Some local phrases are best used as it is without any translation and change as during the process of translation the real essence loses its meaning and the effect of the words. Shamsie implies words like Dadi, Nani, Fakhr, Nazish, aloo puri, chhipkali etc. Food, clothes, dances and family relations dominate all Asian cultures. Shamsie uses these as tools to preserve the traditions while living in London. She throws exclusive descriptions about food, clothes and relationships to make it evident that the expatriates cannot escape from craving and thinking about homeland. She uses these details to draw out the sense of belongingness and sensitivity towards one's culture. She gives the analogy of food to bring back memories like Tamarind sounds

like Taimur Hind to Aliya. However, some expatriates believe in cultural identity an adopted object rather than an inherited one. They forget their own root and quickly adapt to new. Aliya foregrounds this reality “My cousin, Samia had become a sandwich eater. Bread, mayonnaise, mustard, salami, sliced roast beef lettuce, tomatoes, gherkins, tuna salad. Good God, how dreary. Behind the loaf of bread was a sauce boat, not dissimilar in size and shape to Aladdin’s lamp.” (*Salt and Saffron*, 21).

Aliya comes from a multicultural background as she is exposed to both tradition and modernity from Pakistan and America. The Intertextuality of multicultural elements in literary piece and influence is seen from Aliya’s conversations with her cousin where the western literary influence is mentioned in the form of Shakespeare’s character Iago in *Othello*, “Leda and the Swan”, ancient Greek texts, feminist views on Taj’s mother’s story. Multiculturalism as an approach talks about the status of minorities within the nation state. It has shown that the presence of many plural cultures and communities is not enough but they should be given equal rights and recognition and that multiculturalism should not be a source of discrimination. Discrimination on the basis of class is seen in the novel. Mariam’s act of eloping with the family cook was not accepted and looked upon condemned as the Dard-e-Dils maintain their status of their royal heritage. Similarly, Aliya also becomes conscious of Khaleel’s class though both of them are exposed and enlightened in the western world. Back in Karachi they belong to different class strata where Khaleel lives in a locality inhabited by the poor class. Kamila Shamsie’s implication of words and bringing in other culture is seen in her writings which express her opinion that what now interests her about the piece is the function of the other country. She opines in “Tri-Sub-Continental” that it’s not that America is notable for being America; it’s because it isn’t Pakistan. Both America and England are mentioned in her second and third novels, but mainly as places where people return to Karachi or travel to become cut off from home or dread becoming cut off from home. It reminds me of all those Empire novels that seem to be about India or Africa but are really exclusively about England (89). The readers observe that her writings are mostly based in Karachi but she brings inferences and influences of the west though she brings in different historical context which makes a play in the

politics of the situation. She brings multiplicity in her novel but at the same time views and integrates her culture which plays a major part of the Pakistanis.

The characters in *Salt and Saffron* are multicultural: Aliya born and brought up in Karachi and later exposed to the western world, Mariam from a place unknown to the family members, Meher Dadi a character who gives hope and enlighten women to think beyond marriage and family, Khaleel, Aliya's lover from low class society. Here minority in the form of the cook and Khaleel are seen as someone who does not have access to build relationship with the upper-class society.

Multiculturalism as a general understanding is coming together of varieties of people to a particular place where they stay in harmony without losing their identity. Here in the novel, the confusion of identity and sense of belongingness is at stake. Aliya is left in confusion when has to decide whether to love a boy of whom her snobbish, once-aristocratic family will disapprove. In most of the eastern countries, marriage are mostly arranged by the families or relatives and hence it became difficult for her to choose between East who can be seen as the family and west associated with love. Aliya's travelling has instigated in her to find the answer to her question and about herself. As the family history unravels, she comes in contact with the history of partition and trauma of dispersal. They entered Pakistan as immigrants, build their own homes and relationships but the sorrow and reminiscence of their past life were always with them. When it comes to their family history, immigration was brought by partition of India and Pakistan but the ethos and memories they have of their prior to partition was so strong that they held tight to the past glory and tradition. In the novel, Aliya is seen opining "Our lives don't await memories, I decided; they are crippled by memories" (32). This opinion can be confirmed by what Rutherford writes that migration disorientates and ruptures identities. The Spatial and temporal coordinates which are believed to be important for a consciousness about past and origin are removed. Consciousness of an immigrant can be analysed conveniently accordingly only if time and space is considered. The family draws a strong connection with the past and also adhere to the attitudes of their centuries of inbred snobbery. They keep alive the memories of royal past and lost glory with the partition through stories and anecdotes. The multicultural set up of the *Dard-e-Dils* were revealed to the readers irregular collective narratives by the characters, storytelling and family gossips. Shamsi's narrative technique uses dialog, discussion,

stream of consciousness, story, and sub plots. Each character is given importance where they integrate and play an important part in the plot.

The basic premise of multiculturalism according to Will Kymlicka is that “the survival of a culture is not guaranteed, and, where it is threatened with debasement or decay, we must act to protect it. Cultures are valuable, not in and of themselves, but because it is only through having access to a societal culture that people have access to a range of meaningful options” (*Multicultural Citizenship* 83). He further supplements that the values cultural recognition and identity are entitled to every individual and also a basic assumption to individual autonomy. Cultures impact one’s life wherever they may be leave evolving from action and fantasies of the group. Every culture has their own myth, values, fantasies, recollection of memories and so on. For an immigrant not only the past culture which they inherit before immigration but also the culture of present settlement is also interconnected and webbed into his life. It combines to form a new culture to which they have to adjust. Kamila Shamsie as seen in “Tri-Sub-Continental” where she writes about places like America and England as many Pakistanis immigrate or travel to these places. Similarly, she places Aliya in America and Britain as part of her journey and the following sequence in Karachi where she reacts abruptly. This happens to her mainly due to the fact that she has no shoulder to comfort her in the foreign land. Multiple faces appear in the back drop of memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. Aliya aspires to her coming back home from her United States. The space between Karachi (Pakistan) and United States provides her a deep and better vision into the cultural differences that her whole life has been entrenched in. Will Kymlicka expresses:

Some immigrants might hope to re-create these practices in their entirety in their new country. But that is effectively impossible without significant government support, which is rarely if ever provided. On the contrary...immigration policy in the United States is intended to integrate immigrants within the existing English-speaking culture. Immigrants come as individuals or families, rather than entire communities, and settle throughout the country, rather than forming 'homelands'. They are expected to learn the English language and American history, and to speak English in public life—



e.g. at school, work, and when interacting with governments and other public agencies. (*Multicultural Citizenship* 78)

In the situation of aunt Starch and her family they are desperately following the foreign culture. This exemplify that the first-generation immigrants have a constant fear of being away from their roots; the danger of which they foresee in their next generation. The cross-cultural differences create space alienation between the immigrants and the indigenous people due to the fact that South Asian family patterns are closely knit into relationships and ties. With the unconscious space created to adhere and follow the culture of the host nation, Immigrants no longer assimilate entirely to the norms and customs of the dominant culture while they are encouraged to maintain some aspects of their ethnic culture.

Multiculturalism as an approach talks about the status of minorities within the nation state. It has shown that the presence of many plural cultures and communities is not enough but they should be given equal rights and recognition and that multiculturalism should not be a source of discrimination. Here the Aristocratic families in Karachi look down upon people belonging to low class through they are well read. Khaleel represent the lower class people who are uprising in social status by going out of the country to live the American Dream. Many of the post-colonial people migrate to Western countries especially America, Britain, Australia and Canada with a hope to change their class in their country. Some succeed in changing their life while are disillusioned by the charm. This remind the readers of Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* where the situation of the poor country is depicted through the character of Biju and what happens when they are put in a wealthy and different society or country. The illusion that the denizens of poor country have is shattered when they are introduced to the real place. It is common saying that if a tree falls its echo is heard louder at a far distance. Similarly, the lifestyle of the west is admired and consider is as superior to our own. Biju becomes the epitome of the native to expose the disillusion towards the west. To measure in contraction to Biju Khaleel who is educated and has transnational identify but yet a poor in the eyes of many Karachians as he could not get out of Liaquatabad, a place preferred by the poor. When he is in London, he is a Pakistani and in Pakistan a low-class person. People like him are not given chance to integrate in a multicultural situation as they

are firstly not accepted as equal in their nation. In Khaleel's case though a Pakistani born American he falls in the same line with his life in reference to Liaquatabad, a place counted to be occupied only by poor does not make any significant change the narrative. Aliya and Khaleel's conversation give a fair idea that he is aware of the class politics and his association with Liaquatabad can haunt him even in a foreign land to some extent. He asserts that it was the mention of Liaquatabad made people maintains distance from him and that Samia and Aliya also stopped their conversation with him quite abruptly and moved out of the scene when they met the previous time. When Khaleel asks what was wrong with Liaquatabad and asks other questions, Aliya is forced to confess, "Don't tell me you don't know about the great class divide of Pakistan." (*Salt and Saffron* 60). Aliya even added that she has never been to Liaquatabad, indirectly represented the huge class distinction practised but the subjective part of his experiences does not make it through to the narrative. However, Aliya and Khaleel's love managed to overcome the stigma of class strata and the writer gives positive note at the end. The happy ending can be compared to Shakespeare's *The Tempest* where the wounds of the past are healed and Prospero gives his blessings to Miranda and Ferdinand.

In a discourse of multiculturalism, it becomes impossible to avoid assimilation and hybridity. Hybridity as a term was popularised and commonly used in postcolonial discourse. It implies to the people of different nations on how they coexist. A nation cannot progress without any influence from other nations. The subcontinent countries were once colonized and hence they can never separate the ties with the center i.e. the colonizer. The colonizers and the colonized existed for many decades and hence, one cannot fully detach himself from the colonizers. Edward Said in his Introduction to *Orientalism* said that both Orient and the Occident "geographical entities thus support and to an extent reflect each other" (3). Here the novel comes under the talk of postcolonial discourse with the use of Shamsie's careful language and the characters evolving. Aliya undergoes a change in personality when she decides to trace the history of her family and debunk the myth of not so quite twins. Upon reaching Karachi she learns the news of Mariam's elopement with the family cook. She was at first influenced by the family view but later opens her mind to accept her and is in fact influenced by her to listen to her heart and not worry about the opinions of the society. For a change to occur a phenomenon is needed and in *Salt and*

*Saffron* Mariam acts as an agent to bring the reality to the Dard-e-Dils family. Hybridity does not take place all of a sudden. It is not a rapid change; it takes place slowly and without knowing. Aliya comments on Samia who is related to her through their common great grandfather as “Samia, it appeared, had become one of those *desis* who drink Pepsi in Pakistan and *lassi* in London” (7). Homi Bhaba in *The Location of the Culture* writes, “The effect of mimicry is camouflaged. It is not a question of harmonizing with the background, but against a mottled background, of becoming mottled- exactly like the technique of camouflage practiced in human warfare” (84). Hence, we do not see Samia’s mimicry but it is camouflaged. She acts as white in Pakistan and Pakistani in America as trying to preserve her culture in a foreign land.

With the exploration of the western culture, Aliya’s character undergoes hybrid nature where the writer portrays her admiring Meher Dadi’s act of self-assertion and independence. The term ‘hybridity’ has been mostly associated with Homi K. Bhaba who analyzes the relationship between the colonized and the colonizer. He views that in this growing world there can be no culture as pure and unaffected by other culture. This gives rise to the concept multiculturalism where there is intermixture of cultures. It was considered unconventional of a Muslim woman to elope with her lover but Meher dadi as a rebellious child did so and broke the convention of a dutiful and submissive daughter. She did not want to live a life of a widow so after her daughter’s marriage and immediately after the wedding:

Meher sold her house and declared she was going to Greece, and maybe she would take flying lessons while she was there. She said to her daughter, Zainab, ‘Zaheer’s rich, and I don’t foresee divorce for the two of you, so you won’t mind if I squander all my money, will you?’ Then she took off in Mediterranean and proceeded to multiply her wealth with a few wise investments in the European stock markets. (*Salt and Saffron* 90)

Meher dadi integrates in the western world at the same time goes through hybridity where she learns about stock markets which are an alien topic to many South East Asian women. In the case of many Postcolonial nations, it is a typical responsibility of a man to feed the family and after the father dies the son is expected to shoulder the responsibility. However, with her different outlook Meher dadi takes her own

responsibility and lives life without depending on anyone. Not only Aliya but the readers are also impressed by Meher Dadi's free spirited character. Meher dadi assimilated with the concept of the western world where each individual has the right to progress and above all live a happy life.

### *Burnt Shadows*

In *Burnt Shadows* the protagonist Hiroko Tanaka travels around the places along with the mind of the author acquiring cross-culture differences. The story is set with her character starting her journey from Japan to India, then to Pakistan and finally to the USA. She is exposed to the bombing of Nagasaki in 1945 where she lost her loved ones, the partition of India in 1947, the political chaos in Pakistan and the attack on the World Trade Center in USA. The incidents of history are not mentioned in details but the shadows of history- personal, political are cast over which follows her throughout her journey. The novel represents the trauma of wars. Her identity as a Japanese woman takes various forms as she travels around different places. The author presents an interesting perspective through her protagonist Hiroko Tanaka about the sense of belonging. Shamsie narrates on how violence causes infliction on human personality which results in the importance of primal struggle for survival.

Hiroka Tanaka has marks impeached on their backs. They have not seen it but the marks are constantly with them reminding the cruelty of their respective lives. Tanaka has "three charcoal-coloured bird-shaped burns on her back, the first below her shoulder, the second halfway down her spine, intersected by her bra, the third just above her waist" (90-91). Sajjad, Tanaka's husband called it "Birdback" when he was allowed to see the marks for the first time. The female protagonist in the novel has mark on her back which reminds her of the incident where her life was shattered. Her past life is not forgotten but is attached with her giving a separate identity. Hiroko Tanaka is seen as 'hibakusha' which means victim of bombing and a foreigner in the places she lived. She embodies the colonized people who became a subject of destruction in the name of world politics and to bring peace.

In the discourse of multiculturalism Diaspora as a topic also takes shape as it involves people's migration or immigration. The protagonist of *Burnt Shadows* is a Japanese diaspora through whom Shamsie lays the traumatic displacement of

innocent humans caused by world power politics. Hiroko embodies those people who spend their lives in migration from one place to another searching for a peaceful environment. Kamila Shamsie falls under Postcolonial writers and so does her characters' lives caught in transnational identity. The 'bird' in Tanaka's back may perhaps be a symbol of her life where she is to fly to different places like a bird.

One of the key features of the classical, victim diaspora as elaborated by Robin Cohen (2008) is:

the idea of dispersal following a traumatic event in the homeland, to two or more foreign destinations. Migration scholars often find it remarkably difficult to separate the compelling from the voluntary elements in the motivation to move. However, when we talk of a trauma afflicting a group collectively, it is perhaps possible to isolate a class of events characterized by their brutality, scale and intensity so as unambiguously to compel emigration or flight. (*Global Diasporas 2*)

Hiroka Tanaka falls under this feature where she migrates to India after she loses her loved ones in bombing. The trauma of the war is attached to her body no matter how far she tries to escape. It was her own decision to leave Japan but at the same time situation compelled her as she disliked the tag labeled on her as 'hibakusha'. Later in 1947 she is forced to migrate to Pakistan during the partition of India. She refuses the invitation of the Burton-Weiss to move to England and instead marries Sajjad who embodies the colonized Indian who is treated with paternalistic benevolence by the British James Burton. Tanaka's departure from Japan was not a result of tyrannical leader or force but it was her inner self that made the decision. It was an indirect result of political hunger of the nations. She wanted the war to be over soon so that she can marry her fiancée but the bomb destroyed her dreams. The politics of power between nations ruined the lives of many innocent citizens. Tanaka is seen shifting from place to another not out of her will to migrate but the circumstances led her to.

Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin views that "Colonialism itself was a radically diasporic movement, involving the temporary or permanent dispersion and settlement of millions of Europeans over the entire world" (*Key Concepts in Post-*

*Colonial studies* 69) and during this process it is not only the colonized who become diasporas but also the colonizers. They leave their homeland and settle in a place very different their environment. For instance, the Burton family and the other English families settled in India. Elizabeth did not want to return to London to her mother-in-law's place so she decided to migrate to New York after the British left India for good. The freedom that she enjoys will be limited once she gets back to her homeland. She lived a life as a colonizer and going back to England would mean being colonized by the rules and regulations of her in-law and the society. A paradoxical situation is presented through her. The colonizers colonized India for so long and wanted the colonized people to dance to their tune. However, when it is time for them to return, they do not want to for they will be under someone's command. Like the way they want freedom so does the colonized people want to be free and function their lives without external involvement.

Kamila Shamsie brings in Hiroko Tanaka in a situation where she cannot free herself from the burden of the nuclear explosion that has marked her body. She becomes a curious medical case for the researches who want to study the consequences of the atomic bomb on the survivors. Her miscarriage was believed to be the consequence of the exposure to nuclear radiation and also it was believed that the only son born to her could also be deformed in some way. However, she uses her body to rebel against the external force to free herself from the scheme in which her body has been framed. In the novel, we see her with short haircut and trousers; she is an East Asian with a modern westernized look in India, a barelegged woman in Pakistan at the time of the Islamisation policy, and Japanese with a Pakistani passport in the United States. She inhabits multicultural traits during the process of primal sting to survival. This makes it impossible to place her within a geographical, cultural, and social frame. She tries to assimilate with the host nation in which she is placed.

'Hybridity' in the views of Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin "...takes many forms: linguistic, cultural, political, racial etc." (*Key Concepts in Post-Colonial studies*.118) here, in the case of Tanaka she takes the form of various hybridity where she speaks Urdu, Japanese, English and German. She is exposed to different political scenario and displaced from one place to another. The Nagasaki event has

irremediably affected her body, but doing so it has also given her a reason to start a process of self-definition where she enters into the world of diasporas who shift or leaves their original place. Shamsie writes of Tanaka's situation as, 'It was a fear of reduction rather than any kind of quest that had forced her away from Japan. Already she had started to feel that word 'hibakusha' start to consume her life. To the Japanese she was nothing beyond an explosion-affected person; that was her defining feature' (49). To make a distinction of the bomb victims into a narrow means to reduce them with all their unique and complex identities. The one event that had tragically acted on their lives without leaving them any chance to react cannot define them as one. Clubbing them as a separate category means to marginalize them into a particular social group. Nevertheless, Tanaka's journey starts at the moment when her body is marked with burns. Tanaka says, "I don't want to hide these burns on my back, but I don't want people to judge me by them either. Hibakusha. I hate that word. It reduces you to the bomb" (100). She realizes that people are exercising a power on her that reduces her subjectivity to a specific set of social conventions when she is identified as a 'hibakusha'. The protagonist emerges as an individual with autonomous identity constructed by crossing social and cultural boundaries as well as frontiers among nation-states. She adapts and embraces to whatever situation she is placed at. And the result is her inhabitation of a hybrid space where the never-completed process of identity construction develops through the negotiation of several differences. At the end of the novel, she is seen in America the country in which she was not interested at the beginning of the novel, indirectly unhappy for the destruction of her life.

### *Home Fire*

*Home Fire* depicts the debate of whites over the failure of Multiculturalism in United Kingdom. The story is woven on the backdrop of a Jihadist father. The Multicultural element in the text is seen where Shamsie makes use of different locations all in a single text like London, Amherst (Massachusetts), Istanbul, Raqqa (Syria) and Karachi (Pakistan) along with her thoughts. In *Home Fire*, Shamsie places her characters in multicultural situations. They are British Muslim living in London and Isma goes to America to pursue her education. Parveez' disillusionment about ISIS and leaving home to join the Jihadi movement creates an opportunity for

the British to prove their point right on the view that Muslims were commonly associated with radicals than with secularists and that it has not changed even if they have immigrated to secular country. For the behavior and characters like Parvaiz the critics, intellectuals and policy makers are made to comment:

Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from mainstream. We've failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong. We've even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values. (David Cameron)

The British tolerated the diversity of different ethnic people but when the ethnic groups resort to terrorism, they are made to consider their policy of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism created a space where it encouraged different cultures and separate lives but it back lashed when the ethnic minorities confirmed of us and the other. Laura Muchowiecka writes "It contributed to creating more radical sentiments among Muslims which in some way led to incidents like riots among Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities in three northern cities in 2001 and to London bombings in 2005" (2). The 7/7 London Bombing left shock and disbelief among the citizens as the terrorists who were Muslims were British Citizens brought up in UK. Had Parvaiz been successfully brainwashed, he might have turned to be terrorist and perhaps might have even threatened the state which will lead commentators to blame the fail of multiculturalism.

It can be said that as a citizen one has to take responsibility and cooperation for the formation and success of the society rather than just using the goods as rights. Multiculturalism in United Kingdom has been seen as a threat because of some ethnic groups who refuse to integrate and segregate from the culture in which they live. Because of some radicals the whole Muslim community comes under stereotype. In the novel, Parvaiz is shot death by the ISIS member when he decides to walk off the group and go back to London. The state government is unaware of his motive and from an objective view revokes his citizenship and bans his body to be brought to London. This act can be seen as an example to the immigrant and their families to abide by the state or face consequences.



In Bhabha's theory, “ambivalence disrupts the clear-cut authority of colonizer because it undermines the simple relationship between colonizers and colonized” (*Key Concepts in Post-Colonial studies* 12) and suggests that the colonial relationship is always ambivalent and it generates the seeds of its own destruction. Here Parvaiz becomes an ambivalent character where he is a Muslim or Pakistani by lineage at the same time British citizen. He realized his mistake and tried to return but the colonized in the form of the British Home Secretary disrupted and transferred his dead body to Pakistan. The center here is London and when Parvaiz tries to return to the center, he is termed as a traitor and the center would not want any disturbance from the colonized people. Parvaiz at the doorstep of British Consulate in Istanbul was ready to admit his mistake and prepare to face the trail for breaking the law but he clearly knew that “he was the terrorist son of a terrorist father. He rested his head on his knees. He didn't know how to break out of these currents of history, how to shake free of the demons he had attached to his own heels (171). Shamsie through this episode makes a political interjection as expressed through her mouthpiece of a retired Special Branch officer, quoted in the newspaper story titled: “How Many Parvaiz Pashas will it take for the Government to wake up?” (201), and observes the cause of British Born of Jihadi parents being not closely watched by the state. The children of the jihadist need to be dealt with compassion and recognizing them as a productive citizen.

In the use of word ‘hybrity’ one cannot ignore ‘mimicry’. The two goes hand in hand. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin define hybrity as “An increasing important term in post-colonial theory, because it has come to describe the ambivalent relationship between colonizer and colonized” (139). The Home Secretary disillusioned by mimicry and considered himself as British but the fact remains as Rudyard Kipling writes “Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,” (1). He tried to be one of them (occident) but he will always remain an orient to the occident. It is a common stereotype particularly the Muslims segregate themselves from the host nation and there arises many questions like “Why do they segregate themselves?” “Why don't they integrate?” (“No Nation Called Home: Rejecting Britishness” 43). Not only in multicultural society but also in a specific group, people vary from each other in their outlook, opinions and judgment. And many a times, the assumption is made based on small group who are rebellious and

break the rules. In order to protect the integration of general population, some have to step forward and in *Home Fire* it is done by Karamat who is the New Home Secretary. In order to promote plural society and build social unity, Parvaiz' body was not allowed to Pakistan as he was being tagged as a Jihadi. His running away to join ISIS was also reported to the state by his sister Isma. Some immigrants are at fear of revoking their citizenship and try to integrate in a good way. This is depicted through the character of Karamat and Isma. And the brave who does not care for citizenship is Aneeka whose British passport is confiscated when she tries to fly to Istanbul to escort Parvaiz back to England at her own after receiving no response to her numerous calls on Eamonn's cell number. Parvaiz on the other hand is intercepted by Farooq in his efforts to flee from Raqqa to England via Istanbul and is killed just outside the British Consulate in Istanbul. Karamat Lone, as he has lately passed the Bill from the parliament introducing the law of revocation of citizenship for those British citizens who have joined terrorist forces and have a dual citizenship, bars Parvaiz' dead body from a burial in England as he has, according to the new laws, lost his British citizenship. Parvaiz' dead body is sent to Pakistan: his other nationality. Aneeka, heartbroken and ferocious on the unforgiving and inhuman British laws, travels to Pakistan on her Pakistani passport and collecting Parvaiz's dead body gives a protest sit-in in a park near the building of British Deputy High Commission in Karachi. She needs justice for her dead brother and makes requests, via media, to the British Prime Minister to allow her to give proper burial to her dead brother in England as a British citizen.

It has seen that during the recent years the politics has been confronted with various demands for recognition of cultural and ethnic plurality coming from groups of citizens, cultural and ethnic minorities especially in European countries like USA and UK. In this respect, Multiculturalism as part of Post colonialism is now no longer confined to sociological studies but brought to common level through literature. Rise of immigration is not only a concern of politics but the problem is to be faced by all. On the lighter side promoting multiculturalism can lead to protection of cultural identity and also the universal right of an individual. UK, the home to the largest Pakistani-British community in Europe is reflected in the novel. Isma's interrogating scene represents the situations experienced by many British Muslims in

European countries who are under surveillance. The London to whom the Pasha siblings had full faith led them down.

The siblings in the novel are immigrants and the eldest sister Isma represents those immigrants who assimilate with the host nation and try to embrace their culture. An instance is created by Shamsie about the sense of belongingness about when Parvaiz realizes his error, want to be forgiven and return home to London. During his homesick for Britain when he is shown gazing at the British Consulate, at “the red, white and blue flag that fluttered from the roof, cheerful in all its colours was uninterrupted. Mo Farah at the Olympics, Aunty Naseem’s commemorative cake tin from the Queen’s Golden Jubilee. London. Home.” (197). This is an image of an apparently inclusive Britain buying into the symbols of Britishness from which Parvaiz has strayed from. Such ‘heartwarming’ symbols are to be found throughout the novel — directed towards the white reader; identification with them is ultimately about buying into white British ideas of what is ‘normal’. These signifiers reassure white readers that these ‘British’ protagonists are ultimately, “just like us”. They demonstrate the ‘humanity’ and ‘universality’ of these characters, allowing white readers to identify with them and with the premise of the novel; Parvaiz’s desire to return ‘home,’ to safe, normal Britain while alive, and later after his death, his sister’s battle to bury him in his homeland, Britain. Most of the obstacles in the novel are connected to the ways in which the characters, all of whom are shown to have an attachment to Britain, considering themselves British, are not always accepted by Britain. Whether it is “torture, rendition, detention without trial, airport interrogations, spies in... mosques, teachers reporting...children to the authorities,” or the fact that Parvaiz’s body is not allowed back into Britain. The novel is not simply about the technicality of citizenship; instead, it is deeply intertwined with Britishness. It is about a British heart, about the ideal of an inclusive Britain, even while showing that this is not always fully realized. Meanwhile, London and Britain are interchangeable in the novel. Whilst he is in Syria, Parvaiz craves London; a London of libraries and literature, of ‘multiculturalism’, of beauty and flowers. The pockets of ‘extremism’ in the city, Parvaiz wanders into one of these pockets are shown as islands, existing almost outside of this idea of London, of Britain. Similarly, a place like Bradford is also separated from the idea of Britain. It is the

city where Karamat Lone (who becomes Home Minister in the novel) grew up, as if it was Pakistan. Kavita Bhanot writes:

In 2015, a US-based ‘terrorism expert’ on Fox News claimed that Birmingham is “totally Muslim”, a place where “non-Muslims just simply don’t go in”. While of course such an assertion was wild and baseless, the defensive responses in Britain also revealed Islamophobic assumptions and fears, as sarcastic tweets abounded about how ‘normal’ things such as footballers, Spaghetti Junction, Bingo, the band Duran Duran and beer, were actually Islamic (eg “Guinness was actually inspired by the niqab”)....in this way, a city like Birmingham ends up becoming a symbol for white Britain’s fears and paranoias. (“No Nation Called Home: Rejecting Britishness “44)

Karamat left Bradford behind and moved to England to be away from the segregated Muslim and rise up to political power. He managed to climb and reach the position of Home Secretary but failed to gain the trust and confidence of his son Eamonn. He is successful and powerful, so does will he have enemies or people who have been wronged by his action. As a reversal back of his passing of Bill, Eamonn becomes a scapegoat in suicide bombing. Shamsie’s novel is a wake-up call for the British government as it, in making exclusive anti-immigration and anti-terrorist laws, is further isolating and estranging its dual nationality citizens belonging to Pakistani Muslim diasporic communities.

The novel being a clarion call diverts its readers to a challenging dilemma post-9/11 and post-7/7 faced by the British government relating to the family members of those families whose any member’s leaning to terrorist organization not only cause immense distress of loss but also social excommunication on top of which is governmental forsaking. Shamsie, by narrating the story of a family with the history of terrorist father and terrorist brother, intervenes in time by asserting that such families deserve more attention, both socially and governmentally, to keep them in solidarity with the nation by being warmer and considering to them rather than putting them under constant surveillance and demonizing them as ‘Others’ for the misgivings of their family members ‘lost’ to fundamentalism and terrorism. Bitching at them and stripping them of their citizen status by revoking their national status is no solution to the problem of rising fundamentalism among its Muslim

diasporic communities but only an indication of the rising Western obsession with Islamophobia. As these extremist and exclusive steps of states, fighting with fundamentalism and terrorism, will not only encourage Islamophobes but will also incite more aggressive terrorist enlisting and alienation from the subjects already pushed to margins and peripheries. Instead of introducing more draconian laws of immigration and terrorism the governments need to check the popularity of Islamophobia trending in their societies after 9/11 and 7/7. The writers in “Obsessive ‘Westoxification’ versus the Albatross of Fundamentalism and Love as Collateral Damage in Kamila Shamsie’s *Home Fire*” draws a caricature of Karamat Lone modeled on Theresa May, the former British Home Secretary (2010-2016) and Prime Minister of United Kingdom (2016-2019). The paper states that the anti-immigration and anti-terrorist laws introduced by Shamsie has given a mirror image through the laws made by the fictional character of Karamat Lone. Shamsie is praised for her ability to see through fictive imaginary blend with political statement on these laws, timely enough, as they at times lack compassion and forgiveness. However, the complication in the situation arises by imagining a Britain with a Muslim Home Secretary, which, according to her fictional portrayal of Karamat Lone. This adaption is only possible and achievable when such a character is so enamoured with the West that his true lineage and religious affiliation are completely forgotten. Shamsie criticises such 'Westoxification,' arguing that it will not only be Islamophobic, but will also elicit a more fundamentalist response, lethal enough to further rip apart the multicultural fabric of British society, as demonstrated by the fictive desertion of Muslim British youth like Farooq and Parvaiz Pasha to join fundamentalists and terrorists (161-162). The liberal salad bowl hypothesis, which depicts a multicultural society that allows people to cohabit while retaining at least some of their traditional culture's unique features, may be seen in Shamsie's novels. Different cultures are brought together in the same way as salad ingredients are mixed together, but instead of melting into a single homogeneous culture, they keep their distinct identity. According to the salad bowl idea, people do not have to give up their cultural history in order to be considered part of the dominant society. However, the negative impact can be seen in *Home Fire* where the characters face prejudice and discrimination. To add to report Robert Longley writes “critics point to a 2007 study conducted by American political scientist Robert Putnam showing that

people living in salad bowl multicultural communities were less likely to vote or volunteer for community improvement projects". Kamila Shamsie in *Home Fire* brings the multicultural attitude of Britain and the predicament of the immigrants. Character like Karamat Lone exists who are complex and denounce their culture and fully adapt to the British values. While Isma represent the group who are under constant fear of being misjudged by the state and lose their citizenship. They try to integrate and assimilate with the culture. Shamsie through the novel shows how immigrants like Parvaiz become victim to the Islamophobic people.

Shamsie through her writings brings in the conditions of Muslims living not only in Pakistan but also in Britain. There are different stereotypes attached to them and in her writing, she shows to the world the other side of the story which the press or media has failed. She writes from both objective and subjective views. She tries to maintain the balance by being the mediator and leaves the decision to the readers. She discusses issues but does not get into details rather links to what researchers will say as hypertext through reading. She implies Intertextuality to refer in a way widening the readers' curiosity of the story. The characters are displaced and set in multicultural setting where their identity becomes fluid resulting in inner-alienation. When a writer talks about historical events, it tends to hurt the sentiments of the readers as it brings back the bitter memory and also relates to politics which may not favour all. Kamila Shamsie discusses that bitter major history through *Burnt Shadows* and *Home Fire* without hurting the readers.

## Chapter Four

### Feminist Analyses on the Select Works of Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie

#### Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explore the theme of feminism in the select works of Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie. It also explores on feminism having an influence over their writings which bloomed in the form of literary pieces. The chapter begins with a discussion on how what Feminism is and how it is articulated in the world and as part of the study in South-East Asian women writings. A brief history on the origin of Feminism and its impact on present day will be dealt. The discussions are included in the process to analyze the works of the two authors and how their characters excel to the approach. A brief discussion is added on Bangladeshi Feminism and Pakistani feminism: and the plight of people under these countries.

The first literary writing cornerstone demanding equal treatment can perhaps be with the classic publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), an ideology and philosophical tenants of the French Revolution, a product of Enlightenment. Her writing is for her own sex as she writes "My own sex, I hope, will excuse me, if I treat them like rational creatures, instead of flattering their fascinating graces, and viewing them as if they were in a state of perpetual childhood, unable to stand alone" (4). She voices for women to be treated as rational being instead of assigning them roles. She attacks Rousseau's *Emile* (1762) which brings the difference in biological function of men and women: writing on the subject of female education and manners. Wollstonecraft argues on women's education and that if given the same education like men they will be efficient and will make an intellect partner to their husbands. She argues that women are not allowed to have their own sufficient strength of mind to acquire the name of virtue. Education to women will no longer keep them connected to men as daughters, wives and mothers but will end grand with exertion to unfold their own faculties and acquire the dignity of conscious virtue.

Wollstonecraft implies the arguments of French Enlightenment of 'reason,' 'natural rights' and social contract to the idea of family and the private sphere (Duman 75). Dr. Gregory's *Legacy to his Daughters* comes under attack where he writes to his daughters about the manners and duties of a wife. Her writing refutes the writings of Eighteenth-century writers who assign roles to women as befitting to domestic chores, to be soft and delicate. Dr. Gregory serves as an epitome of patriarchy who tries to enforce their rules on women. To Wollstonecraft a woman's goal should not only be to obtain husband but to be "the woman who strengthens her body and exercises her mind will, by managing her family and practicing various virtues, become the friend, and not the humble dependent of the husband(44). It is argument that women are also capable of 'rational thinking' and exercising reason if they are given equal opportunity like men.

Wollstonecraft's views can be echoed in the writings of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's own* where she gives a picture of different attitudes toward men and women. If education was given to women like men, they would also produce good literary piece and make a huge contribution to the era. Women's contribution towards any development is not because they are women but as Simone de Beauvoir says "One is not a born, rather becomes a woman". Patriarchy has established different roles based on gender and this culturally construct roles put women below men. Throughout the history women are seen as the other of men and not men as the other of women. Women as the second sex did not stand at par with men whether it is in religion, social, economic, cultural etc. The struggle as we see has been there and it was only in the recent twentieth century that women were granted right to vote and with that great change, history counted woman as an individual being rather than the other of man. In the field of education not much is recorded of women writers. Some kept their writings for themselves while other took the pseudonyms. One such example is Mary Ann Evans whose pen name was "George Eliot" a male name to get her work published. This shows how women's works were considered inferior to men and were not expected to publish. They can write and even outshine men but as Woolf says, they do not have a room of their own. Women voiced their voices for hundreds of years and only after so many struggles they metamorphosis into the women to adjust to the modern world. It is important to know the works of women who write as a woman from the perspective of a woman. This study or criticism has



been long time focused by Elaine Showalter as a change in the late 1970's where attention shifted from 'androtexs' to 'gynotexs'. She coined the term 'gynocritics' meaning the study of gynotexs in her Essay "Towards a Feminist Poetics" which at present serves as a base for literary criticism.

### **Definition of 'Feminism' and 'Feminist'**

Everything starts from the root or base and so the term 'feminism' and 'feminism' which the world popularly uses have their origin. Like many other loan words in English these words also trace back to french words *féminisme* and *feministe*. The coinage of the word "feminism" as *féminisme* in French is attributed to French philosopher and utopian socialist Charles Fourier who recognized the essence of Women's participation and emancipation in the field equal to men. His views differ from the strict rules of patriarchy and believed on equal employment based on skills and aptitude rather on gender.

Feminism or feminist movement cannot be traced to one single source or event. Rather, it is a culmination and explosion: of various awareness and perception of society's unequal treatments. Different countries have their own meaning and application of the term Feminism. However, a compact definition can be a movement or ideas concerned with advancement on the position of women in the field of political, legal, economic, social etc. and consider women as human being with their own individuality.

The *Oxford Advanced Dictionary* defines 'feminism' as "the belief and aim that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men; the struggle to achieve this aim" (565). Furthermore 'feminist' is defined as, "a person who supports the belief that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men" (565). Janet Radcliffe Richards in *The Skeptical Feminist: a Philosophical Enquiry* (1980) introduces feminism as "a movement opposed to the systematic social justice suffered by women because of their sex". The core of feminism is not concerned with a group of people it wants to benefit but with a type of injustice it wants to eliminate. Many people are of the opinion that feminism stands for women hating men, opposing men's rule, trying to dominate men etcetera. Letting aside the

misconception feminism as Janet Radcliffe Richards is that feminism is not only a movement of women but men can also participate and be a feminist

Feminism gained its influence in the world history in the second half of the twentieth century. As a movement, the term 'feminism' has been defined in myriad ways in different parts of the world. In its simplest, it can be seen as a capsule holding numbers of social, cultural, political, economic movements and ideologies dealing with gender inequality. Feminism takes the shape of socio-cultural movement that seeks to liberate women from oppression. It was cry for justice from a woman who has no power other than her pen and put it in motion. In common when we say 'feminist' people often associate that it will a woman but a feminist can also be a man. Male contributions to the development of feminist writings are Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* (1869) and Friedrich Engels *The Origin of the Family* (1884).

The feminist criticism of today is a product of feminism in the 1960s. It was a time when female writers used literature to express themselves. "Feminist literary criticism," according to Bijay Kumar Das, is particularly concerned with how women are depicted in literature. It is based on two main premises: one, the representation of 'woman' in literature by male writers from their own point of view, and two, the representation of 'woman' in the works of female writers from their own point of view" (88). They are phallogocentrism and gynocriticism, respectively. When the number of female-authored books was restricted, critics looked to male-authored texts that depicted female characters from their point of view. As it tried to highlight the work's masculine biases, this became phallogocentric criticism. Elaine Showalter outlines the shift from "androtexts," or male-authored literature, to "gynotexts," or female-authored books. She coined the term 'gynocritic,' which refers to the study of texts written by women. She believes that only a woman can adequately represent a female role because she has gone through it. Feminist writers refuse to accept masculine writers' representations of women. They believe that characters depicted by men in literature lack genuineness. The characters they portray are not true to life and cannot be perceived by a woman.

## Branches of Feminism

Some of the branches of feminism are:

1. **Cultural Feminism:** According to this theory, men and women have inherent psychological distinctions that are unique and should be cherished. It supports the idea that men and women have biological differences, as well as the idea that women are kinder and gentler than men. This leads to the belief that there would be no wars if women ran the globe. Cultural feminism is an ideology that aims to combat sexism by recognising and promoting women's unique talents, perspectives, and experiences, with the belief that the "woman's way" is the better way.

2. **Ecofeminism:** Ecofeminism is an ideology that arose from feminist activity and investigation. It is based on the core premise that patriarchy's ideologies are destructive to women, children, and nature. Greta Gaard in "Living Interconnection with Animals and Nature" writes:

ecofeminism's basic premise is that the ideology which authorized oppressions such as those based on race, class, gender, sexuality, physical abilities, and species is the same ideology which sanctions the oppression of nature. Ecofeminism calls for an end to all oppressions, arguing that no attempt to liberate women (or any other oppressed group) will be successful without an equal attempt to liberate nature. (1)

Furthermore, Janis Birkeland defines Ecofeminism as "a value system, a social movement, and a practice, but it also offers a political analysis that explores the links between androcentrism and economical destruction" (Birkeland 19). They feel that the patriarchal philosophy emphasizes the need to dominate and control unruly females and the unruly wilderness.

3. **Liberal Feminism:** Human beings and individual philosophies are valued in this style of feminism. Individualism, rights, liberty, independence, autonomy, and diversity are the guiding principles. Liberal Feminism/Individual Feminism, as it is known, does not demonise males; rather, it concentrates on the obstacles that both men and women suffer as a result of their gender. This feminism works to integrate women and strengthen individual women's rights in mainstream culture. They do not

directly criticise the system or ideology that oppresses women, but they do promote equal rights for women. It may be the suffrage movement in politics, when women who work in the mainstream demand their rights.

**4. Material Feminism:** Women's liberation is the centre of this movement, which began in the late 1970s. It is closely tied to Marxist and Socialist beliefs, and as a result, it sees patriarchy and capitalism as central to women's oppression. As they believe gender is socially determined, the movement advocates societal transformation. As diverse roles are allocated, prejudices emerge, leading to even more oppression. They do not want women to be solely responsible for childbirth and household tasks. Women should have the same financial opportunities as males. The concept of material feminism reminds of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, in which women are often refused access to education and other amenities that men enjoy. If the society overcomes the stereotypes and provides women with equal opportunity she will also produce and contribute to the society as men does.

**5. Radical Feminism:** Feminists under this type view patriarchy and sexism as the most elemental factor in women's oppression which cuts cross all others from race, age, culture, caste and class. It questions the Patriarchal system and ideology behind women's subjugation. The term often refers to the women's movements emerging from the civil rights, peace and other liberation movements at a time when people increasingly were questioning different forms of oppression and power. Radical Feminism has served as a leading ground to many several ideas of feminism. The movement lost its influence and popularity as some people took it extreme and started hating patriarchy rather than trying to bring equality. An example of radical feminist writer can be Mary Daly who was a radical feminist and rejected the ideas of God as male figure.

**6. Amazon Feminism:** This type of feminism gives importance to equal physical strength and challenged the gender stereotypes and discrimination meted out on women. They reject patriarchal archetype of women to be weak, fragile, submissive and physically helpless. The attribute masculine characteristics in women and upholds a vision being heroic. To them women are also born with equal strength like men and that she also excels in any field like men. The representation of these ideas

in popular culture 2020 movies can be *Wonder Woman 1984* and *Mulan* where the central protagonist is female and the victory laid in their hands.

### **Waves of feminism**

Feminism in modern era in an attempt to distinguish prominent feminist movement in history is often classified into three waves:

The first Wave covering period from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. In this wave the emphasis was given to equal rights of women and the right to suffrage. This wave saw women Suffragists confronting stereotypes of women and revoking the principles of proper female behavior and talk laid by patriarchy. They stepped out in public persuasion which was not a characteristic of a woman. Following women actively activity challenged the role of domesticity and submissiveness which was instilled that a women's role is to perform duties for husband, children and house. It can be indirectly seen as the writings of Mary Wollstonecraft coming to live where women instead of being confined in the house stepped out to claim their rights. A Century after Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of The Rights of women*, we see the vision of Wollstonecraft coming to reality where women no longer depend on men to escort her to be in social domain.

'Second wave' feminism refers to the highly radicalized feminist movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s which concentrated on voicing out the inequalities faced by women in work environment and family and eventually demanding women's sexuality and reproductive rights. This wave's most publicized event was the protests associated with the Miss America Pageants in 1968 and 1969 in United States. Some of the books that highlighted consumerism and economic contributions of women are: *The Edible woman*, *The Golden Notebook*, *Sexual Politics* etc.

The Redstockings, the New York Radical Feminists, and other significant feminist groups joined the 1969 protest to show how women in pageant competitions were paraded like cattle, highlighting the underlying assumption that the way women look is more important than what they do, what they think, or even whether they think at all (Freeman, 1975). History saw a radical movement of women which exploded in the form of protest against women treating as an object and suppression their sexuality. Women opposed to stereotyping them in Media in the form of sexual

object and a doll in a house. An allusion of Henrik Ibsen's play *A Doll's House* is seen where women are seen as an object in the house to be cared and protected by patriarchy. She will have no voice but listen to her father or husband. Radical feminism can be seen in parallel to what Ibsen through his character Nora says "...I believe that before all else I am a reasonable being, just as you are- or, at all events I must try and become one" (106). An influence of this wave is seen in writers like Mary Daly who in her book *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* writes to exorcize the patriarchy in order for a woman to become independent and discover her true self. A woman should spin from deceptions spread by patriarchy. It is only when she fits from foreground to background that she will be able to see through the deception and lies that has been holding her back to recognize herself.

The third wave was a response to second wave started in 1990's to present day and as a backlash against initiatives and movements created during the 1960s, '70s and '80s. The 'third-wave' of feminism refers to the polemical movements that began in the 1990's to the present focusing on politics that honor contradictory experiences and deconstruct categorical thinking. The feminists of this wave have their own doctrine where they support at the same time criticizes the feminists of former wave for the failure. It attempts to expand feminism to include women with a diverse set of identities, recognizing that women are of many colors, ethnicities, nationalities, religions and cultural backgrounds. Thus it can be seen as a reaction to or continuation of second-wave feminism, and constitutes a partial destabilization of constructs from the second wave. The third wave feminism includes the women and plights of different forms. They articulate universal or global womanhood. Third wave feminism is articulated in different forms like in America it is known as 'grrl feminism' and in Europe as 'new feminism'. The struggle of every women is different so as the approach of feminism different in different parts or countries of the world. Therefore, feminism in its form transforms into myriad definitions and application according to the adaptation of the countries. It is diverse yet a common platform to bring and address the issues of stereotypes and emancipation. This wave analyses the previous waves and accepts the chaotic world while embracing changes and ambiguity. This can be seen in the phrase "It's possible to have push-up bra and a brain at the same time" Pink floor. At present feminism, feminism is not only confined on gender inequality but extends its studies to post-colonialism, Marxism,

cultural studies etc. They create a literature on their own which functions like the male domain world existing parallel to male library.

The present world has become so advance that everything is current and different theories come about countering the other. And so, feminism according to some has also reached the next level which they call as 'postfeminism'. According to Ann Brooks it can "be understood as critically engaging with patriarchy" (Brooks 1). It used to describe reactions against contradictions and absences in feminism, especially second-wave feminism and third-wave feminism. Feminism is divided into different waves and types but the common cause remains that it pays attention to woman. All types of feminists agree that sexist oppression is wrong and seek to overthrow patriarchy in its various forms.

### **Islamic Feminism**

Since the authors discussed in this paper are related to Islam religion, we will look on what is Islamic Feminism and how this feminism shapes their writing. Islamic feminism in general overview is the mixture of Islam and feminism where discussions have been carried off from the analyses of feminism based on Islam. Scholars are of the view that Islamic feminism is more radical in their outlook than secular feminism as their discourse is based on religion and its holy book. As an outsider many people believe Islam to be traditional, violent, rigid in its rules and conservative in nature. However, one should not negate the fact that Islamic countries which many believe to be strict in Patriarchy have contributed and gave chance to women heads like, Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, Lala Shovkat of Azerbaijan, Tansu Ciller of Turkey, Maegawati Sukarnoputri of Indonesia and recently Samia Suluhu Hassan as the first woman President of Tanzania. Bangladesh a young country has seen Khalida Zia, country's first Prime Minister in 1991 later replaced by Sheikh Hasina in 2009 making a place in the world of longest continuous reigning women Prime Minister.

Islamic feminists aim to debunk the discrimination meted out to women on the basis of religion. Their arguments are based on religious and seek to interpret religious texts from the lens of feminism perspective. There are some sections of religious people who interpret religion and apply it to Patriarchy. Simultaneously,

Islamic feminism re-reads the Quran and seeks gender equality. Equality has been deprived to women in the name of tradition and customs, but recent scholars come up with valid arguments and seek justice based on the religious text which was used to enforce oppression. They seek gender equality both in public as well as private spheres. This feminism is not only confined to Muslims but people of other religion can be a part of this debate and discourse. The writers explore the status of women, inequality and sexual ideologies in their respective societies. They break the silence of women by giving a voice in literature to escape from the realm of patriarchy. Feminist in Islam religion support that man and woman have equal rights in mosques, leadership, boards and in all spheres of society. Women are oppressed in the name of religion and in several mosques not allowed to pray beside men. They view that Quran has been misinterpreted and feed to the masses which results in inequality. The Quran speaks of dressing modesty but does not enforce *hijab* for women which many women wear as a religious symbol.

Islamic feminism seems to trace its role to pre-nineteenth century however, the active prominent role can be seen following twentieth century. In the twenty-first century we see many activists and organization taking its shape to support women's rights. Several organizations were formed to reform the status of women and promote equality. The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) 1977 based in Quetta, Pakistan which promotes women rights and secular democracy. It also founded Watan Schools to aid refugee children and their mothers, offered hospitality and taught them vocational skills. The Islamic feminism as their claim to be radical took its stage in the form of "Muslim reform Movement" in 2015 issued by a group of Muslim activists, politicians and writers. This was in support of women's rights and rejecting violence. The Declaration of Reform states secular democracy and stood against political movements in the name of religion calling for separation of mosque and state. The Muslim Reform Movement committed to defend freedom of speech and supports the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and states "Every individual has the right to publicly express criticism of Islam. Ideas do not have rights. Human beings have rights. We reject blasphemy laws. They are a cover for the restriction of freedom of speech and religion. We affirm every individual's right to participate equally in *ijtihad*, or critical thinking, and we seek a revival of *ijtihad*" ("Muslim Reform Movement embraces secularism and Universal



human rights”). The statement to receive criticism allies to what Taslima Nasreen in one show says that Islam is not open to criticism and change like Christian or Hindu (“*NDTV-The Big Fight-Islamic Radicalization*”). Patriarchy uses the Quran to oppress women and Islamic feminism re-reads the Quran to show the inclusion of women and their rights.

### **Feminism in Pakistan**

The several movements which were organized to define, reclaim and defend the rights of women paved way to feminism in Pakistan. These movements raised concern for equal political, economic, social rights in parallel to equal opportunity. The people of Pakistan have seen the turmoil created by various political factors in history. During the partition of India, women of both Hindu and Muslim suffered in the name of religion. It is reported that 75,000 women and abducted and raped during the partition. It should be noted that the number is of those reported, if it to add those unreported then it would be far more than this. The theme of partition and cruelty are recorded in Bapsi Sidhwa’s *Ice-Candy Man*.

Islamization in Pakistan took its form when military regime of Muhammad Zi-ul-Haq gained power reforming the pervious British Era code and introducing whipping, amputation and stoning. This law did not bring any justice to gender inequality but women suffered the most. The law acted as moral police which served as a pressure to women. This law can be seen as a misinterpretation of Islam which stood for peace loving religion. With feminists opposing the law, parts of the law were revised by the 2006 Women’s Protection Bill. Feminist Movement is gaining its popularity not only in the west but in a country like Pakistan which people fear of terrorism. The participation of women in public sphere is increasing with private media and social media. With the world becoming a global village connected by technology, the women of Pakistan are also exposed to the views of world outside and gain awareness.

With the active participation of women, the first *Aurat* March (Women March) on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018 was organized in Karachi, Pakistan. Now, it is an annually held social or political demonstration to observe International Women’s Day. The march at present is not confined to Karachi city alone but it spread to other

cities and also to cities of other countries like Hyderabad of India, Quetta of, Mardan of, and Faisalabad by various women organizations. The march is against domestic violence, harassment and supports equality and acceptance of women as equal contributor to the society. The march welcomes participants from various walks of life. In 2020 *Aurat* March men were also seen joining the march in support of women's rights. During this march women from different backgrounds bring their views on equality. During this process, women are open to bring their grievances and not confined by patriarchy. The petition in the Lahore High Court to stop *Aurat* March was rejected on the basis that Freedom of speech cannot be banned. Feminism in Pakistan is growing and making an impact in the lives of women where they are made aware of their rights and laws.

### **Feminism in Bangladesh**

Feminism in Bangladesh like the broader feminism seeks equal rights of women in through social and political change. The women's movement in Bangladesh is characterized by its great diversity with regards to its goals, strategies and its own processes of formation. Long before the independence of Bangladesh, various women's rights groups have challenged gender discrimination in the political, social, economic and cultural spheres and have achieved remarkable successes (Nazeen, *The Women's Movement in Bangladesh*). However, the current situation is such that resources and influence are not equally distributed between men and women as the structures of the spheres are often more favorable for men. Nazeen further adds that women's rights movements are confronted with a growing global backlash against emancipation and equal opportunities for all. Multiple crises at the national and global level, such as increasing inequalities, natural disasters and extremism are examples of additional challenges to women's rights movements. For socially just and gender equal responses to these challenges, solidarity and coalitions among the various movements in Bangladesh and in Asia are essential ("Forward," pp ii).

The participation of women in public sphere is seen public sphere. In fact, the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina sets an example for other women in Bangladesh. Some of the feminists in Bangladesh are: Begum Rokeya, Kamini Roy, Narun Nahr Faizannesa, Sultana Kamal, Taslima Nasrin, Syeda Razia Faiz etc. Bangladesh has

seen the participation of women in different fields and one of the most notable is a research and study group in Dhaka called “Women for Women”. It is group engaging in research and public education programs on gender issues to enhance the status of women. It is a non-profit, voluntary contribution established in 1973 a group of committed woman professionals, representing a variety of academic disciplines. It is a group formed to spread awareness on unequal status given to women and encourage women’s participation in various public policy makings. With education comes power, the group Women for Women conducts seminars, workshops, conferences so that women can be sensitized on various issues and enhance their livelihood through various training programs. In the recent times, the country has seen the political scenario where Religion is believed to be politicized. Under such situation, Taslima Nasrin rises as a radical feminist who criticizes the religion Islam.

### **Feminist Criticism**

The feminist criticism started with the rise of feminism in 1960’s. Along with the social and political, feminist criticism excavated the works of earlier feminist writers like Mary Wollstonecraft, Virginia Woolf, and George Eliot etc. to read and contextualize their writing to the present day. It gave rise to women reading women’s writings to understand women. It is woman themselves who can understand the experiences of other women as they go through similar experiences in one or the other form if not direct experience. With feminist readings came Elaine Showalter’s ‘gynocritics’ which means to study the works of women writers. For long time in history people read and studied the work of men writers who portrayed women from their perspective. This eventually portrayed women as seductive, naive, and manipulative, in a way denoting negative character. With the feminist criticism women will be studies based on the writings of women who write down their experiences which in a way revalue their experiences. They examine the representation of two sexes as presented in literature by men and women.

## Analysis of Taslima Nasrin's Texts

### *Lajja:*

With the publication of the novel in 1993, Taslima Nasrin's literary career came into limelight of the world as it attracted several criticisms both from political and religious aspects. The novel set during the communal riot that occurred in Bangladesh aftermath the demolition of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya (1992) in serves as a twain of fact and fiction. The family of Sudhamoy is a fictional family yet they serve as an archetype of sufferings faced by thousands of Hindu families during the riot. The novel on the surface is a call for justice and humanity. The human rights became null and void at the same time the women folks suffered double. In any riot or war, it is the women folk who are treated with cruelty as avenging or passing out the anguish in them. Women are considered as an asset or someone weaker gender that needs to be protected. Hence, men folk use women to prove their dominance and power. In the novel women characters irrespective of religion become victim in the hands of male dominance. When we speak of feminism in Bangladesh one cannot ignore the name of Taslima Nasreen as she is popularly known for her outspoken writings about the issues of women.

Taslima Nasrin as a woman focused on feminism and subjugation faced by women through her writings. She voices out in *Lajja* for humanism as well as women. During the riot women were abducted and in many cases the kidnappers were not arrested, if arrested released the following day and women found dead. Islam, which they claim to be peaceful religion is seen at its worst when they reacted to incident happened in India and started the riot in Bangladesh. The book highlighted the extreme to which religion can go to becoming greedy and blood thirsty to same human being and especially women. The shame as the title of the book suggest is raping woman, torturing, occupying neighbour's house, stealing, ransacking all in the name of religion and ideologies. Religion in many cases unites people but at the same time divides people when they turn fanatic and lose sanity. She addresses the negative side of human society. The novel suggests that the male member fear the riot but at the same time talks about women who are doubly margined in the name of religion and for being a woman. The women characters in the novel were deprived of their rights in the name of society, state, and family.

The novel shows the desires of women characters unfilled under the system of patriarchy. Kironmoyee's desire to leave Bangladesh and shift to India to her relatives was constantly denied and remained unheard. She did not have voice in the family and all she could do was to secretly shed tears, remain mute while behaving submissively. In the novel she is depicted as always engaged in household chores, serving tea to male characters. Kironmoyee's view is not considered and hence she is only a supporting figure in whatever decision her husband takes. Glimpse of Kironmoyee's life is shown as a singer and a daughter of a well-known police officer. She seems to have lost her voice when her interest in singing was put off as indecent. The art of singing and dancing are considered immoral by orthodox Muslims. It believes that girls will become disillusion if they learn to sing. It was an issue of girl's character. Sudhamoy recollects that Kironmoyee's voice was so beautiful and she sings from heart that even atheist like him was filled with tears after listening her song. People cheered and applauded but at the same time Kironmoyee says:

‘Yes, I did get applause. The people who clapped were the ones who said that Hindu women have no sense of shame and that's why they learn to sing. Then they show their bodies off in front of men’... ‘Those men said that Muslim women shouldn't sing. Singing was a bad thing and girls would be ruined if they learnt to sing’. (52-53)

She was discouraged and gradually stopped singing. Her interest was looked down as indecent though people applauded her. It shows the paradox of situation where people want to hear songs but again fail to appreciate when people take up singing. The issue can be the subconscious mind of some people with inferiority complex. Kironmoyee has been conditioned in terms of subduing her desires while fitting in the socio-cultural framework of the society in Bangladesh. Taslima Nasrin has shown on how women are threatened and Kironmoyee stopped wearing conch-shell bangles and *sindoor* which is a symbol of married wife in Hindu religion. Muslims of Bangladesh had all the freedom while the Hindus acted as slaves and had to keep their identity secret.

Taslima Nasrin in the text talks about inhuman acts meted out towards humanity like rape, molestation, violence, abduction which were not reported as

crime in Bangladesh for the victims were Hindus. The novel gives the readers that When Maya when she was six years was kidnapped without a trace. However, the police did not help to trace the kidnappers/s. She returned after two days and behaved unnaturally for two months more or less turned to a psychic because of the trauma she underwent. Following the incident, Sudhamoy sold their house at very low price and settled in Dhaka with a hope to get security in the city. Maya's abduction is not her problem alone but she served as an archetype of many children abducted by unknown and the law failing to give justice. Maya was released but many children were not lucky to share the fate of freedom like her.

As an advocate of feminism, Taslima Nasrin has condemned the behavior and objectification on women physically, psychologically and morally. Through *Lajja* She has depicted how the women worldwide had been harassed sexually, kidnapped and tortured to death. She has written on how the Hindu girls of Bangladesh were abducted and tortured. And because of this, the Hindu daughters were sent to India for their security and education. An instance from the novel has been quoted in this context to present the situation of Hindu girls in Bangladesh after the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992:

Sonaton Mandal's daughter, Reena, was taken away by force and raped. She was abducted after this and then there has been no news of her...

All the Hindus in the Gopalganj district including those in Kotalipara and Maksudpur were regularly subject to theft, cheating, the ravaging and illegal occupation of their property, rape of their women, destruction of their temples, and to all this was added torture by the police. (62-63)

Hence, Taslima has mentioned on how women are treated as an object to show their superiority and fulfill their lust. To retaliate the demolition of Babri Masjid in India, the women were exploited and defiled making them a common ground for negotiation of geopolitical scenario between India and Bangladesh. They became victim to the nation they hold dear:

An educated official of Gopalganj, Johur sahib, promised Hindu women jobs and raped them. Two women of the Biswas family of the village of Demakoir

were also raped in a similar way. This man also extorted money from Hindu teachers, both men and women, by threatening them with transfers. (64)

The hardship and ill-treatment in the novel are given explicitly. In novel is in the form of fact-fiction where she combined the fact with the fictional characters of Sudhamoy family. Lajja woven with a feminist perspective expressed the voice of women folk in times of communal riots and tension in the name of religion. Her writings did not appeal to the Islamic religious patriarchy as it highlighted the internal negative aspect of them which they try to hide from the world. She exposed the situation of the nation from an insider view which brought them to multiple fatwas and later exile. In her books she does not support any religion or nation and writes to reflect the truth. By giving importance to feminism and women rights, Taslima has attempted to evaluate the marginalization of the women in Bangladesh. Nasrin portrayed the religious fanaticism through her novel from the thought of a feminist writer. According to Chandini & Meenakshi the introduction of the females who were abducted and tortured by the Islamic fundamentalists has been the principle point of discussions in Nasrin's novels Thus, the religious fundamentalism and gender extremism move side by side as portrayed by Nasrin in her novels.

The Hindus no longer felt safe in Bangladesh and to avoid discrimination the writer shows of how Suronjon's lover Parveen got married to Muslim businessman since Suronjon refused to convert to Islam. Here we see how religion plays a vital role to provide security to family and personal life in Bangladesh. Change of identity can also be seen in Sudhamoy and Kironmoyee's marriage life when the country was facing liberation war. The Muslim name and leaving aside the practice and rites of Hinduism gave them life and safe passage in their journey:

He had lived in a bamboo hut for seven long months, calling himself Abdus Salam in Arjukhila village in Phulpur. Suronjon became Saber. And Sudhamoy cringed in shame when a roomful of people addressed Kironmoyee as fatema. His broken ribs certainly hurt his chest, but the pain of Kironmoyee's transformation to Fatema rankled much deeper. (54-55)

The similar situation can be seen in *Ice Candy Man* where Shanta changes her name to Hamida to stay alive in Pakistan. She becomes a puppet to Ice Candy man as he

says that she is accepted in the society all because of him. Feminism not only talks about women but stands for equal rights of both men and women and hence, in this chapter on will see references on the importance of both sexes. Not only did they take Muslim form but the Hindus were very careful on the usage of language i.e. 'pani' instead of 'jol', 'gosol' instead of 'snaan'. The violence on the women along side with the communal turmoil between the Hindus and the Muslims has been the major problem and a matter of concern in the novel. Nasrin's novel does not intend to entertain the readers but to fight and oppose the injustice, gender bias, and women oppression in Bangladesh. Dasgupta is of the opinion that she turned her voice for the marginalized and subjugated women in the patriarch society. Taslima understood the violence which was physical and mental in nature against the women in the communities. She has given a length of instances about Hindu women facing tortures and inhuman act but she has not totally ignored Muslim women. She describes about the mentality of men whether they are Hindu or Muslim through the character of Suronjon. Both the men from either Muslim or Hindu view women as an object to be abused and harassed to show their dominance and anger to the other party. Suronjon brought paid women named Shamina to his house. His anger towards the Muslims was so much that he threw all over to Shamina. To him, the woman was a Muslim and not a prostitute or a person. In his anger to avenge Maya's death and failing to save her, Suronjon expressed his anguish on Shamina. The writer expresses that Suronjon did not see her as a whore but as a Muslim woman. He tortured and eventually raped her. The violence shown against her and many women has been considered as the performance of the gender bias that resulted in the psychological, sexual and physical harm without any regret and guilt on the side of the perpetrator. Suronjon tore her anger on Shamina on the fact that she was a Muslim and that he felt a sense of satisfaction by harming her. Later he feels melancholic thinking about Maya and how she might have also felt a lot of pain. He did not feel sorry for the woman he raped but rather felt good inside. This act allies with Kate Millet view where she writes:

In preliterate groups fear is also a factor, as in the belief in a castrating *vagina dentate*. The penis, badge of the male's superior status in both preliterate and civilized patriarchies, is given the most crucial significance, the subject both of endless boasting and endless anxiety (Millet 47)



This sense of satisfaction can be seen from the Freudian concept of 'displacement of object' where Suronjon pours out his anger towards Muslims to the act of raping Shamina. Nasrin through Suronjon shows the attitude of men towards women. One side they care about their sister, wife and mother but on the other does not respect someone's sister, wife and mother etcetera.

A woman is expected to follow the words of father at home, then of husband and later under son's authority during old age. Kironmoyee in the novel depicts the typical woman attitude where at her father's house she lived as a doll and with Sudhamoy as a silent spectator. She does not have voice of her own. She tries to pursue her husband and son to leave the country and go to India but her voice was unheard. She has been under patriarchy and acted as per the norms of patriarchal society which was to listen to the male figure. Nasrin highlights the conditions of those women surviving in the marginal society of Bangladesh and were oppressed being Hindu. The women became doubly victims on the basis of subjugation and marginalization in terms of religious grounds. They lost their individuality and gender identity. Kironmoyee invested her whole for the family but could not fulfill her desire to live freely without any tension of riots and fear of losing. At some point she is seen as a weak character who cannot stand on her feet, however her bravery and feminist attitude is seen when she fought with the abductors to prevent from taking Maya. Her silent tears were finally paid off when the Sudhamoy decided to leave for India. The decision was made based on pain, insecurity, mindless killing and fear which occurred in Bangladesh for they cannot continue living as Muslims. The depiction of the female characters and their treatment under the Muslim fundamentalists makes a ground breaking discourse as per the feminist analysis. The novel depicts marginalization and subjugation of the women in the Muslim community.

### ***French Lover***

Nasrin's novel *French Lover* narrates a story of the patriarchal dominance exerted on the protagonist Nilanjana by her father, her husband Kishanlal and the domination of friends and lover. Nila in the novel is the spokesperson of Nasrin who justifies her liberated escapades as the result of the lack of real love or affection in her husband's attitude towards her. The protagonist also reflects Nasreen's

unsuccessful love life and her struggle to trust male member who were once her friends, colleagues and family members.

Nila leaves for Paris with full of dreams about her prince charming (Kishanlal) with full of expectations and fantasy which later turned to be an illusion created for naïve women like her. Her marriage was not out of love but was the idea that no men in Calcutta will be ready to marry her after knowing that she had intimate relationship with her boyfriend before marriage who later jilted her because of caste. Mary Daly in *Gyn/Ecology The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* is of the opinion that patriarchy creates foreground which is led by games and this games in the novel can be in the form of materialistic standards before the protagonist. On reaching her husband's house, she is informed that the place is all set. There were machines to dust, wash, dry and even to beat the eggs, whip it, boil it and then cut into pieces. This reflects her situation where she is transported from her father's doll house to husband's care. In her husband's house Nila became more of a maid and a decorative piece whose husband shows her off to his friends which fits to Simone de Beauvoir view in her "Introduction" to *The Second Sex* where she says men have always and everywhere paraded their satisfaction of feeling that they are kings of creation. The example of Jews Morning Prayer, "Blessed be the Lord our God, and the Lord of all worlds that has not made me a woman," meanwhile, the wives resignedly murmur: "Blessed be the Lord for creating me according to his will" (31) shows the hypocrisy of patriarchy where they constantly remind the female figure as inferior to them. Nila was directly replaced from a daughter to a dutiful wife and expected to cook, clean and make her husband happy. She was turned to a living robot for her husband. Many men go crazy over women with western clothes but they cannot stand their wives wearing one, Kishan scolds Nila on the pretext that a bride cannot dress like this (wear jeans). He demands her to be presentable with sari and jewellery. Nila's plight to world through the marriage window turned out to be another house of suffocation. Her master shifted from her father in Calcutta to her Husband in Paris. She longs to spin to what Daly would say 'realm of ecstasy' but is left on the foreground of the patriarchy in the form of her husband.

Kishanlal's marriage with Nila seems to be for profit to safe the salary of the maid and constant nagging to get married. Nila remained confined to the walls of the

house where access to outside of the door was not even granted. Mary Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* writes that a woman who exercises and strengthens her mind becomes a companion to her husband rather than a humble dependent but here, Nila is projected as more of a dependent than free woman. Her outlook is liberal but it is patriarchy which holds her thoughts and actions.

In a feminist dialog 'marginalization' can also be a discussion as women tend to be in the receiving end. Nila stands at the edge of deprivation where she cannot mentally exercise her rights. She is made to become a child who requires permission from her husband to go out and do things she likes. She becomes more of a dependent than a companion in marriage. It is an axiom that a woman's goal is achieved when a husband is obtained and this axiom but Nila's character shows that it is marriage that led to her discovery of herself which transformed and helped in her realization. She breaks the foreground and spins to what Daly would say 'background' to discover herself. On the process of her 'A-Mazing' journey she is faced with different circumstances. Different people resort to different types of protest for instance in the novel we see a young boy wearing earrings, a girl with brown lips, and tongue pierced, young boys and girls with their hair dyed and raised high and stiff as a sort of protest to society's rules. Nila's way of protest was to leave her husband's house and shifted to her friend Danielle's house. Mary Daly says that patriarchy takes control over us when we give them access and hence Nila cuts off the access for her husband over her. The journey towards her emancipation did not turn out easy even after cutting off the access of patriarchy. She is introduced to the world of homosexual relationship. As the story progresses the readers can assume that Nila's relationship with Danielle a result of social influence or insecurity towards men folk after her marriage failed.

The ill-treatment of women is not confined to third world countries but Nasrin has shown the readers that it happens even to the developed people where every individual is given importance. Through the lens of Danielle, the readers are introduced to bitter experience of young Danielle where her own father raped her in the absence of the mother. This can perhaps be the psychological reason on Danielle's choice to be homosexual. The common ground that brings the two women

together is their disdainful nature towards men and their oppressive nature. Nasreen through Danielle brings in the view that men use love as a web to trap women and continues “Women think they can’t live without men. That’s not true. Look at me. I don’t need a man” (118). Nasreen in her life also faces several trust issues towards men. In her autobiographical book *Split: A Life* she exposes her failed affairs and the names of men who used her or sexually abused her. Some of the incidents mentioned in the book are seen in the story of Danielle who was raped by her own father. Nasreen was also raped by her own uncle when she was young. The Failed marriage of Nila can be a parallel failed marriage of Nasrin herself.

In most of the relationship cases, men get away without the blame while the women are tagged as immoral or adulteress. This is applied to Nila’s circumstances where her lover Sushanta had sexual relationship with her but married someone unknown whom his parents chose for him. Men get away with such situation as they maintain the upper hand but women are the ones who suffer the pain. She lost her virginity to him and because of this, she was looked at contempt and concluded that no men in Calcutta will marry her. The situation shows how women are being punished while the men not even questioned. No penalty was imposed on Sushanta while the female victim was tagged as immoral.

Nila’s mother is another character who bears the wrong doings of her husband silently. She did not retaliate to her position but shifted her attention to her children. Elaine Showalter in her essay, “Towards a Feminist Poetics” views that a woman can best portray the suffering of another woman as she had or has similar experiences. Hence, Nasreen in this novel brings her best to bring the hardships of different sections of women. The women characters in the novel are not just mere individuals but they are the archetypes of different Indian women. Molina (Nila’s mother) can be compared to Ganthari in Mahabharata who stayed devoted to his husband even to the extent of living her life blindfolded. Devotion towards husband is good but the devotion that Molina harnessed towards Anirba can be seen as drowning her life into sorrow. Society enforces the idea on women that they are inferior to men and that they cannot survive without a male member in their life. The idea continues and takes a proper shape where even matriarch continues to feed these ideas to the next generation. The blind devotion not questions her husband of having

extra marital affair. The husband having affair can be a reflection of Nasrin's father who fell in love in Razia Begum as described in *Meyebela: My Bengali Girlhood*. The woman suffered emotionally but society instead applauded her husband of not divorcing his dark-skinned wife. India's commercials and beauty standards have made people obsessed with fair complexion and the fact that majority of the Indian population have dark complexion. Patriarchy has set that; men can be dark and can get any wife but women should stand to their standard and this is used as a tool to build low self-esteem of women.

Nila says her mother wasted all her life trying to please other people and the readers couldn't agree more to it. In her quest to be a good daughter, good wife and good mother she forgot everything about herself. She lost her identity of being Molina. Patriarchy controls a woman's life even to the extent that she cannot laugh heartily because "...some stupid man somewhere has said that if you laugh too much you'll pay for it with tears" (54). Nila advises her mother to laugh without fear as life is not forever. However, Molina's life came to an end without her discovering herself to be happy.

Being dark in many Indian societies is seen as a curse or crime. People do not look for the inner virtue but outer beauty as standardized by society. Many girls become victim failing to reach the beauty standardize and live miserably. Mithu, one of Nila's relatives becomes victim to such societal demands. She was rejected by many men because of dark skinned. Society condemns women who remain at her father's place. Mithu's desperation for marriage is so much so she does not have problem if treated like a servant. Her sole motive is to get out of her father's house through marriage to escape the disgrace. She does not think about her feelings or love but gives in to patriarchy. Her character alludes to Jane Austen's character Charlotte Lucas who married Mr. Collins to have comfortable home. The characters do not view love as the vital component rejecting Wollstonecraft's argument that marriage should be based on compatibility. Unlike like Charlotte, Mithu was unable to find man to marry her so commits suicide. It is not society who will look after one's family during marriage or look after the couple's children but society keeps interfering in other's private life that it becomes unbearable for people like Mithu. Many Indians face this kind of problem because of the lack of knowledge and

awareness. Nasrin further brings in a painful turn that that Mithu's family mourned but deep inside there was tinge of relief as they can now marry their son for a huge dowry. When it comes to dowry, the parents want male child so that they can acquire. The society and place in which the novel is based is such that they are relieved at the death of a dark unmarried daughter and excited to welcome someone else's daughter to their house. The women character in Nasrin's texts as she says may be perceived as 'bad' but they are rebels who do not strengthen misogyny and hence we see Nila and Danielle rebelling in their own way.

### ***Meyebela: My Bengali Girlhood***

The journey to the book is led by young Nasrin from the year of war till the time when Sheik Mujibar was assassinated in 1975. The autobiography starts with Nasrin's birth till her childhood around 12 years. The discussed texts *Lajja* and *French Lovers* are interwoven with facts and fiction but this text is based on her life and the circumstances Nasrin faced being a girl child. Her defiance to adhere to the rules of patriarchy is seen right from the title of the text where she chose to use 'Meyebela' that is Girlhood instead of childhood 'Chebele.' In the autobiography Nasrin openly wrote about her family without any hesitation of the criticism that would follow. In one of the interviews when asked about how her family reacted to the book, she replied that her family was furious. When the book was banned in Bangladesh, she was relieved, hoping that no one in her family would receive a copy as she didn't want them to know about her father's adulterous affair, in particular. Her father, on the other hand, was able to obtain a copy from Kolkata, and Nasrin was told that he would read it every night. She regrets that her work caused her father pain now that he is no longer alive. She feels, though, that he would have secretly admired her for telling the truth. He was a courageous individual. He wrote her a letter while she was hiding in Bangladesh after the publishing of *Lajja*, advising her not to worry about being killed for revealing the truth (*Exiled and Still Homeless*, p. 3). Furthermore, Nasrin adds that she heard about her father extra marital affair from others but he never brought any woman home for which she is proud of. She seems to feel bad but at the same time reconciles herself that many people do not have the courage to write about the dark secret of their own family.

The haunting girlhood of Nasrin started in confusion and pain. During the time when Bangladesh was created Nasrin's family fled to the countryside where she began to know the gender stereotypes and inequality. Since from the childhood Nasrin faced gender discrimination and her voice was often neglected. She writes that gender discrimination was clear from the time she was born as she was told a goat was slaughtered to mark the occasion of her birth while for her two brothers it was a cow. The attitude of people in the rural area is much shallow than that of city or town people. Nasrin received comments like:

“It's all right for Chhotku to go to shop...” “But not you. You are a girl.”

“You might be able to do that in town,” he said, “but this isn't a town, is it? It's a village. Girls stay at home in villages. They don't go out.” (6)

Nasrin as part of growing up in Muslim family was not allowed to go to the store to buy candy and could not even play outside. The restriction was seen even in her mother's life where she wanted to go to school even after marriage. She was opposed with strong objections “Your job is to raise your children and stay at home,” and like the typical patriarch “And to take care of your husband. There's no need for a girl to think of education” (26). Nasrin's mother certainly left school after seventh standard but she did not keep her children from attending colleges. It can be seen as her effort that Nasrin became a doctor and later turned a writer. Her mother might not be a perfect example of feminist thought but it is undoubtedly her character contribution that gave shape to Nasrin to have a feminist outlook. She learnt from her parents, relatives and family friends the reality of being a girl or woman in a Muslim society.

Nasrin did not hesitate to write about the negative aspect of religion. This is also one reason why her books are banned in Bangladesh and often receive criticism. Religion is a sensitive issue and openly talking about its negative aspect especially in Muslim religion, the person is either judged according to their Islamic rules, issued Fatwa or exiled like Nasrin. She did not talk about the sexual abuse she suffered as a child as her mother who is a religious woman forbade her to even draw humans. Seven, is an age where she is a little girl but her abuser or so to say uncles saw her as an object to be used to gratify their sexual urges. She could not say that to anyone as she was told it is shameful to even talk about such things. Later after growing up as a

Doctor and witnessing girls being raped, she realized she has been raped at home by her own family members. It is unusual for any woman to openly talk about her bitter past in public but Taslima Nasrin has taken the courage to expose people like her Sharat and Aman living among every society. Research suggests that child sexual abusers are mostly the ones whom the child knows including parents, siblings, relatives, friends, sports coach, teacher, priests etc. And hence in the case of Nasrin it was her uncles whom she knew very well.

Marriage is a topic which includes husband and wife and their relationship. The marriage that Nasrin talks about is of the darker aspect. She openly discusses her father extra marital affair with Razia Begum and domestic violence meted out towards her mother. Many people write keeping in mind the sensitivity of domestic violence, child abuse and religion but Taslima Nasrin boldly discusses the sensitive issues in public making it known to people to voice out and encourage women to speak out for themselves. Mahatma Gandhi view on marriage is beautiful as he says he first learned the concepts of non-violence in his marriage. Muslim marriage according to S.C. Sarkar (1948) says that “marriage among Muslims is not a sacrament but purely a civil contract” (qtd. *Sociology: Principles of Sociology with an Introduction to Social Thought* 342). However, it is also a devotion as in Muslim community celibacy is discouraged. The marriage that Nasrin portrays in the autobiography is based on male supremacy over women. The cruel side of her father is depicted where he lays hands on his wife and have extra marital affair. Their marriage is not based on love but on certain terms like the husband has to marry the woman because of obligation and the wife on the command of the father. Marriage as seen in the text is portrayed as a situation where the men figure controls the women and what they should do. The female characters mentioned in the book are more of a victim because of lack of education. Here, under such circumstances the importance of Mary Wollstonecraft’s argument on education girl education comes in. Had the girls’ been given education, they will reason first and then decide their life. Nasrin’s classmate Mamata who she mentions in the text as book worm was married off to a man she doesn’t know or have met at the age of eleven. A girl was married off with a huge dowry of seventy grams of gold, thirty thousand takas in cash, a radio and a wristwatch. Society has imposed on women with the idea that



their ultimate aim is to marry and look after the husband which many women without reasoning accepts it.

Bapsi Sidhwa in an interview with Tabinda Naeem says that people have misconception towards Pakistani women. Bemoaning the plight of women in Pakistan, Sidhwa stresses that it is the duty of the educated Pakistanis to correct the misconception of the people outside Pakistan. She gives an instance where she has a conversation with an Indian lady and says that the women in Pakistan have taken up the responsibility of education women in Pakistan. Pressing her surprise, the Indian women replied that she did not know that Pakistani women can be so much enterprising. This responsibility of educating women in Bangladesh can also be taken up by educated women so that they will not be oppressed in the name of religion. A woman can understand the plight of another woman so the enlightened women should spread awareness and enhance the women to make decision on their own. With the coming together of educated women with a common case, many reforms and policies can be made even in the national level.

Nasrin discusses the harmful practise of Naseehat, which is sometimes camouflaged as Naseehat in Islam and may be the major cause for her works being prohibited. Women are subjugated and silenced even in the name of religion. Movies were also deemed a sin since they were pleasurable to the senses. Nasrin, through the innocent little Nasrin, describes how Sharaf, who is also her abuser, sexually raped her cousin Mubashwera while providing Naseehat. She narrates:

Mubashwera was chosen to offer naseehat to uncle Sharaf. It was all right, for Uncle Sharaf was her own uncle, not someone from the outside world. The jinn was giving advice that, one day, a jinn possessed her. The jinn was different from any other. It made its victim sit alone under a tree and weep. She told no one why she was weeping. She lost her appetite, complained she was feeling nauseous, gave up doing her namaz. All she did was look for a suitable tree to sit under. The naseehat sessions began to be ignored.” (276)

The reason why Mubashwera grieved and sequestered herself becomes clearer as the reading progresses. She had dedicated her life to Allah and, in the end, she was unable to speak about the "shameful" conduct and the pain she was experiencing.

Nasrin only learned about the negative consequences of naseehat or Sharaf after Mubashwera's death. According to Nasrin's father, a doctor, pregnancy was the cause of death. Nasrin eardrops her parents' conversation and overhears what her father says, "She must have tried to get rid of the fetus using the root of some plant, perhaps. The whole thing got infected. Septicemia" (278). This shows how the sacred act of giving counsel and advice is manipulated by lustful people like Sharaf. Nasrin's portrayal of religion is not acceptable by Islam, and her writings have been attacked as vulgar. In her conversation, she emphasises the importance of conducting a critical examination of any faith. She claims that only after allowing individuals to examine their own texts did Christian and Jewish cultures become civilised and contemporary, whereas Islam forbids change and the state is ruled by religion. Her target is not all Muslims, but rather fundamentalists who exploit religion for their own gain. To those liberals, she calls them 'pseudo-seculars' as they do not like fundamentalists but also do not approve criticism of Islam ("Exiled and Still Hopeless" 5). The female body was viewed as a subject to be subjugated, and patriarchal control over it provided a sense of superiority. She believes that it is impossible to be a feminist while accepting religious persecution. She is a feminist who does not support religious tyranny but rather rebels against it. She writes for equal rights and to empower women to speak out against injustice. Nasrin's autobiography is the archetypal of many Subcontinent women who face comparable challenges on a daily basis, and her narrative serves as a wakeup call for parents to prioritise their children. Many women may relate to her essays, and through her experiences, many women discover that they may be able to relate to any trauma they experienced as a child that they had hidden. She writes to raise awareness about patriarchy's mistreatment of women in the name of religion and societal laws.

Feminism is about more than just fighting for equal rights; it also tries to raise awareness and educate women so that they can talk about their problems, figure out what's causing them, and try to alleviate or correct the situation. Nasrin advises against repressing one's freedom of speech and existence and submitting it to patriarchy or any other form of oppression. The majority of women in the Indian Subcontinent feel that men have complete authority over them and are unaware of their rights. They've been disregarded, and if some women try to question or criticise, they're penalised, silenced, or labelled as immoral. Women are treated as

second class citizen where they are not allowed to get equal access like men and Taslima Nasrin through her autobiography tries to bring in the discrimination.

The identity of women gets lost the moment people say, 'You are a girl' 'girls don't do that' 'it is the duty of the girl' and so on. Women suffer in the hands of patriarchy but owing to that lower class women suffer more because of poverty. Nasrin shows the condition of women based on class structure. Phulbahari's mother who works for young Nasrin's family says that she does not have a name of her own and people call her as Phulbahari's Ma. On being enquired by Nasrin of how she was called when she was unmarried then she replied "'You, gal!' or 'Oy, you monkey!' Or things like that" (262). This shows how even parents do not care to name their girl child and marry her off early without name. However, Nasrin's mother did not seem surprised when Nasrin told her about having no name which instead makes readers astonished on how people can be treated like this. This can be symbolism of women identity being constructed after marriage to become a dutiful wife. Most of the women are kept in disillusion which Mary Daly would say as 'foreground' guarded by deception and lies.

Discrimination and rejection of women as equal human being is seen when a girl or a woman is on her monthly period. Menstruation is seen as impure and during that time women are not allowed to touch the Koran or do namaz. The practice of shunning women during this time of month is similar to other religions like, Hindu, Christianity, Parsee and Buddhism. In some country and religion, they practice 'other room' the name 'menstrual huts' where women have to stay there till, they are pure again. Firstly, women are subjugated in the name of gender and then with the natural process or different function of body associated with women ie. menstruation. It is not the fault of women that they are born female but nature has made them as they are. It is patriarchy that goes against nature and terms them as impure or polluted.

### *Exile: A Memoir*

The book Written after Nasrin was exiled from West Bengal and confinement in a place which she did not know. The text talks about the series of criticism on her by various people some of whom she knew very well. The echo of feminism can be

seen in all thoughts and writings of Nasrin. She is a liberal thinker who is also a radical when it comes to women's rights. Many women are unable to fathom her views and acts, hence she can be regarded a protestor against men's injustice. She says Bangladesh is very much Islamized today and criticizes the double standard of Muslim intellectuals who applaud a Hindu and a Christian criticizing their respective religions but fail to accept a criticism on Muslim. The popular saying that women can understand women better since they share similar experience is made void and null when Nasrin in *Split: A life* brings an instance where women who are leaders of the country rejected support to her and women in general. She views Sheik Hasina as a cunning politician who can do anything to stay in power. She claims:

It was amazing that we lived in a country where both the Prime Minister and the leader of the opposition were women. Did they never receive the reports of rapes being committed everywhere? Or did it not make difference to them? Was rape something so amusing for them that they never felt incensed by it? Despite there being a female prime minister in charge of the country, incidents like murder of house wives, rapes, kidnapping, acid attacks, dowry-related violence and child marriage were commonplace.” (*Split: A Life*, 384)

She voices out for women without filtering her words and this has been seen as obscene and not becoming of a woman. Nasrin opines that she values honest and cannot write just for the sake of good literature. This is one reason of her belief why her books are banned. For a long period of time, women's sexuality has been portrayed from the lens of male writers but when Nasrin came open with her sexuality, people shamed her. The controversy she claims is because of her sexual independence that she talks about and in a society where talking about sex is a taboo. Daly view that patriarchy gets access when it is given access therefore Nasrin denied access to define her sexuality to men and she cuts off their access. The sense of independence should start from control over one's body rather than following what patriarchy has established. Famous personalities like Mahatma Gandhi, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Benjamin Franklin, Bertrand Russell and Leo Tolstoy were mentioned who were not criticized for their moral behavior and confessions of having multiple affairs but the question was why Nasrin's work was seen and termed shameful. Was it because they were men and allowed to exert their sexually while a

woman should as perhaps it might bring them equal to men and eventually the control of men over women's body will slowly fade or decrease.

The exile and confinement of Nasrin under house arrest can be seen as an action taken under the law of Qur'an where it is instructed:

As for your women who commit adultery, call four among you to witness against them. If they so witness, confine them to their homes until death overtakes them or else God provides another way for them. And if two males among you commit indecency, rebuke them harshly. If they repent and make amends, leave them alone. (64)

She was judged based on Islamic rules which she has been trying to oppose. The texts were about human rights of women and its oppression by Islamic religion. However, that religion tried to suppress her voice. Woman adultery considered a sin while men can get away with and be pardoned. Similar situation of confinement of Nasrin can be seen in the story of Soraya where the woman is stoned to death without giving her chance of explanation. Nasrin also faces this situation where she was not allowed to justify herself and her books being banned and she herself was denied entry to her Country and also to her adoptive country India. Nasrin is an emancipated woman who does not confine to the rules of patriarchy. She says, men have always taken pride in the number of women they have been but is entirely different for women. They earn names like traitor, whore, shameless, desperate etc. and critics have described her independence as hedonism while for men it will earn them prestige. Mary Daly writes that "Overcoming the silencing of women is an extreme act, a sequence of extreme acts. Breaking our silence means living in existential courage. It means discovering our deep sources, our spring. It means finding our native resiliency, springing into life, speech, action" (Daly 19) and hence we see Nasrin finding her spring of life by challenging and breaking the silence of many women.

Taslima Nasrin's adherence to women writings is based on reason and not on any religion or faith. She is not biased but brings forth prevalent situations in her novel. Feminism today is active not only in urban areas but it has spread to rural areas also. Activists work to bring attention to rural women who comprise the majority of women

population especially in third world countries which is highly uplifted by United Nations who gives the theme for International Women's Day 2021 as "Choose to Challenge." A challenged world is an alert world and from challenge comes change. Taslima writings aptly fit to the theme since she has chosen to challenge the patriarchy and social norms. No matter where they live, women have been stigmatised and discriminated against in numerous ways. They suffer at the hands of patriarchy; despite the fact that some enlightened families provide women with equal opportunities as men. Women will suffer regardless of how many people like Nasrin come up to challenge fundamentalists who refuse to accept change and reformation.

### **Analysis of Kamila Shamsie's Texts**

The Images of women criticism in the select fictions reveal Kamila Shamsie's keen observation and realistic presentation of Pakistan's predominantly patriarchal culture. The women are still in the process of transition to break free from the moulds of ideal femininity. Shamsie champions women's autonomy by portraying socially rebellious, strong-willed and courageous women as her central characters and deconstructs the ancient stereotypes of Pakistani women. Shamsie unlike Nasrin does not portray only the dark and negative aspect of the society. She presents modern women who are decisive and some of her characters do not give in to societal rules. She has a positive outlook towards the society and believes in changes.

#### ***Salt and Saffron***

The story centers around Aliya's life and her fight to overcome the traditional belief that has been imposed on her. The writer's thorough observation of Pakistani women of all influences has been depicted inside the novel with their emotional, cultural, and modern characteristics, bringing the story's feminine sensibility to the fore. She has paid close attention to the ladies, which has helped her to demonstrate the plight of women in society, displaying not just prejudice and misery, but also their development as persons capable of self-willed action. The history of the Dard-e-Dils plays an important role where it accumulates and social milieu's transition from a strict conservative family to acceptance of change and liberal outlook.

Taslima Nasrin writes about brutality, rape, torture, and other inhuman crimes, but Kamila Shamsie's novels offer a feminist viewpoint on human relationships and family life. She is not as extreme as Nasrin, thus the battle of women in family, society, relationships, and cultural conceptions is expressed in a subtle way in *Salt and Saffron*. The novel's core theme is the fight of her female characters for existence, honour, acceptance, and freedom. Shamsie uses her writings to call for a change in society's attitude toward women. Her various characters serve as archetypes for various types of Pakistani women.

The novel sketches the tales of several women across different class and generation. It crafts Elite class woman Aliya's confusion on her choices in life to midwife Taj's struggle for existence. Along with the female characters caught in the shackles of conventions, runs in parallel the spirit of revolt and journey to attainment of independence and self-assertion. The protagonist Aliya is a young American graduate and modern woman, who is compelled to investigate the history of her royal clan in order to excavate the truth about her identity. She is a modern woman intertwined with tradition and culture. She was brought up in traditional family and exposed to liberal world during her studies. Shamsie through Aliya craftily presents the struggle of modern Pakistan women and this can be seen as her own struggle living in London yet the roots of culture attached to Karachi, Pakistan.

Aliya's sense of dilemma in the family traditions is reflected in her belief in the myth of not-quite-twins despite her education and wide exposure. The family believes that the not-quite twin pair brings disaster to the family. Aliya who is an educated woman feels entrapped with the tradition and tries not to be like her not-quite twin Apa Mariam though she cannot stop her admiration towards her. They are not twin by birth but by fate where Aliya was born the day and moment Mariam stepped into their family. She is confronted with an actual conflict when she becomes aware of the origin of Khaleel, the dazzlingly handsome and exceptionally urbane man whom she meets on the plane on her way back to Pakistan. She was charismatically drawn towards him and at the same time do not wish to break the old age tradition of her family by marrying him. The patriarchal structure has been set through the process of social conditioning and to break this will be an epoch for Aliya. Kate Millet in *Sexual Politics* states on this conditioning as:

We are not accustomed to associate patriarchy with force. So perfect is its system of socialization, so complete the general assent to its values, so long and so universally has it prevailed in human society, that it scarcely seems to require violent implementation. (43)

Aliya seemed to be worried over her own reaction to learning of Khaleel's origin. She feels helpless, despite her desire to break free from her family's long-standing customs, which she admits to have analysed and refuses to comply by. She tries to piece together Mariam's life, such as why she didn't speak to anyone except the family cook and her elopement with him. Despite her strong ties to her family's traditions, Aliya aspires to be a self-sufficient individual free of societal constraints. She can be seen defending Mariam for choosing love over a long-standing family tradition. She negates the family social class and Aliya at one instance slaps her dadi when she calls Mariam a whore for eloping with the cook Masood. She defends her on the pretext that "...whoever Mariam might have married she was still Mariam and I would defend her against all those who couldn't see beyond their own class prejudices" (112). Aliya can only discover her own self and her own potential to assert her individuality via self-analysis. She discovers herself, attains realisation, and rational thinking through her voyage to her family's historical history. Mariam and Aliya are shown by Shamsie as powerful women who refuse to abandon their traditional beliefs. Despite the fact that Maraim is really not depicted directly interacting with Aliya, her demeanour has motivated the latter to rebel against the class system.

Shamsie balances the portrayal of characters in her novel. She portrays the struggle for self-affirmation of the women from the elite class at the same lights the ghastly condition of the women belonging to the lower class of the society and the hideous injustices committed against them. Taj and Taj's mother are the two characters from low class through which the novelist exposes the dreadful and indifferent treatment of the poor women by the rich male members of the society. Taj's mother became pregnant as a result of a Dard-e-Dils family prince. Instead, she and her daughter Taj were shunned. Taj worked as a peasant girl in the hamlet before being summoned to the Dard-e-Dils family as a midwife after none of the prince's children, the Nawab, survived the trauma of birth. Taj worked as a midwife for her



biological father. This demonstrates how patriarchy treated the lower classes. Taj's mother is compared to Leda in Yeats' poem "Leda and the Swan," with the Nawab as Zeus in the form of a swan. He was strong and powerful, and Leda couldn't keep herself back.

Shamsie not only depicts the historical prejudices that women have experienced, but also portrays an authentic character in Mariam Apa, Aliya's aunt or half-sister. She is portrayed as the novel's most determined character. She exudes incredible self-assurance and is unwavering in her determination to achieve her goals in life. Mariam is depicted as possessing feminine attributes such as grace and poise, as well as being delicate and sensitive while maintaining a firm resolve in her refusal to speak to anybody except the cook and to order meals. When she decides to elope with the cook, her silence, which the readers interpret as a protest, may have been broken. She has taken a risk that no one else in the family would have considered. She moved away from the Royal lineage and the prejudices of her family's social level. Shamsie's self-assured female characters may be observed in her other novel *Broken Verses*, where her character Samina Akram follows her boyfriend everywhere despite the fact that they are not married. Her attitude is non-conformist and radical. People accuse her of failing to fulfil her motherly responsibilities to her kid, but she follows her heart. Aasmani appreciated her mother's free-spirited attitude toward life while harshly criticising her for abandoning her responsibilities as a mother.

Another interesting emancipated character in *Salt and Saffron* is Meher Dadi as addressed by Aliya. She is an unconventionality character and completely different from her sister who hold strictly to family tradition. She eloped and married Nineteen. After her husband's death, she did not confine herself into dejected and poor widow but instead preferred to chase her dream. She is a unique character because of her enthusiasm to discover the positive possibilities of life and to make the most of them. She became independent and also invested her finance in European stock markets. She is a modern character who does not give up and solely depend on men for her survival. She stands for her interest and expands her ideas beyond Karachi. In all the societies there are certain sections of women who are ignorant of the important things and gives importance to petty issues and gossips. Mary

Wollstonecraft also suggested in her writings advising women not to meet often as it will lead to no productive result. Shamsie also presents this comic character through the Starched Aunts who are preoccupied by trivial issues like going to parties, physical appearances, and unnecessary chit chats. This will not result in any intellectual conversation or outcome and will not contribute to self-realization.

Shamsie's thorough observation of Pakistani society and the role of women in it is depicted through the characters in *Salt and Saffron*. Mariam, Aliya, and Meher Dadi are all strong-willed characters that she portrays. Women like Dadi, who follow tradition without reason, contribute to Taj's unfortunate fate. Shamsie brings up the point that sometimes it is women who oppress women due to their own ignorance. Her major characters rose to remake their lives based on their own reasons rather than convention. They soared above patriarchy's illusion, to what Mary would refer to as the "background," where they discovered their actual selves.

### ***Broken Verses***

Shamsie depicts non-conformist, radical, and autonomous female characters in *Broken Verses* who excel in their own unique ways to overcome society's judgement. The characters capture the reader's interest, and the reader is unable to judge the action since it engages the reader's emotional intelligence. Throughout the narrative, the readers connect with the characters and watch them evolve. The writer raises questions about women's status in Pakistan through the song and events in the text. By avoiding preconceptions and focusing on freedom, goals, uniqueness, and non-conformity, the novelist widens women's roles. The novel revolves around the lives of three modern and educated women belonging to the upper strata of the society viz. Aasmani Inqalab, narrator and the protagonist of the novel, Samina Akram, mother of Aasmani and women rights activist and Shehnaz Saeed, a popular actor and the mother of Mir Adnan AkbarKhan. The two mothers in the story play an important role in the development of Aasmani's view on life. Another women character is Beema step mother of Aasmani and her half sister Rabia. Beema is introduced as a perfect mother and dutiful wife. She fulfills the demands expected of a wife and mother by the society.

Samina Akram, an educated Cambridge graduate at the age of twenty-three decides to work as women rights activist who fell in love with a thirty-six-year-old Poet. When the poet began to use her as a muse to his poetry, she felt her identity as an individual being shadowed by the attention she receives from the poet. In order to express her freedom and self dominance she enters to wedlock to prove the poet that she is in charge of her own life only to realize that they share different opinions and incompatible leading to divorce after four months of marriage. Samina is strong, progressive and unconventional women and it is reflected in her decision to live with the poet even though they are not married. Kamila Shamsie is not applauding Samina for living her husband and daughter but she is depicting a woman deciding her happiness without letting society's view influencing her. She is shown defying patriarchal rules by expressing her free and enlightened opinions. Women's roles in society are expected to be linked to their husbands and families, restricting them from pursuing careers after marriage. Men are not required to quit their jobs to care for their families, but in many countries, women are required to abandon their jobs and careers to care for their families. The woman is forced to give up her autonomy. Samina is a rebellious lady, similar to Shamsie in earlier novels, who is continuously chastised by society for her strange decision to accompany the poet during his imprisonment and exile. She was labelled as reckless and neglectful of her responsibilities as a mother by society. Aasmani reveals people's opinion as:

Most of the Karachi society disapproved of her, of course. Running around the country for some man she wasn't even married to, leaving her daughter behind. But they also said that letting Beema raise me was the best she could do for me, not that they excused her behavior in any way" (89).

Aasmani also get conditioned by the cultural constructs of motherhood and believes that it's not unnatural of what her mother did, "mothers aren't supposed to choose over their children" (254). Toril Moi says that patriarchal tyranny consists of putting specific social norms of femininity on all biological women, thereby convincing them that the chosen criteria for femininity are natural, in contrast to Aasmani and society's ideas on femininity (108). As a result, a woman who does not conform is deemed unfeminine and unnatural. Aasmani admires her free personality and powerful, motivating deeds, but she also accuses her of disregarding her motherly

duties. This demonstrates how a daughter views a mother rather than a person. Samina's strong personality was not accepted by the society and she had to endure several criticisms and at the end left to live a secluded and woeful life. She is consumed by society wretched and bitter attitude and at the end commits suicide. Even when she needed love and support after the poet's death, instead of letting her grief and show sympathy she was besieged and people turned hostile to her. Her strength became a threat to people since her character was far ahead of her time where Pakistani society was not ready to accept such force. Shamsie shows of how women who are different become victim in a society where change is slow. Yet, the novel also shows a positive light where Samina influences other women character.

The perplexities of women trampled between their dream and responsibilities run alongside with Shehnaz Saeed, a friend of Samina. Her bold character is introduced through Asamani. She admires Samina and in a way influenced by her daring outlook but she confesses that she is not as strong as Samina in dealing with Society's demands. She has been a famous actor but as a mother people think she failed in her responsibilities. Her identity crisis as a lesbain is revealed only to Aasmani. Here Shamsie through Shehnaz brings in the dilemma of a woman who struggles with her sexual identity along with the institution of marriage and suffers from guilt as such people like her are seen as taboo. She is tormented for being an irresponsible mother and blames herself for her son's secluded life. The hope in Samina gives her a reason to start her career again. Samina's way of life though not accepted by society has made positive impact on Shehnaz where she comes into realization and starts building relationship with her son.

Along with the disappointed of women character who are mothers, Aasmani Inqalab from the view of a daughter is also disappointed with the life of feminist being rejected by society. The novel is set in an era where feminist movement was at its peak leading to personal as well as political dimensions. Aasmani is discontented with society as well as herself for the disappearance of her mother. She could not accept the fact that her mother committed suicide and decides to know her mother from people who knew her. The more she knew about her mother the more she became matures in her thinking and accepted the reality. Along with her realization of being a woman she decides to help in women cause by helping in making

documentary about women's movement in which her mother Samina's story will also be prominent.

*Broken verses* do not focus on only one type of women but it consists of multiple personalities existing in the society. She brings in the characters of woman like Shamina and Shehnaz in contrast to Beema who is the perfect wife, adored and accepted by society. Shamsie through the women characters lets the readers to analyze the question of how a woman should. If a woman listens to her heart and chases her dream, she is considered unconventional and rebellious while a woman, who sacrifices her individuality by following the norms and expectations of patriarchal society, is rewarded with happy marriage. The readers are left to ponder on what actually a happy marriage mean. Samina who is freethinking and self-assertive is tormented and distressed, loses personal connection even with her daughter.

Kamila Shamsie is subtle in her writings. She might not directly oppose or wage war of words against patriarchal society but through her myriad characters she brings in the struggle of women in various forms: be it society's judgment, inner self dilemma and realizations. Her portrait of characters includes mosaic where characters are confused, dutiful, submissive and rebellious which forms the microcosm of women's life. Out of the four women characters in the novel, Beema represents the dutiful wife who sacrificed her individual being for the family while Samina and Shehnaz rose beyond their assigned roles as mothers and wife. They asserted their individuality in the world of patriarchy which later crushed Samina emotionally. Aasmani's life was also impacted by all the three characters which made her decide for herself. Shamsie does not support or defame any women in the novel but each portrayed with utmost care to impact the readers in their own way. The characters help readers to look at women not as one entity but from different perspectives.

### ***Burnt Shadows***

Kamila Shamsie's characters are realistic and present an optimistic view of society where women can grow and assert their status. She has a poignant view of women to keep in parallel the oppression and independence. Her female characters

are vibrant and embraces life in their terms and at the same time impact other women. In *Burnt Shadow*, Shamsie explores women psyche through Hiroko and other women where the novel is hailed as a woman presenting woman with woman psyche. Like in *Salt and Saffron*, the women presented in the novel are bold and keeps on changing. They do not stick to patriarchal control after realization of their individuality. Through the use of Japanese Protagonist amid South East Asian culture, Shamsie brings in her prolific skill of presenting women beyond Pakistan. The novel denies the implication of harsh suppression or cruelty to the characters apart from the general terror that Hiroko had to undergo along with history. Shamsie discusses the thin line which people often ignores but is present and contribute to women's self-development.

The progressive and fresh journey of Hiroko is rendered through her journey to Delhi to find her Fiancé's sister. On her arrival she meets James Burton and Elizabeth who gave her shelter in Delhi before her decision to stay back when they live for London. The readers are introduced to the patriarchal control of James over Elizabeth through the conversation of how Hiroka arrived to Delhi. When Hiroko reveals:

Tokya, I've been working in Tokya since soon after the war ended. As a translator. Someone I knew there told me about a friend of hers who was coming to India, to Bombay. We met, and I convinced him to take me travel with him. And from Bombay I took the train to Delhi. (46)

To which James glanced at Elizabeth giving a hint that she was making up the story. Hiroko's bold action was a blow on James' patriarch dominance over his wife. The society does not approve of women travelling alone especially outside the country and also with an unknown man. On being asked 'What, alone?' The protagonist defies the structure by replying 'Yes. Why? Can't women travel alone in India?' (46). James' shallow and conservative attitude is seen when he says that he certainly won't allow Elizabeth to travel like Horoko. The readers see the arrival of Hiroko making difference in people's life. James couldn't understand the outspoken Japanese woman in trousers and considers keeping women at home as common sense. Hiroko stepped into a predominantly masculine society of colonial India where women were denied any voice. Her arrival can perhaps be the beginning of

feminist thought in the life of Elizabeth which she did not realize as there was none to show her.

Elizabeth is introduced as a modern aristocratic wife unaware of English patriarchal system. She is conscious of her rights but she compromises because of the passed down knowledge that woman's position lies with her husband. She is seen as a dutiful wife and does question her position. She is a dependent and not a companion in marriage which Wollstonecraft emphasizes on. She is seen as dominated by James Burton as India during the time by British Raj. Elizabeth's character allies to Henrik Ibsen's character Nora who is dutiful and happy in the house without giving time to reason. Similar to Nora's chores like looking after the children, shopping for family and busy in maintaining the house, Elizabeth role was a passive one where she has to pick her cup of tea and maintain her grace and pose as to model for a portrait, she was a 'colonial wife' who cannot break free.

Shamsie highlights Hiroko's progressive attitude to life she decides to learn Urdu which Elizabeth never thought of during her long stay in Delhi. Instead, James discourages her and this shows his snobbish way of looking at the colonized Indian people. He replies:

'It's not necessary. English serves you fine. The natives you'll meet are either Oxbridge set and their wives or household staff like Lala Buksh, who can understand simple English if you just know a clutch of Urdu words to throw into the mix. Those Elizabeth can teach you.' (57)

With words come knowledge and with knowledge power, here James is seen refusing power to Hiroko who finds his statement the oddest thing. However, with the intervention of Elizabeth who was now thinking beyond the garden and flowers, Sajjad who later becomes her husband was assigned to teach her Urdu. She is a strong woman who never turns away from truth but rather embraces with hope. Her eagerness to learn Urdu language indicates her quick adaptive nature to which she is placed. She withstands language and cultural barriers and becomes one with the world.

Elizabeth becomes aware of her feelings and emotions after Hiroko enters her life. She realized that she does not want her son Henry to be away from her. She

agreed to whatever James Burton decides for the family but as she spent more time with Hiroko, she realized to form her opinion and view. The writer pours out Elizabeth's mind as if like she has become accumulation of things she dislikes. She feels sad to let her son Henry go far away and live with a husband who no longer knew how to talk. She is surrounded by people and privileges but deep down she is lonely and depressed. She is British by marriage but she is German by birth and she is in pain with the fact that at times during the war, especially when Berlin was firebombed, she had felt entirely German. Shamsie portrays Elizabeth's sense of freedom when:

She didn't want to go back to London and live under the shadow of her meddling mother-in-law. She didn't want to make James unhappy through her inability to be the woman he had thought she would turn into, given time and instruction, she didn't want to be undesired. She didn't want her future to look anything like her present. (100)

Hiroko invokes feminist thought in Elizabeth at the same time helped her to unleash the pain she had been keeping heavy in her heart. Nationalism is also revitalized when Elizabeth talks about the bombing of Berlin. She is married to a British, leads life as the wife of a British Officer but her heart is German. She was under her husband's control and she doesn't want to be controlled again by her mother-in-law who will instruct her rules of London socialite since they have spent several years in India. Hiroko is presented as a progressive, positive and free willed women who transcends time, space and terror of the world, she is also depicted as soft and nostalgic where she reminiscences being Japanese.

Elizabeth in the beginning of the novel was shown as submissive and naïve character towards the end transforms into a bold and decisive woman who decides to do the best for herself. James says they will start new when they get back to London but on the contrary Elizabeth affirms to leave her husband and start her life without patriarchal dominance. This is reflected in her letter to her cousin where she writes that she will come to New York but not with James as she is planning to leave him. She insisted her not to let James or others know about her plan. Her letter gives a hint to the readers that her cousin Willie advised her not to marry Burton as it would



kill her to be the good wife. She tried to be the good wife but, on the process, loses her identity as Elizabeth. She reclaimed her free after spending time with Hiroko.

Hiroko like Mariam in *Salt and Saffron* influences Elizabeth to reaffirm herself. Shamsie's characters impact each other to rise above patriarchy. They fit into Mary Daly theory on women spinning through the maze of deception and lies created by patriarchy to the background to the realm of ecstasy. She writes "Breaking through the Male Maze is both exorcism and ecstasy. It is spinning through and beyond the fathers' foreground which is the arena of games" (*Gyn/Ecology*, 8). Thus, Elizabeth like Aliya breaks through socially constructed rules and defines her own choice.

### *Home Fire*

*Home Fire* is a contemporary reimagining of Sophocles' *Antigone* with characters placed in London, Britain. The story takes place in the family of Pakistani-British family with past history linked with terrorism. Shamsie's characters are wonderers and travelers. They are progressive and bend to situation in which they are placed. Similar to *Burnt Shadows* where characters travel, Isma in *Home Fire* travels to another country with a dream to graduate and pursue academic knowledge. The novel in general introduces to the problem faced by Muslim citizens in Britain. In the opening chapter of the novel, Isma is held back at the interrogation room where the officers checked her luggage and commented over a designer jacket that it isn't hers. This is a disdainful attitude of people towards people belonging to poor countries though Isma had lived her whole life in Britain. She was asked whether she considers herself as British even with her British Passport to support her identity. The process of interrogation in airport is a common scene happening to people of poor country. Similar experience is shared by Taslima Nasrin's character Nila in *French Lover*.

Isma the sister of Aneeka took responsibility to raise her sister Aneeka and brother Parvaiz at the age of nineteen after their mother's death. Their father, Adil, was a jihadi and had been absent from their lives. Isma kept aside her dream to pursue academic to work and look after the twins. It was only after they grew up and had become capable to work that she decides to resume her dream and life. The

conversation in the interrogator room reveals that she was a manager in a dry-cleaning shop and later travelling to America to fulfill her American Dream to study Ph. D program in Sociology in Amherst, Massachusetts. Like several other women character of Shamsie, Isma is also ambitious and works towards her goal. She is a character who does not let her dream shatter because of the problem she faces. She is an optimist and also upholds her moral character. She has a mixed character where she is seen caring for her siblings and at the same time reports Parvaiz' action to the state when he joins the terrorist group. She has a concept to be loyal to the state and cherish what is left. She is strong in her determination but not rebellious like her sister Aneeka. She objects Emmon's love and decides to stay chaste. She upholds high moral values which later brought disappointment and regret.

Aneeka, the twin sister of Parvaiz and the sister of Isma is opposite. She is close to her sister as well as to her twin and he felt betrayed when her sister reports about her twin to the state. Instead of accepting the fate like Isma, she tries to bring back her brother to London and come clean with the government. Parvaiz' personal reason to join ISIS was a trap where he trampled in search of emotional connection and he also realizes his mistake. His personal reason was to know about their father's death but his emotions unknowingly led him under the terrorist agent. Aneeka echoes Mary Daly writings where she says:

We must learn to dispell the language of phallocracy, which keeps us under the spell of brokenness. This spell splits our perceptions of our Selves and of the cosmos, overtly and subliminally. Journeying into our Background will mean recognizing that both the "spirit" and the "matter" presented to us in the fathers' foreground are reifications, condensations. (9)

The state or the government declares Parvaiz as terrorist but Aneeka did not accept it as it was a 'phallocracy' as Daly suggest. She tries to break the spell and works towards bringing her brother back through her influence on Emmon who is the son of the Home Secretary. Shamsie through the role of Aneeka and Parvaiz brings in the misconception that people have regarding Muslims and how they misunderstand Islam and terrorism. After Parvaiz's was shot death, Aneeka journeys to the foreground to bring her brother's body to London and give him proper burial. She knew her journey will be defiled by the state but the bond between the twins was

stronger than external force. Her act of rebellion is seen in her decision to travel to Pakistan knowing the criticism she will attract, unlike Isma who wants to prove themselves loyal to the British.

The love tale of Aneeka and Emmon started as the former plan to use the latter's father's political power to bring back her brother. However, as the relationship continues Aneeka falls in love with Emmon and at the end of the novel, both of them die in a terrorist linked attack. The writer describes the painful scene as:

The man with the explosives around his waist holds up both his hands to stop her from coming to him. Run! He shouts. Get away from me, run! And run she does, crashing right into him, a judder of the camera as the man holding it on his shoulder flinches in expectation of a blast... She rests her cheek against his, he drops his head to kiss her shoulder. For a moment they are two lovers in a park, under an ancient tree, sun-dappled, beautiful and at peace.  
(260)

Aneeka is strong willed at the same time sensitive to people she loves. For her brother she defied the law and for her lover, she hugs death. Some may consider this act of bravery as foolish while some will appreciate her feelings however, Kamila Shamsie through her and Emmon tries to bring the life of immigrants in Britain who has to choose either to please the state or to listen to their emotions. Unlike the other novels, Shamsie does not bring in the character who completely stays under patriarchy but she brings in resemblance through the character of Isma. Instead of supporting her sister, Isma tries to stay under the rule and trying to be on the good side and at the end of the story she lived while the strong character met a tragic love end. Feminist ideas do not mean always fighting against patriarchy but sometimes it is against fighting one's consciousness against instructions of set rules. How one would have acted when there was no rule of punishment and outcome. In *Home Fire*, Aneeka chose to live stand for her brother and along with her lover. She did not give in to patriarchy and at the end the readers are left impressed by her act and indirectly attribute empathy to the courage.

Taslima Nasrin and Kamila Shamsie's ideas are both based on feminist views and they contribute to feminist ideas and women's rights. They talk about Muslim

women suffering in the hands of patriarchy and their journey towards self-realization. Their characters are strong willed, rebellious and ready to change their course of lives. The women characters are presented in accordance to their respective societies though they deal with Muslim women. One is based on Bangladesh while the other mostly in Pakistan. Furthermore, their characters travel along with the change of time. The characters do not confine to particular place, time and space. The issues of women and their struggle to fit into knitted patriarchal societies are presented.

Both Taslima Nasrin and Kamila Shamsie are aware of feminist movement and its struggle. However, writings of Taslima Nasrin are darker and more morbid comparing to Kamila Shamsie. The former presents the dark world where women are under threat by patriarchy while the latter presents her plot in a lighter way where women are progressive and does not settle to the rules of patriarchy. Nasrin's writings attribute the oppression of women to religion while Shamsie avoids the topic of religion through her characters are mostly Muslims. She does not attack religion like Nasrin. The writings of Nasrin and Shamsie complement each other towards women empowerment and making readers aware of the oppression and psychological trauma that women undergo. Their characters represent not only the Muslim women but also the women in general.

Taslima Nasrin and Kamila Shamsie whose works have been discussed in this chapter can come under the wings of feminism. The writers do not call themselves as feminists but it is the people who read their books attribute them as 'feminist'. Feminist does not mean staging protest and asking for equal rights just blindly but it is about being conscious of one's rights and equality. From the four texts each discussed on Nasrin and Shamsie, the two can be categorized under different types of feminism. Taslima Nasrin can be brought under Radical Feminism while Kamila Shamsie can be categorized under Liberal Feminism. Both the writers focus on women and their struggles bringing consciousness to the readers.

## Conclusion

Some decades back women were ashamed to speak about the ill-treatment or abuses but today we see women being vocal about being a victim. Society instead of emphasizing towards the victim blamed her and supported the oppressor. However, with education and reason women speak boldly asking for justice. Social media is also playing an important role in demanding justice and bringing to the world the clarity. For instance, the Me Too Movement (**#me too movement**) which became viral in the late 2017 is becoming more effective to break the silence of many women who were sexual harassed or raped in work place. It was started long back in 2006 but has gained popularity recently. The movement is sprouting its shoots all over and has spread its wings to many other countries including India and Bangladesh. Before the platform of social media, literature took the arena to bring in the injustice and hence forth,

Feminism as a movement has been one of the most influential and strong movement in the history of mankind. For long women has shared the identity as 'second class citizen', 'the other' or a possession in many of the societies. Since the recall of history women have been discriminated based on gender, social, culture, religion etc. based on the ideology created by patriarchy. However, women after a long struggle and suffocation emerged to raise their voice demoing equality in the form of feminism. It is the contribution of enlightened women who pioneered the cause of women and stood demanding equality. The history as we study today culminated the actions of feminism. Wollstonecraft's *A vindication of the Rights of Women*, Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, Kate Millet's *Sexual politics* are some of the ground breaking writings which gave birth to modern day's feminism. Apart from the mentioned authors and the books, there are several writers whose works serve as a basis to feminism readings. Feminism seeks to change the way people look at history, not only from men's perception but also from women's perspectives. The world not only comprises of men but also of women, so history ought to portray both the gender equally. For long the contribution of women has been excluded from history and hence feminist movement stands to be included and be accepted as the equal member.

The influence of feminism is not to a particular place or region but it is a global movement which includes the women of all race, culture and colour. Hence, the discussed authors Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie's works are products of feminist writings. Their writings, settings and usage of words may differ from each other but they focused on the experience of women and tried to give voice through their texts. When it comes to writing about women, it is the women who can portray them well as the woman writer has a lived experience. There are authors like Taslima Nasreen who has been through different situation where she faces discrimination and oppositions. While writers like Kamila Shamsie also indulge in writing who are inspired and influenced to write about women issue though she has not much of lived experience other than being a woman. They deal with women characters voicing out for them so that society's prospect towards women change slowly.

## Chapter Five

### Poetics of Culture in the Select Works of Taslima Nasrin and Kamila Shamsie

A work of art, like the works of Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie, cannot be free of its history and effect. This chapter will look at both writers' works through the lens of New Historicism. The research will look into Taslima Nasrin and Kamila Shamsie using a new historicist approach called Poetics of Culture by Stephen Greenblatt. The external context is examined in terms of biographical, historical, political, social, and cultural factors in order to understand the characters and the text. The chapter analyses the works while paying close attention to the socio-cultural and historical circumstances that go into creating literary work, with the caveat that each piece of work under consideration is unique. The topic's findings reveal that works are impacted and produced as a result of their time, place, circumstances, and the writer's background.

New historicism is a method based on parallel reading of literary text and nonliterary texts. It believes in the historicity of the text and the textuality of history. To them history itself is a created thing. New historicism is interested in history as written history. The work of the past replacing the world of the past. It studies language as context and it knows that language can be political as well as tool that unmask. It is a counter part of cultural materialism of early 1980's. The term New Historicism was sired by Stephen Greenblatt in 1980 in the Introduction to *The Power of Forms and the Forms of Power in the Renaissance* and gained widespread influence in the 1990s and beyond. Greenblatt refers to itself as a form of "Cultural Poetics" which gave rise to the title of the chapter to deal with New Historicism. The method of poetics of culture sees historical and literary texts as autonomous entities, studies the relationship between texts and socio-historical contexts. It has its roots in a reaction to the "New Criticism" of formal analysis of works of literature, which was seen by a new generation of professional critics as ignoring the greater social and political consequences of the production of literary texts. In the words of Xiaotang Lyu "New Historicism is mainly the result of concepts and ideas of literary analysis and interpretation that have been assimilated from various poststructural theorists, especially Louis Althusser's Marxist ideology, Michel Foucault discourse and power, the central concept in deconstructive criticism and Clifford Geertz's

anthropology” (“An Introduction to New Historicism” 1075). It lays emphasis on history and culture of the author. It is an approach to literary theory and criticism based on the premise that a piece of literary work is to be considered a product of the time, place, and historical circumstances of its composition rather than as an isolated work of art or text. In a way, new historicism gives importance to the background of the author rather than to the text alone.

One of the key factors of New Historicism is that art and literature are integrated into the material practices of culture resulting in literary and non-literary texts functioning together in the society. It analyzes the text in parallel to historical milieu and relevant documents which demonstrates how a text addresses the social or political concerns of its time period. The approach is influenced by Foucault aiming at interpreting a literary text as an expression and reaction to the power-structures of the surrounding society. Traditionally historicist used past history as if it has a unified entity. They periodize certain times. To Foucault knowledge of history is archival and that it is an intercourse of multiple discourses. He views power not only a source to produce things and discourse but also induces pleasure and forms of knowledge. Bijay Kumar Das suggests that “The new historicist’s conception of the author is similar to Foucault’s views of him as expressed in his essay ‘What is an Author?’ Author has been reduced to author-function” (*Twentieth Century Literary Criticism* 125). He further agrees with his idea that the text becomes the product under the negotiation of the creator and the institutions and practices of the society. The aim of criticism according to new historicism is to detangle way in which power is produced. New historicism as an antiestablishment investigates three areas:

- Life of the author and political inclination. Social rules found within the text.
- Works historical situation in the text. In its various reflection of ideas, how the ideas are reflected in the work.
- New historicist work to unearth what is not visible or seemingly silent. And that society is not a unified entity. It has lot of gaps manifested by silence.

Colebrook in *New Literary Histories: New Historicism and Contemporary Criticism* opines that New Historicism studies "the relation between text and history" where the interaction between: the text and the world, materiality of the text and meaning produced and art and history should be the object of investigation in any



critical practice. History is not only accessible but also the text is a result of non-discursive forces which made the relationship between the text and its historical context dynamic. Advocates of new historicism base their arguments on the circumstances and material effects produced by the text and influential phenomenon. Gallagher views the procedure of reading a literary text from a new historicist approach engages reading both literary and nonliterary texts as it composes of historical discourses that are inside and outside the text. New Historicism practitioners in the process of analyses are provided space to step beyond the text boundary which separate different disciplines.

The meaning of the term Historicism in *Advanced Oxford Dictionary* is “the theory that culture and social events and situations can be explained by history” (737). In the words of Muller it is "literary works can help us to understand the time in which they are set – realist texts in particular provide imaginative representations of specific historical moments, events or periods; however, fictional texts are subordinate to historical records." While new historicism is defined as "literary texts are bound up with other discourses and rhetorical structures; they are part of a history that is still being written" (*Theoretical and Critical Perspectives Week 5, Literature and History: New Historicism 2*). Peter Barry in his *Beginning Theory An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* also expressed that old historicism or historicism made a hierarchical separation between the literary text and the historical background while new historicism involves parallel study of literary and non-literary text.

Cultural Materialism has been often linked with New Historicism which emerged in America in its approach. Some consider it as same as they emerged during the same time. However, there are some key differences between them:

- New Historicism focuses to subdue the oppression or the problem in the society to achieve change whereas cultural Materialism focuses on how that change is brought about.
- New Historicists claim that they are aware of the difficulties, limitations, contradictions and problems of trying to establish the truth; nevertheless, they believe in the truth of their work. Cultural Materialist sees new historicism as politically ineffective since it does not believe in absolute truth or knowledge.

They feel that cultural materialists do not believe in the truth of what they write.

- New Historicists situate a text within the political situation of its contemporary society. Cultural Materialists situate a text with the political situation of the critic's contemporary world.

Unlike Cultural materialism, new historicism is context oriented where it is centered between texts and discourses. New historicism traces discourses among text, culture, context in understanding a work. Stephen Greenblatt and Louis Montrose belong to new historicism where focus was on how renaissance literary texts are situated in between these practices. They take literature not as a reflection but takes into consideration the political, economic, other sources and non-literary areas. Greenblatt gives importance to the composition rather than an isolated creation.

The practice of New Historicism is primarily associated with two groups of critics –one arising within the study of Renaissance and the other concern with the study of Renaissance text. The second group of New Historicist led by Stephen Greenblatt has succeeded in giving a new orientation to literary studies. An important aspect of new historical method has been outlined in Greenblatt's well-known essay "Resonance and Wonder" as follows:

New historicism obviously has distinct affinities with resonance; that is, its concern with literary texts has been to recover as far as possible the historical circumstances of their original production and consumption and to analyze the relationship between these circumstances and our own. New-historicist critics have tried to understand the intersecting circumstances not as a stable, prefabricated background against which the literary texts can be placed but as a dense network of evolving and often contradictory social forces. The idea is not to find outside of work of art some rock in relation to other representation practices operative in the culture at a given moment in both its history and our own. (20)

Stephen Greenblatt outlines the following four tenets of New Historicism:

- Literature is history-oriented which means that all literary works are the products of many social and cultural circumstances and forces.
- Literature constitutes another vision of history.

- Literature cannot transcend history and is continually shaped by social and political forces. Literary texts are the products of the ideology of the age in which they are written.
- Literature should be interpreted in terms of its historicity since history shapes all literature.

Finally, new historicism is considered to be a method of exploring how literature brings some understanding to current social problems, and it makes critics talk about politics, power and class divisions while talking about the text. In general, it is a literary analysis tool wherein the focus of literature is given on interpretation of social, cultural and political factors, and is looked upon to see the impact on the author influencing the context in which the text is produced. In a constructivist class many teachers use new historicism analyses to understand the situation and scenario of the text. The sole privilege is not attributed to the text alone rather both literary and non-literary texts are given equal importance. It looks at a text as part of diverse knowledge and all other spheres also contribute to the knowledge. Greenblatt gives importance to culture. A culture not confined to the tradition but advocates anthropology culture. This makes new historicism a poetics of culture. The attraction to this concept is because of its flexibility and dynamic ability. It rethinks literary criticism and acts as a new perspective in rethinking literary criticism and historical tradition.

Stephen Greenblatt's approach was to study Renaissance texts but in this chapter the approach will be applied to contemporary situation with reference to the Muslim culture and politics with the use of literary texts by Taslima Nasrin and Kamila Shamsie. The foundation questions of New Historicism to be discussed in this chapter are: whether the texts address the political or social concerns of the time where the authors have written their works. Which or what historical events or controversies does the text allude to. How the text deals with the events. New Historicism took its concept from the focus on Renaissance and the literary works produced. It emphasizes on the product of time, place and circumstances. New historicism juxtaposes literary materials with contemporary non-literary materials. Since Taslima Nasrin and Kamila Shamsie are both living in the contemporary world, the chapter will be looked as juxtaposing literary works with non-literary

factors like social, political and other factors in the contemporary world. Allying with the concept of new historicism, the circumstances and discourse specific of the world of both the authors and have these have shaped them will be discussed through their work. According to Thomas Greene, a text becomes 'vulnerable text' if it is symbolically wounded in the form of criticism. However, Stephen Greenblatt views that the artifacts being wounded shows the sign of usage, which is in reference to the example of vase being broken by Marcel Proust as mentioned in "Resonance and Wonder". Similarly exploring the works of Taslima Nasrin and Kamila Shamsie will also serve as a sign of great importance where the value and regard of people will increase as in the case of Cardinal Wolsey. The chapter does not look at the text alone but goes beyond it to understand the author's intension, social, meaning and historical moment. History in new historicism does not serve as a background alone but gets incorporated in the text.

Talima Nasrin who is an advocate of human rights openly writes about religious fundamentalism in her writings which brings resonance of historical events. She writes not to engage the readers and educate but introduces the readers through her words. In her works like *Lajja*, *Meyebela: My Bengali Childhood*, *Exile: A Memoir Split: A Life* and *Exile*, Nasrin alludes to the historical event of Partition of East and West Bengal to Pakistan and Bangladesh. In the sequence of her novel, she based her novel *Lajja* after the mate of destruction of Babri Masjid. She brings in the political and religious event of the Indian historical controversy where the case in the settlement of the issue is still not solved. Nasrin talks about the contemporary issues in Bangladesh and the politicized form of religion. She is against Muslim and claims to be an atheist. In her books she describes of helping people not out of religion but as human being. Her works can be seen as a product of time and new field of study to the contemporary world in order to understand history and human emotions connected to it. One cannot read her works just for the sake of reading but Taslima Nasrin's writings compel the readers to understand the history behind the characters and words.

Nasrin's *French Lover* brings in the culture and socially accepted condition of women. In the story Nila is judged for having intimate relationship with a man before marriage. It is a socially constructed notion in many societies that a woman

should be pure, innocent and submissive to find a suitable husband. With the enforcement of this concept in Nila's society, she was married off to Kishan who was a non-resident Indian. It was only after her marriage that she learnt about her husband's first wife. Here the history of the male is kept out of the light. It is not a problem to society if a man marries for a second time but for a woman having any romantic relationship was seen as equal to immorality. However, with the passage of time and modernity where people give importance to individual this is not so much of a problem. Yet, in some societies it is still a rigid practice. Nasrin also brings in the issue of racism faced by the coloured people. Here coloured people in the novel refer to Indian people where they are treated with indifferent attitudes and suspicion. According to the record published by Statista Research Department, July 5, 2021 "In total, France welcomed nearly 23,000 Indian immigrants on its territory. Taking a closer look at the numbers, the most represented age group of Indians in France were aged 25 to 54 years. There were around 3,100 thousand Indian children in France and more than 2,500 15- to 24-year-olds in 2017." The novel shows the racial discrimination faced by Indians outside the country especially in the airport. The similar experience is brought about by Kamila Shamsie where Isma faces an interrogation in at the airport in America. Upon Nila's enquiry on the reason for the misbehavior of the security at the airport, the responses that followed were, 'The reason is the colour of your skin – it's not white enough' 'And your passport- it's not of a rich country,' (10). The question of what view or understanding of the relevant culture does this text offer which new historicism asks is seen through Nasrin's depiction of racial discrimination.

The open talk of sex and sexuality is seen as a taboo in Islamic society yet Taslima Nasrin belonging to Bangladesh does not hesitate to write about Nila's sexuality. Nila is portrayed as having a gay relationship with Daniel during the process of her journey to realize her individuality. Daniel is represented as a lesbian and has a terrible past where her father raped her. In Islam the attitude towards LGBT is a taboo and it is considered as sinful according to their religious jurisprudence. Laura Muchowiecka in "The End of Multiculturalism? Immigration and Integration in Germany and the United Kingdom" gives an instance of how a poll conducted by The Gallop demonstrates that British Muslims are extremely intolerant to homosexuality. "100% views of interviewed said they find it unacceptable. 124

confronted with the challenge of “failed diversity,” the government sought to re-orientate the integration policy towards cohesion which could actively promote certain values, including freedom of speech, democracy, equal rights regardless of race, gender or sexuality” (20). The poll was conducted among British Muslims who are integrated and assimilated with the white culture. However, their views and ethos are still based on Islam. In a space where homosexual is intolerable Nasrin produces a text bringing into light the sexuality of a woman. Nila is rebellious, self-assertive, independent and partakes in sexual exploration. The Muslim majority countries and the organization of Islamic Cooperation have opposed moves to advance LGBT rights at the United Nations, in the General Assembly. This unwelcoming attitude is influenced by religious, social, political and cultural history.

Nasrin’s *French Lover* shows how culture is represented in different parts of the world. She shows of what culture a woman may belong to but discrimination and ill-treatment of women happens everywhere. She breaks the ignorance of underdeveloped and under developing by talking about lesbianism which at present is considered sin and unaccepted in many societies. Nasrin writes in *Exile: A Memoir* argues “Who decides between what should be done and what shouldn’t? What if I don’t believe that what I have said is obscene? Who draws the lines and who takes the call on what is obscene and what is not?... Critics have described my independence as hedonism” (22). Nasrin bold writing about sexuality shows her conformist attitude to fear, prejudice and homophobia. It is seen as immoral for a woman to speak out about sexuality in public sphere. The writer also brings two different cultures into one platform one of India and other France. She also brings the different cultures between these two countries. She depicts of how young people pierce their eyebrows, colour their hair and dress different as a sign of protest. Nila also realized that in Paris people do not complain or show disrespect if they show display their affection in public. The common thing that Nila saw between India and France that they discrimination happens even in developed countries. Women become victim in the hands of patriarchy. *French Lover* brings the patriarchal attitude of men which leads to discrimination of women whether it is *desi* or white. The novel represents the culture of male dominated society where women are not given equal rights and in the case of Nila not allowed step out of house. Her human rights have been violated which beings the concept of class struggle. The Marxist

concept of class struggle can be applied in gender struggle where the male controls the capital. Kishanlal did not allow Nila to work on the pretext that she stays whole day at home and that the expenses of the food and necessary items were paid by him. Financial independence is also one important aspect to uplift social condition of women which Nasrin voices out in the novel. *French Lover* serves as a text which brings in social and cultural issues which are often neglected in the name of norm and tradition. It is a fight back against society where injustice meted out to women and the mentality of people living outside. Those NRIs date and involve in sexual activities with foreigner yet for marriage they search for their native people who are not aware of their lifestyle. Louis Montrose is of the opinion that new historicism deals with textuality of history but here in the case of Taslima Nasrin she deals with the textuality of the present society. Through her novel she brings the socio-cultural conditions surrounding the conception and interpretation.

*Meyebela: My Bengali Girlhood* takes its form through the eyes of innocent young Nasrin. The narration brings in creation of Bangladesh which is a joyous celebration yet a fearful situation where people killed each other in the name of religion. It is a clear declaration that Bangladesh got its independence from Pakistan in the year 26 March 1971. It is a famous saying that history is written by winners but the fact neglected is that they do not write much about the suffering and emotional hardships of the people. History is written mostly from the political perspective but writers bring history through the lens of common people with common experience. New historicism is not concerned with whether the character is real people, are there any events in the text drawn from the author's life and experiences. *Meyebela: My Bengali Girlhood* is an autobiography that chronicles Nasrin's life up to the age of thirteen. The impact of history is more important than the life of the character. Nasrin introduces the story, which is set against the backdrop of the struggle for independence. Her work reflects the terrifying sight and bloodshed of the battle. People flee to Nasrin's house to hide their valuables, which they deposit in Ma's hand with an assurance that it will be safe with her. The book brings in the class discrimination, religious orthodox and intolerance in the family and the society. The study of Shakespeare's works and Renaissance writings was the centre of new historicism, but as time progressed and changed, the chapter dealt with

works of contemporary writings that dealt with historical context as well as literary work.

The traumatic occurrence of the demolition of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh on December 6, 1992 is depicted in *Lajja*, a controversial and banned book in Bangladesh. The historical event took place against the backdrop of a story that resulted in thousands of Hindus fleeing to India, houses and temples being damaged, and neighbours turning on neighbours in the name of religion. According to new historicism literature is written under context and here it is clearly reflected in *Lajja* where the demolition by kar Sevaks (volunteers) led to the sufferings of Muslim community in India and Hindus in Bangladesh and Pakistan. The parallel reading of the literary text and non-literary text here is replaced by the study of history alongside the literary text. In *Destruction: A National Dishonour*, Editor A. G. Noorani in his preface writes:

In the courts of law and justice, the civil and criminal cases concerning the title to the Babri Masjid and accountability for its destruction, on 6 December 1992, have all but run their course. Neither legality nor justice has been conspicuous in the proceedings or in the many judgments delivered. On past form, there is little hope for redress in legal proceedings after that grave and utterly wasteful crime.... The forces of India's secularism can ignore the challenges ahead only at the nation's peril. At stake is the survival of India's democracy and its corollary, secularism.

This demonstrates how the use of religion by political power corrupts a country's secularism. In April 1984, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) launched a campaign to mobilise public support for Hindu access to the Babri Masjid and other structures allegedly built on Hindu sanctuaries. The VHP staged nationwide rath yatras (chariot processions) to raise public awareness, the first of which took place from Sitamarhi to Ayodhya in September–October 1984. The programme was temporarily discontinued after Indira Gandhi's assassination, but it was resumed in 25 places on October 23, 1985. On January 25, 1986, Umesh Chandra Pandey, a 28-year-old local lawyer, petitioned the court to lift the limitations on Hindu prayer in the Babri Masjid grounds. The Rajiv Gandhi government eventually unlocked the locks on the Babri Masjid gates. Previously, the only Hindu ceremony authorized at the site was a



yearly puja performed by a Hindu priest. Following the verdict, all Hindus were granted access to the site, and the mosque was awarded partial Hindu temple status. When the VHP got permission to hold a shilanyas (stone-laying ceremony) at the contested location before the national election in November 1989, communal tensions in the region escalated. L K Advani, a senior member of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has begun a rath yatra, which will take him 10,000 kilometres from the south to Ayodhya. On December 6, 1992, representatives from the BJP, VHP, and RSS assembled at the spot to pray and perform a symbolic kar seva. The breaking of the outer barrier occurred at midday, when a teenage Kar Sevak (volunteer) was "vaulted" onto the dome. The mosque was soon demolished by a big group of kar sevaks.

The destruction of the mosque on December 6, 1992 gave rise to communal riot between Hindus and Muslims around in and around India. Sandy Gordon in *India's Rise as An Asian Power Nation, Neighborhood, And Region* recounts the riot in India as "These were especially serious costly in Mumbai, where a regional, Hindu chauvinist part, the Shiv Sena (Shivaji's Army," named after great eighteenth-century Maratha leader and patriot Shivaji Bhosale), formed the government in the state of Maharashtra. The Shiv Sena triggered vicious rioting." (53). He goes on to say that an estimated 900 persons were killed, significantly more Muslims than Hindus, due in part to police bias, as confirmed by the Srikrishna Report.

The destruction of the Babri Masjid, as well as the loss of life and the collapse of communal trust it produced in India, had a profound influence on India's neighbours. In Pakistan and Bangladesh, hundreds of Hindu, Sikh, and Jain temples have been damaged and razed. The Air India offices were ransacked in both countries, with one person slain in Bangladesh. The ramifications are detailed in Taslima Nasrin's *Lajja*, where she keeps a journal of the reports. Nasrin, speaking through Suronjon, asks if the BJP, VHP, and their allies assume that the consequences of their hysteria will be limited to their geographical borders. In India, riots between Hindus and Muslims had erupted. A total of 500, 600, and a thousand persons were killed. Every hour, the number of those who had died increased. She questions whether the defenders of Hindu interests realized that Bangladesh has between 20 and 25 million Hindus and that Hindus might also be found in practically every country in West Asia. She is concerned about the Hindus in other parts of the

countries as the virus of hatred and communalism will spread agony all over the world and most certainly to neighbouring Bangladesh and Pakistan (6). True to the premonition of Nasrin, the demolition was a one-day contribution, but the ramifications are felt by Hindus and India as a whole. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council) is one example where Hindus in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Kashmir are seeking protection. A. G. Noorani comments on the backlash as:

By far the most important of the terrorist attacks perpetrated in the back wash of Ayodhya was the bombing in Mumbai undertaken by the Bombay Gangsters Dawood Ibrahim and his D company. These occurred in March 1993 and resulted in 257 deaths and the wounding of 700- to this day the most serious losses ever suffered in terrorist attack in India. (54)

He is of the opinion that the event became more linked to Pakistani extremists, particularly those who were specifically formed to persecute Pakistan's proxy war in Kashmir. The LeT and Jaish-e-Mohammad were the most well-known of these (JeM). Following the demolition of the Babri Masjid, riots spread to Bangladesh, destroying hundreds of Hindu stores, residences, temples, abducting women and blundering neighbours' houses. Nasrin has recorded it in detail about rape incidents during day in Golokpur. Hindu women taking shelter in Muslim homes being raped, houses and properties burnt into ashes while the magistrate and DC turned blind to the incidents. The jewellery in the temples were plundered and a hundred-year-old temple complex razed on fire (233-235).

Literature is history for New Historicists, and history is literature. Historians are authors who use writing and literary techniques to tell stories about events. Nasrin's novel *Lajja* is an example of how new historicists interpret literature within other cultural works. Despite the fact that New Historicism is not a cohesive approach, all new historians tend to criticize literature in the same way. They begin by extracting a tale from underutilized resources, such as a historical event, a poem, photographs, and architectural design, and then delving into the depths of their meaning to connect them to their research. As a result, comparable things are done in this chapter. Taslima Nasrin's popularity as a writer was aided by the publishing of *Lajja*, but as a Bangladeshi citizen, she faced Fatwa and exile. In her own motherland, her name was outlawed. Fundamentalist Muslims accused her of being hired by the BJP to

publish anti-Muslim books, despite the fact that she claims the book was about a call for humanism.

*In Split: A Life* Taslima Nasrin recounts her life, her affairs, and the events that transpired following the release of *Lajja*. She has been labelled a whore and hedonist as a result of her comprehensive disclosure of her affairs with several men. Her works were relegated to the category of pornography. Nasrin brings a surprising fact to the world's notice through the book: women, not just males, can write books about their sexuality. She doesn't brag about it, but she does divulge the names of the people with whom she has had affairs in the hopes of finding true love and friendship, only to find herself being used instead. The novel was widely panned and, like her earlier works, was banned in Bangladesh. The book was prohibited in Bangladesh when it was first released under the title *Ko* ("Speak"). It was also banned for two years in the Indian state of West Bengal, allegedly for insulting religious beliefs and being obscene. The book was translated into English and published by Penguin Random House in March 2018 under the title *Split: A Life*. This reflects the male-dominated society's mentality and nervousness when women express their sexuality. The patriarchal culture is unprepared for such bold works, as evidenced by the fact that her books have been banned.

New Historicism unlike new criticism gave importance to the text and the background in which the writer produced the work. New Critics focused more on language of the text while New Historicism seeks to create meaning by giving equal weightage to text and context of the literary piece. By context it means social, political and economic scenario which gave rise to the text. The historical aspect and the context in which the text originated is focused on. In order to be New old has to be present and to this Old Historicism was also prevalent which looked upon the background or context of the author. This approach gave more attention to context and not the literary text. The basic difference between Old Historicism and New Historicism is that the former focusses on one aspect while the later stands on parallel reading of literary and non-literary texts. Some of the writers of New Historicism apart from Stephen Greenblatt are J. W. Lever and Louis Montrose. It can be observed from the works like *Renaissance Self-fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, and *The Tragedy of the State* that New Historicists' study more on the Elizabethan works to apply it to the present context. The various issues

encapsulating in the text is being studied and given importance. The background of the writer is also studied to define the text of a particular era. The chapter discusses Taslima Nasrin and Kamila Shamsie's background and issues spoken in the works. The social, political and economic aspects are also looked upon. The paper does not discuss the works of old History alone but focuses on on-going political, social and economic issues. Some of the contexts of the texts are unresolved and some on-going at the present. When analyzed through the lens of New Historicism, the text of Nasrin and Shamsie reveal its historicity and how history was incorporated into the text in its historical context.

Kamila Shamsie is a British-Pakistani author who incorporates political, social, and historical issues into her novels. The Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, India's split, Pakistan's and Bangladesh's division, and the invocation of dual citizenship in Britain are all depicted in Shamsie's works. In *Salt and Saffron* Shamsie brings up the bitter memories of India's division into two parts, which separated millions of people from their families and loved ones. Before the division, the Dard-e-Dils were royals, but the partition tarnished their royalty. The elder members of the family despise the partition, which divided the family into two countries. When it comes to reading about the country through the eyes of family members, history is a common denominator. Jalal claims that whether South Asian history is told in terms of Hindu kings, Muslim rulers, or colonial masters, it appears to be static and is often trapped in an "essentializing mould." She emphasises on the importance of developing a sense of self that is independent of such rulers and is based on historical periodization. In light of this argument, Shamsie revisits history through the prism of family history in order to liberate South Asia's history from the meta narrative of nation-states (both India and Pakistan). She looks at 'history' from three perspectives: pre-colonial, colonial, Partition, and post-Partition. She fights Pakistan's state-controlled nationalist inclination to ignore or frame the past within a state-controlled narrative in this way. Her motivation for revisiting 'history' is to assess its procession temporality, demolish its fixities, and establish new forms of national identification. This bonding re-creates new forms of belonging that incorporate not only the tales of elites, but also those of subalterns, such as women and colonized men, who were previously repressed or neglected in patriarchal controlled colonial, anti-imperial, and post-partition nationalist narratives. New

Historicist researchers begin their examinations of literary writings by seeking to examine other texts—both literary and non-literary—to which a literate public had access at the time of writing, as well as what the original text's creator might have read. The goal of this study, unlike the New Critics, is to examine the relationship between a book and the political, social, and economic circumstances in which it was written. *Salt and Saffron* brings in the social issue of class distinction prevalent in the society through the character of Aliya and Khaleel, and Mariam and the cook. The Dard-e-Dils maintain and preserve the high social class which they inherited even before the independence. Aliya admits with skepticism that this kingdom did not exist at all, and that the head of the Dard-e Dil tribe merely controlled a little plot of land that could not be mistaken for a territory or a kingdom. Although the descendants of Dard-e Dil traced their ancestry back to the Timurid line, Aliya thinks they were not brave enough to build a kingdom like Timur or Babur. As a result, all survives are the legends and claims of supremacy passed down through family mythology.

Khaleel on the other hand is climbing the air of social status outside Pakistan but back in his home country he cannot change his status as it is deeply rooted. His family does not have a history like Aliya's of which he can be proud of except the fact that his family resides in Liaquatabad which was considered a locality of low-class people. The older generation is constantly reinstating their family pride by looking back in time through family trees and lineage maps, keepsakes, photographs, and orally stories were passed on. Members of the new group, on the other hand, The younger generation openly doubts the legitimacy of the past. New conclusions are drawn by reinterpreting the transmitters' the authenticity and ramifications of previous events. The narration abounds in anecdotes of previous blunders as well as accomplishments that are a source of encouragement as well as subjects of rigorous investigation and suspicion.

*Burnt Shadows* works with parts of history regarding the displacement of individuals in the case of warfare on a worldwide scale. The tale spans sixty years, beginning with the bombing of Nagasaki in Japan and ending with the September 11 bombing. Between these points in time, the story delves more into India's partition and the mounting tensions around the country's independence. The novel focuses on the immediate impact as well as the aftermath of the bombings of Nagasaki and

Hiroshima at the end of World War II through Hiroko's story. Fat Man's release over Nagasaki was an unprovoked act that obliterated an entire city and killed or injured a significant portion of the people. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, spoke at the "Hiroshima Peace Cultural Foundation" in 2016 about the effects of war and the displacement of Nagasaki and Hiroshima residents in the aftermath of the bombings, saying, "This city knows about the fear of war, and about the plight of people for whom there is no safety – no safety, anywhere." Shamsie weaves this history through the bodies and minds of two families: the Tanaka-Ashrafs and the Burton-Weisses, spanning three generations. This routing is a method of concretizing history, of performing it in the most intimate levels of individuals and families and their ongoing interrelationships, rather than in the abstract. It's also a manner of enacting the power structures that shape racial-national violence throughout history. The Tanaka-Ashrafs (Hiroko, Sajjad, and Raza) are Japanese and Indian subcontinent natives, whereas the Burton-Weisses (Illse, James, their son Harry, and his daughter Kim) are German, English, and (once Harry becomes an American citizen) American. The first of these family groupings, the racially "different" Tanaka-Ashrafs, suffers a tragedy in each of the book's main sections. Hiroko survives the Nagasaki bombing, but she loses her fiancé, father, and hometown. In the aftermath of Indian Partition, Sajjad is compelled to return to Pakistan from Delhi. Raza is persuaded to join a mujahadin camp in Pakistan, and his father, Sajjad, is mistaken for a CIA spy and shot killed while searching for him. Raza is later recruited into the world of US military contractors, only to be denounced, jailed, and vanished since his "ethnic" background make his loyalties innately suspicious in the PATRIOT Act era.

The disasters in each of these examples are the result of large-scale sociohistorical dynamics known as colonialism and neo-imperialism. With the exception of the atom bomb, each case's proximate cause is a Burton-Weiss family member. James Burton is the one who persuades Sajjad to spend his honeymoon in Istanbul during the vital months of 1947, when India and Pakistan are partitioned. The man who shoots Sajjad is Harry Burton's driver in Karachi, a lower-level Pakistani intelligence operator who Sajjad only encounters because Harry returns to his life after years apart. Finally, Raza is betrayed (inadvertently) to American authorities by Harry's daughter Kim, in a sequence that demonstrates how even the

most well-intentioned, liberal-minded of Americans can harbor a set of unquestioned assumptions that allow them to remain "innocent" of racist violence perpetrated in their name. *Burnt Shadows* invites us to think and examine these topics rather than providing answers. To aid that process, I'd want to end by suggesting that the questions can be more effectively addressed by looking at three of the novel's other major concerns.

Hikoro was reduced to a *Hibakusha* which means 'person affected by a bomb'. She was seen as an object of curiosity for scientific experiment and not as an Individual. In the novel Hiroko says that the word Hibakusha is her most hated vocabulary. And to get away from it all, she boarded a ship to India, where she would meet a couple, she had never met before and visit a location she had never visited before. Due to general confusion regarding the effects of radiation sickness, many people believed it was genetic or even contagious, Hibakusha and their offspring faced (and still face) tremendous prejudice in terms of marriage and employment opportunities. Despite the fact that no statistically significant increase in birth defects/congenital malformations was found in later conceived children born to survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki nuclear bombings, or in later conceived children of cancer survivors who had previously received radiotherapy, this is the case. The surviving women of Hiroshima and Nagasaki who were able to conceive after being exposed to large amounts of radiation went on to have children with no higher rate of abnormalities/birth problems than the Japanese average. Shamsie in the novel portrays this misconception and discrimination through Salma whom Raza wishes to marry. She declined to marry him on the grounds that he was the son of a hibakusha or a bomb survivor. Shamsie through the telephonic conversation between Raza and Salma reflects people's attitude and discrimination towards Bomb survivors of War. She says that no one will give their daughter for marriage to a bomb survivor's son knowing that Raza isn't deformed. People like Salma judge Raza based on information collected from external source and generalize the idea. Kamila Shamsie depicts the difficulties and stigma faced by individuals and the progeny of bomb survivors through the characters of Hiroko and Raza. Society stigmatizes them and casts doubt on their DNA, causing them to lose their independence and perplexity. Hiroko fled Japan in the hopes of forgetting her past and starting a new life, but she had no idea that she was being watched. She intended

to get away from the scientific experiment, but she ended up becoming a study subject and this is revealed through Salma and Raza's telephonic conversation. The text sparked a debate about discrimination towards bomb survivors and their families. It also depicts a woman's struggle to acclimatize to the situation in which she has been placed. Hiroko is a powerful lady who has adopted various ethnicities, but she is still haunted by her past, which she carries in the form of a bird on her back.

In *Broken verses* Shamsie subtly brings the dilemma of political and family issue. Shamina and the Poet represent the educated folks of Pakistan who want to bring change in the country. The history on women participation demanding equal rights is also discussed through flash backs and conversations. Kamila Shamsie's political issue was the women's rights movement and the active role of women in society. Samina Akram was a feminist pioneer who fought for equal rights, democratic state and voiced out against the poet's false imprisonment. The conditions that prevailed in Pakistan at the time, was that the bureaucracy and the military emerged as the country's primary institutions with a need to build a young, fragile country emerging in the aftermath of partition, and to meet the tension from India. The political supremacy of Pakistan's civil-military elite was also proof of Punjab's pre-eminence in the post-colonial state of Pakistan. Strict political control and corruption became a hindrance to the country peoples' opportunities and freedom. Shamsie brings the political tension of India and Pakistan which became sour because of several reasons. The novel is based on a situation where the country is at its recovering age after Partition of Bangladesh in 1971. The state did not welcome outspoken poets like 'the Poet' and as a consequence he was forced to exile. The context of the text is from the social and political issues prevalent in Pakistan.

The conversation of a Pakistani-British who joins a terrorist organization and the citizenship being revoked is brought up in *Home Fire*. As Home Secretary, Theresa May used her authority to take British citizenship from people who join extremist war in Syria. According to reports, up to 240 Britons are believed to be in Syria, and May has targeted 20 dual nationals for instant citizenship revocation. This portion of history was dealt with in Shamsie's *Home Fire*, when Parvaiz was stripped of his citizenship and, as a result, his body was not allowed to enter London



even after his death, instead being deported to Karachi, his second country. Parvaiz joined ISIS to learn more about his jihadist father, but instead discovered that he had been duped, and upon realizing this, he attempted to come clean, but was assassinated. He was assassinated before he could tell the authorities the truth, and as a result, he was labelled a jihadist.

Like in *French Lover*, Isma in *Home Fire* is also interrogated for long so long in the airport that she almost missed the flight. Her clothes were checked as if she couldn't afford to buy all those stuffs in her bag. They looked suspicious when she had a designer coat in her bag. New Historicists also focus on the impact of emotion in relation to events. And in *Home fire*, the emotion is created out through the character of Aneeka, the twin sister of Parvaiz. She goes to Karachi with her Pakistani Passport to collect her brother's corpse but gets killed in a tragic way. Herman Northrop Frye views criticism as a structure of thought and knowledge existing in its own rights. It is useful and authentic, and should have conceptual framework. Similarly, Shamsie bases her framework of *Home Fire* to Sophocles tragedy *Antigone*. Literature exists as a coordinating principle where one work is related to the other. The classic provide literature in the skeleton framework and hence *Antigone* serves as a recurrent narrative design. This is how pattern of action is repeated in history.

New Historicism recognizes that all historical perspectives, stories, and facts are skewed. Unlike prior historical criticism, which focused solely on establishing how a work reflected its time, New Historicism considers how the work is influenced by the time period in which it was created. New Historicist critics use a broader definition of history than their predecessors. New Historicist critics think that history is not a set of permanent, objective facts, but rather a text that must be understood, much like the literature with which it interacts. In the light of Nasrin we see her influenced by social dimension where she experienced psychological trauma and inhuman acts which resulted in the production of her works. New Historicism investigates the artist's social environment, psychological background, publications and theories that may have impacted the author, and any other elements that influenced the piece of art. Here the social environment is the unrest in Bangladesh that took place since the formation of country where communal intolerance was

experienced and later the writer becomes the victim when she voices out. The movement of the approach acknowledges the textuality of history and the other related sources. It doesn't give full privilege to the text alone but gives equal importance to its alliances. History was no longer only a collection of ideas or a collection of empirical facts. New Historicists emphasize on history as one that has stressed the function of representation and decision-making in social life.

History is narrated by people and not be considered and since history was largely documented in the form of narration, historians could also access history through textuality. Several writers write the same incident in different way in their own narration and it is because of this that new historicism focus on parallel reading. Nasrin and Shamsie document the history of partition, violence, and human relationships. Furthermore, several historical occurrences had been incorporated into the narrative. The new postmodern and alternative historiographies provide new impetus to historiography and culture, as well as new opportunities for people and diasporas, native peoples, and subaltern people to rewrite history as ongoing cultural exchanges. The new postmodern and alternative historiographies give history and culture fresh impetus, as well as new opportunity for people and diasporas, indigenous peoples, and subaltern peoples to rewrite history as continuing cultural exchanges. The key arguments of this argument are that, unlike postmodernism, new historicism recognizes that practically all historic views, accounts, and facts contain biases derived from the viewpoint. Some critics of New Historicism have complained that it reduces literature to a footnote in history. It has also been claimed that it ignores the antiquated intricacies involved in assessing literature. Lacking in-depth knowledge of literature and its structures, New Historicism simply identifies historical issues with which literature may create connections without explaining why. As a result, it has spread like wildfire across socio-cultural and historical divides. The New Historicism's rapid adoption spawned a slew of new phenomena, including the "new new historicism" which can be a term to apply new historicism to the history of contemporary world. When a reader analyzes a text from the new historicism approach, the text serves not only as a source of reading but unravels different social, political and economic issues. It spreads more awareness and detailed study.

## Chapter Six

### Conclusion

The Epistemology of Humanism has been discussed in the preceding chapters. The construction of knowledge on humanism is not from the idealistic view but rather from a practical standpoint where humanism believes in an ethics or morality that grounds all human values in this-earthly experiences and relationships and holds as its highest goal the this-worldly happiness, freedom, and progress-economic, cultural, and ethical-of all humankind, regardless of nation, race, or religion (Lamont 14). Taslima Nasrin and Kamila Shamsie did not give way to supernatural beings or mysticism in their works. They focused on the well beings of human and discussed human relationship. As mentioned in earlier chapter, the two writers belonged to Islam religion but they did not write as an orthodox or in favour. They were bold to speak against the religious leaders, government and make an impact on the readers. Humanism as an approach has been discussed in one chapter but the trait of this is present in all the chapters thought the chapters are not solely devoted to that approach. Humanism is not just a philosophy but an idea that concern to human reason and science. Hence, all the chapters focus on human society from various aspects. The genres under which the two authors come under can be Women writers, South- Asian Literature, Post- Colonial Literature etc. Literature is a reflection of society and hence, Nasrin and Shamsie's writings reflect their respective society. When it comes to Bangladesh and Pakistan people think of poverty, terrorism, slums etc. but what people do not understand is that they are also like us. The only difference is media represent them in a negative way. To prove our mindset wrong, writers like Taslima Nasrin and Kamila Shamsie take the responsibility to write their own story from their own insider perspective. When a writer writes, he/she is in control of the thought. And so, we see the upbringing of both the writers through their works. They do not cover the facts and try to please the government by portraying only the good side. They also speak negative about the system in order to bring changes through their writings. The common that runs in the works of the two authors are their attitude and dealings with their characters who are Muslim living under patriarchy, multicultural set up and reflects the history of that particular contexts in which they are writing.

Taslima Nasrin's works *Lajja*, *French Lover Meyebela: My Bengali Girlhood*, and *Exile: A Memoir* are seen from different aspects like a call on humanism, demanding equal opportunity for women, a memoir of history and over all a reflection of the social and political situation prevailing in Bangladesh. Her works in this thesis has been focused on humanism, feminism and new historicism approach. She is a writer influenced by the historicity of the time but not bias in her approach to literary piece. She is not against any India, Bangladesh or France, the country where her works are based on but she is against the fundamentalist and people who misuse power and let the innocent suffer. She is against the system which violates human rights in the name of being harmony and religion. The works used in this thesis are translated works of Nasrin as she originally writes in Bangla. Though translated it is believed to have the same effect in reading which she intended in the original pieces.

Humanism as discussed in the thesis is about human beings and their importance. Humanism or a humanist is often confused with altruism, a concept introduced by August Comte. In broader sense it means promoting the interest of others before oneself without any expectations in return. It is the notion and moral practice of caring about the happiness of other people, resulting in improved material and spiritual quality of life. It could also refer to an ethical concept that states that people have a moral obligation to help others. Nasrin voicing out for Hindus and women in her books and asserting human rights lead some people to consider her as an altruist. However, the study on her writings has shown that she is more of a humanist. The chapter on humanism has shown how human rights became invalid in the midst of chaos and communal disharmony. The violated has been noted with the help of articles under Universal Declaration on Human Rights. The right to live which was basic was under threat and people fled to India from Bangladesh their homeland. The situations recorded in the texts were of history but the fear and tension of religious intolerance is still lingering in the minds of the Hindus. The population of Hindus in Bangladesh decreases every year as people immigrant to India.

Humanism is also being confused with Humanitarian like it has been mistaken for Altruism. Though both Humanism and Humanitarianism preach

comparable principles, there is a distinction between the two. Humanitarians are mainly devout persons who participate in various charitable actions to please God. Humanists engage in similar activities, but they do it in the pursuit of rational self-interest. Humanism excludes everything celestial from its realm, whereas all humanitarians strive for perpetual joy in divine nature. Taslima Nasrin encourages more sensible individuals to come out and lessen the grip of established religious institutions by embracing the humanism movement through her work. Even in this age of science and technology, educated people still do not apply logic to mechanical religious rituals and rigid social customs. Nasrin has convincingly demonstrated in her writings how irrational ideas; societal and religious taboos can infect people's minds and utilize them for their own ends. To her, rational and humanist approach to life can provide happiness and prosperity to everyone. Individual protection and growth are more essential than religion and social custom and this is seen in her works. She did not receive protection but was instead become an object with price. She is against religious groups frequently use phrases like compassion, love, and honesty but fail to operate to promote and defend the religion rather than the individual.

Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie deliberate on similar experiences of Muslim women in their works. The subcontinental women experiences are not same as they are from different diverse cultures has been done. The common thread that binds these women is the fact that they are looked upon as inferior to men. They are not given the authority to take decision for themselves. It is the men who decide and have a heavy influence over them. The research was not against the men folk as the tradition was passed down through generations but it seeks a solution to lessen the rigidity of the trend. Taslima Nasrin writes about women who are neglected and at the receiving end both socially and economically. Her characters are dependent on men for sustenance and struggling to speak out for themselves. Meanwhile, Kamila Shamsie's female characters are usually independent, upper class, and has a voice to change the society. She does not deal with lower class but presents the plight of upper-class women. Both the writers write on Muslim women though the characters are placed in different countries. Their works complement each other's works by giving a view of different kinds of women in Muslim patriarchal society. From a devoted chapter on feminist analyses, it can be concluded that Taslima Nasrin falls

under what is called a radical feminism and Kamila Shamsie under liberal feminism. Kamila Shamsie's writings are understated. She may not actively criticize or conduct a verbal war against patriarchal society, but via her diverse cast of characters, she depicts women's struggles in numerous forms, including society's judgement, inner self dilemmas, and realizations. Her character portraits contain a mosaic of characters who are perplexed, dutiful, subservient, and rebellious, forming a microcosm of women's lives.

It is very simple to talk about multiculturalism and the theory of melting pot, late of salad and mosaic but the depth lies in how successful and positive is in impact. The term became a common use with the immigrants entering the European nations especially Canada and America. The Europeans opened the door for immigrants but the problem arises when it is time for equal opportunity to all the diverse culture gathered in one place. People come from different backgrounds, culture and religion and along with it brings their own ideologies and beliefs. Not all people of the host nation will be tolerant and acceptable of the people coming from outside countries. Similarly, there will be problem arising out of those immigrants. Cultures have an impact on one's life regardless of where they emerge from the group's actions and fantasies. Every culture has its own story, values, dreams, and memories, among other things. For an immigrant, not only the culture they inherited prior to immigration, but also the culture of their new home is intertwined and woven into their lives. Multiculturalism can also make negative impact when people are segregated based on their religion, culture and practices. The promise of celebrating diversity turns into segregation of diversity. It is hard to prevent assimilation and hybridity in a multicultural discourse. Kamila Shamsie through *Home Fire* shows how assimilation can lead people to separate from their roots by embracing the new identity.

New historicism as an approach deals with the parallel study of literary and non-literary text. The writings of Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie reflect the influence of social, political and economic issues in the setting in which they produced the text. Nasrin projects the historical event of creation of Bangladesh, destruction of Babri Masjid in India and following her exile. New Historicism looks at the artist's social milieu, psychological background, publications and theories that

may have inspired the author, and any other influences on the work of art. The literary pieces are the product of her witnessing the history and thus influenced to voice out. Shamsie through the lens of a British- Pakistani brought the struggles of immigrants living in European countries. Some immigrants after they are accepted in new country try to preserve the practices and adhere to principles from which they were trying to flee. Some revolt against the host countries and brings disharmony while some people like Isma try to adhere and follow the rules laid by the host country. Some try to start anew life while some try to create the same life in a new place.

In common understanding people often associate the writings of women to be a feminist writing. However, the writings of Nasrin and Shamsie deal with the plight of women alone but also examine the struggle of an individual. The writings of Nasrin show the detail situations as she has lived experience. Each chapter is carefully analyzed to bring justice to the multipronged analyses as the subtitle of the topic suggest. Of the four main chapters the chapter on “Feminist Analyses on the Select Works of Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie” has been discussed in-depth as the writers are women and there is so much to discuss on the topic in which they have observed and mastered. The texts are Gyno text and serves to be under gynocriticism. The three chapters are more or less equally distributed in length and discussion. Multiculturalism so far in many researches has been celebrated but here in this thesis it has been questioned and the problems have been highlighted. New Historicism as an approach has been seen mainly applying to renaissance texts but in this research, attempt has been made to read the works of the two writers from poetics of culture perspective. This perhaps may serve as a new lens to view literature by studying not only the historicity of the past but also the historicity of recent past and contemporary history.

Considering the works of Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie as epistemology of humanism is appropriate as it studies the knowledge about human society with the concern on reality and reason. The study deals with the human rights not only in one assigned chapter but it pave way to further chapters. The multipronged analyses are also aptly titled as the study focuses on different approaches like multiculturalism, feminism, and poetics of culture. The chapters are

interconnected and woven to justify the topic at the same time placed to stand alone as an individual chapter. Though the chapters stand with separate approach to literature, they are interconnected by the knowledge of humanism.

The contribution of this thesis to the wider area of academic field are to look into the issues prevalent in the society and try to address the issues so that solution can be brought about. It is only when people raise their voice that they could be heard. The discussion on the issue of multiculturalism could be an important contribution as it is time for people to look beyond the idealistic thoughts. The contemporary world is a world of observation, reason and practicality. Hence, Multiculturalism which started decades back has to be restudied and analyzed. Humanism is the need of hour especially in third world countries like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan where news of communal riots and atrocious acts surface every now and then. The people are intolerant when it comes to religion and people stand to protect their own respective Gods whom they worship. People become fanatics and act without reason. Women are mostly oppressed in the name of religion and culture and deprived of equal rights. It is for this reason that writers like Taslima Nasrin and Kamila Shamsie write to draw attention of wider population. When one hears of the term 'humanism' they automatically click to assume deep philosophy which might give sophisticated meaning and exploration of the world but in reality, it simply means giving importance to human being, reason, scientific knowledge, justice and laws of democracy.

The question that Taslima Nasreen and Kamila Shamsie deliberate on similar experiences of Muslim women in their works can be altered as their characters are not only Muslims but also Hindu and Christian. After reading the works of both authors, the theory that Humanism is the true religion appears to be taking a favourable turn. Individuals as human beings should come first, before culture, religion, or nationality. Differences will exist in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, England, and America, but tolerance is a human trait that lays the foundation for peace. It is an individual's responsibility to not only take advantage of what the country has to offer, but also to contribute to its advancement and to stay focused on one's responsibilities. With the world turning to a global centre, no nation is immune to the influence of others; nonetheless, living in peace requires integration rather



than segregation. Religious bigotry stifles cultural advancement and consequently poses a health risk. One of the chapters examined the consequences that led to the other. Knowledge under humanism links entire chapters and perspectives because the shared threat of the human centre binds the texts. Taking all these things into consideration, Taslima Nasrin and Kamila Shamsie's works are not confined to particular issue but rather ambiguous. The thesis has been confined to the discussed approach however; further studies can be carried on as there is a room for more exploration.

## Works Cited

- Alexander J. Motyl , Editor. *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, Vol. 1, No. 3, Academic Press, 2001.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial studies*. Routledge, 2004.
- Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*. 1813. Orient Longman, 2004.
- “Bangladesh English Literature.” *Wikipedia*, 18 Nov. 2020,  
<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh>
- Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Viva Books, 2015.
- Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. Translator: Constance Bordeand Shiela Malavany Chivallier. Introduction by Judith Thurman. Vintage, 2011.
- Bhaba, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, 1994.
- Bhanot, Kavita. “No Nation Called Home: Rejecting Britishness.” *The Good Journal 3*, 2019. <https://www.academia.edu/39044086/>
- Bhargava, Rajeev. ed. *Secularism and its Critics*. Oxford UP, 1998.
- “British Pakistanis.” *Wikipedia*, 29 May 2021.  
[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/British\\_Pakistanis](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Pakistanis).
- Brooks, Ann. *Postfeminisms: Feminism, Cultural Theory, and Cultural Forms*. Routledge, 1997.
- Cameron D., speech at Munich Security Conference delivered on 5 February 2011.  
<http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference/-accessed> 12 June 2021.
- Chandini, M and Meenakshi K. “Perception of Men through Taslima’s Writing within the Social and Religious Framework. *International Journal of Applied Engineering Research*, Vol. 11, no. 3, 2016. Pp. 2025-2029.

- Clifford, J. 'Diasporas'. *Cultural Anthropology*. Vol. 9, no. 3, 1994.  
[http://wayneadwax.com/pdf/clifford\\_diaspora.pdf](http://wayneadwax.com/pdf/clifford_diaspora.pdf).
- Cohen, Robin. *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Routledge, 2008.
- Colebrook, Claire. *New Literary Histories: New Historicism and Contemporary Criticism*. Manchester University press, 1997.  
<content/uploads/2013/11/Theory-Week-5-New-Historicism.pdf>
- Daly, Mary. *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*. Beacon, 1978.
- Das, Bijay Kumar. *Twentieth Century Literary Criticism*. Atlantic, 2005.
- Dave, Mihir. *Taslima Nasrin- A Committed Humanist*. Hemchandracharya International, 2015.
- Davies, Tony. *Humanism*. Routledge, 1997.
- Desai, Kiran. *The Inheritance of Loss*. Penguin, 2006.
- Dubashi, P. R. "Review: Taslima Nasrin *Lajja*: A True Assessment." *The Indian Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 57, No. 1/4 (1996), pp. 115-120.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/41855741>.
- Duman, Fatih. "The Roots of Modern Feminism: Mary Wollstonecraft and the French
- Elders, L. J. "Humanism: Its Roots and Development. What Humanism Consists of."  
 Congress Tomista Internazionale, 2013, pp 1-14.  
<http://www.thomisme.org/images/stories/elders2003rom.pdf>.
- Eliot, T.S. "Tradition and Individual Talent." 1919.  
<https://people.unica.it/fiorenzoiuliano/files/2017/05/tradition-and-the-individual-talent.pdf>.
- "Feminism in Bangladesh." *Wikipedia*, 11 Feb. 2021,  
<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki>.

- “Feminism in Pakistan.” *Wikipedia*, 14 Feb. 2021,  
<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Feminism-in-Pakistan&oldid=1006748453>.
- “Feminism” *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed., Oxford UP, 2010.
- “Feminist” *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed., Oxford UP, 2010.
- Gaard, Greta. “Living Interconnection with Animals and Nature.”  
<http://tupress.temple.edu/ex.pdf>
- , editor. *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*. Temple University Press, 1993.
- Gallagher, Catherine. “*Marxism and the New Historicism*.” *The New Historicism*, edited by Veese, H Aram, Routledge, 1989.
- Gordon, Sandy. *India’s Rise as an Asian Power Nation, Neighborhood, and Region*. Georgetown University Press, 2014.  
<https://books.google.co.in/books?id=xllmBAAQBAJ&9=Pakistan+hindu+temple+babri&pg=>
- Greeblatt, Stephen. “Resonance and Wonder.” *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, Vol. 43, No. 4, Jan., 1990.
- . “The Forms of Power and the Power of Forms in the *Historicism*.” Chapman and Hall, 1982.
- Hashmi, Alamgir. *Pakistani Literature: The Contemporary English Writers*. University of Michigan, 1987.
- Hickling, Matt. “New Historicism.” *Brock Education Journal*, Vol 27, No. 2, 2018.
- Historicism*. Chapman and Hall, 1982. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1179950.pdf>
- “Humanism.” *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed., Oxford UP, 2010.
- “Humanist.” *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed., Oxford UP, 2010.

Ibsen, Henrik. *A Doll's House*. Maple, 1897. Rpt. 2017.

"I will never be silenced, says Taslima Nasreen." *The Hindu*, 14 Jan. 2018, 17:16,  
[www.thehindu.com/lit-for-life/i-will-never-be-silenced-says-taslima-nasreen-lit-for-life-2018/article22441076,ece](http://www.thehindu.com/lit-for-life/i-will-never-be-silenced-says-taslima-nasreen-lit-for-life-2018/article22441076,ece).

"Islamic Feminism." Wikipedia, 10 March 2021.

[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic\\_feminism](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_feminism).

Kipling, Rudyard. (1940). "The Balled of East and West." *Verse*. London: Definitive Edition. [https://literaryballadarchive.com/PDF/Kipling\\_2\\_B\\_of\\_East\\_and\\_West.pdf](https://literaryballadarchive.com/PDF/Kipling_2_B_of_East_and_West.pdf).

Kiran, Surya. "Politics of Identity in Kamila Shamsie's Novels." *An International Multidisciplinary Research e-Journal*, vol. 3, IV, June 2017. pp. 220-229.

[www.indianscholar.co.in](http://www.indianscholar.co.in).

Krolokke, C and Sorensen, A.S. "Three Waves of Feminism: From Suffragettes to Grrls. In *Gender Communication Theories and Analyses: From Silence to Performance*" Sage Publication, pp. 1-23.

<https://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/6236-chapter-1-krokokke-2nd-Rev-final-pdf.pdf>.

Kumar, Utpal. "Exiled and still homeless." *The Sunday Guardian Life*. March 28, 2020.

Kymlicka, Will. *Multicultural Citizenship*. Oxford UP, 1995.

Lahiri, S. K. *Police Handbook* 9<sup>th</sup> ed. Law Book Society, 2016.

Lamont, Corliss. *The Philosophy of Humanism*. Humanist press, 1997.

Longley, Robert. "What Is Multiculturalism? Definition, Theories, and Examples." ThoughtCo, Aug. 17, 2021, [thoughtco.com/what-is-multiculturalism-4689285](https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-multiculturalism-4689285).

Millet, Kate. *Sexual Politics*. 1969. University of Illinois Press, 2000.

Moi, Toril. *Sexual Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory*. Routledge, 1985.

Muchowiecka, Laura. "The End of Multiculturalism? Immigration and Integration in Germany and the United Kingdom." *Inquiries Journal/Student Pulse*, Vol. 5, no. 6, 2013, <https://www.inquiriesjournal.com/a?id=735>.

*Mulan*. Directed by Niki Caro, Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures, 2020.

Muller, Nadine. "Theoretical and Critical Perspectives Week 5, Literature and History: New Historicism." 17 Oct. 2013. <http://www.nadine-muller.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Theory-Week-5-New-Historicism.pdf>

"Mosque attacked, 2 shops gutted in Tripura." *Nagaland Post*, 28 Oct. 2021, p. 4.

"Multicultural" *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed., Oxford UP, 2010.

"Multiculturalism will Eat Itself." *Dawn*. 12 Jan. 2014.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1079945>.

"Multiculturalism" *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed., Oxford UP, 2010.

"Muslim Reform Embraces Secularism and Universal Human Rights." National Secular Society. Dec. 8 2015.

<https://secularism.org.uk/news/2015/12/muslim-reform-movement-embraces-secularism-and-universal-human-rights>.

Nasrin, Taslima, translator: Maharghya Chakraborty. *Split: A Life*. Penguin, 2018.

———. translator: Maharghya Chakraborty. *Exile: A Memoir*. Penguin, 2016.

———. translator: Diptendra Raychaudhuri et. al.: *No Country for Women*. Vitasta, 2010.

———. translator: Sreejata Guha. *French Lover*. Penguin, 2001.

———. translator: *Meyebela*: Gopa Majumdar. *My Bengali Girlhood*. Steerforth, 1998.

———. translator: Anchita Ghatak. *Lajja*. Penguin, 1993.

“NDTV-The Big Fight Islamic Radicalization.” *You Tube*, uploaded by madiam 4u, 13 July, 2016, [www.https://youtu.be/\\_4oQLRLS12Q](https://youtu.be/_4oQLRLS12Q).

Nazneen, Sohela. *The Women's Movement in Bangladesh*. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2017.

Noorani, A. G., editor. *Destruction: A National Dishonour*. Tulika, 2017.

Oh, Irene. *The Rights of God: Islam, Human Rights and Comparative Ethics*. Georgetown University Press, 2007.

Radhakrishnan, S., and P.T.Raju, editors . *The Concept of Man: A Study in Comparative Philosophy*. Motilal Banarsidass, 1992.

Rao, C. N. Shankar. *Sociology: Principles of Sociology with an Introduction to Social Thought*. S. Chand, 2009.

Rattansi, Ali. *Multiculturalism, A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, 2011.

Revolution.” *IJHSS*, vol. 2, no. 9, May 2012, pp. 75-78.

Richards, Janet Radcliffe. *The Skeptical Feminist: A Philosophical Enquiry*. Routledge, 1980.

Parachu, F. Nadeem. “Multiculturalism Will Eat Itself.” *Dawn*, 12 Jan. 2014.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1079945>

"Prejudice haunts atomic bomb survivors." *Japan Times*, 10 August 2007.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20070810060050/http://www.nci.org/0new/hibakusha-jt5701.html>

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. Routledge, 1978.

Shaheen, Aamer . “Obsessive ‘Westoxification’ versus the Albatross of Fundamentalism and Love as Collateral Damage in Kamila Shamsie’s *Home Fire*.” *Journal of Research, Humanities*. [pu.edu.pk/English/pdf](http://pu.edu.pk/English/pdf). pp. 150-168.

Shamsie, Kamila. *Home Fire*. Bloomsbury Circus, 2017.

———. *Burnt Shadow*. Bloomsbury, 2009.

———. *Broken Verses*. Bloomsbury, 2005.

———. "Tri-Sub-Continental." *Index of Censorship*, Vol. 31, no. 3, 2002, pp. 85-91. <https://ioc.sagepub.com>.

———. *Salt and Saffron*. Bloomsbury, 2000.

Showalter, Elaine. "Towards a Feminist Poetics." *A Literature of their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing*. Princeton UP, 1997.

Sidhwa, Bapsi. *Ice- Candy Man*. Penguin, 1989.

Sidhwa, Bapsi. Interview by Tabinda Naeem. *Urdu AOA News*. Washington. 29 Apr. 2009. *You Tube*. <https://youtu.be/GFE4cokrNY>.

Simons, Lewis M. "Children of Hiroshima, Nagasaki survivors facing prejudice, discrimination in Japan." June 7, 1984. <https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2194&dat=19840607&id=Z6QyAAAIBAJ&pg=1441,3702452&hl=en>. Ottawa Citizen. Knight-Rider News.

Smith, D. E. "India as a Secular State." *Secularism and its Critics*, edited by Rajeev Bhargava. OUP, 1998.

Tagore, Rabindranath. *Gitanjali*. Introduction by W. B. Yeats. Indian Society, 1912. Rpt.1992.

"Taslina Nasrin: 'They Wanted to Kill Me.'" *Middle East Forum*, [www.meforum.org/articles/other/taslina-nasrin-they-wanted-to-kill-me](http://www.meforum.org/articles/other/taslina-nasrin-they-wanted-to-kill-me).

*The Qur'an*. Translator: Tarif khalidi. Penguin,2008.

"The survivors of the atomic bomb attacks in Japan." 2 August 1995. <http://www.radionetherlandsarchives.org/the-survivors/>.

"Theresa May Strips Citizenship from 20 Britons fighting in Syria." *The Guardian*, 23 December, 2013. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/dec/23/theresa-may-strips-citizenship-britons-syria>.



- Vedalankar, Dilip. *Vedic Humanism: Path to Peace*. Geeta Books, 2015.
- Wagar, Muhammad Rafay. "Feminism in Pakistan." *The News*. Aug. 18, 2020.  
[https://www.the\\_news.com.pk](https://www.the_news.com.pk)
- Wallop, Harry. "Britons Flee London to be Replaced by Immigrants." *The Telegraph*, 4 Jan. 2009.  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/4109171/Britons-flee-London-to-be-replaced-by-immigrants.html>.
- Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of The Rights of Women*. 1792. Vintage, 2014.
- Wonder Woman*. Directed by Patty Jenkins, Warner Bros. Pictures, 2020.
- Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*. 1929. Naples: Albatross. 2015.
- Wright, George Henrik Von. *What is Humanism*. University of Kansas, 1977.
- Xiaotang, Lyu. "An Introduction to New Historicism." *Advances in Social Sciences and Humanities Research*, Vo. 543, 2021. <https://www.Atlantispress.com.21/125955026>.