

Fiction After the Fall: Reimagining Identity, War and Trauma in Non-Western Post-9/11 Literature

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<https://doi.org/10.62345/jads.2025.14.3.6>

Abstract

The incident of 9/11 offered a privileged framework of mourning to America, which foregrounded only the Western identity and trauma. Sequentially, the War on Terror promoted the constructs of Western narratives of civilisation, morality, and peace. This review article offers essentially a counter-narrative on how identity, trauma, and the War on Terror were reimagined by non-Western literature against the dominant political and literary discourse of the West. Fiction from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, responding to the dominant discourse of 9/11, shifted to a justice-oriented and pluralistic literary landscape, focusing on a call for equal distribution of senses between the West and the East. Thus, Post-9/11 Non-Western fiction became a space of resistance, where writers confront orientalist stereotypes, destabilise colonial legacies, and reclaim agency of the silenced victims of the West.

Keywords: Post-9/11 Literature, Post Colonial Trauma, Narrative Resistance, Non-Western Aesthetics, Muslim Identity.

Introduction

The incident of 9/11 initially was reported as a catastrophe and a national tragedy of America only. The themes of trauma, identity, suffering and redemption were dominant in immediate Post-9/11 American fiction. In Post-9/11 times, non-American writers were treated as inauthentic and outsiders. American fiction in immediate response to the tragedy of 9/11 portrayed the national tragedy with partial truth, centring American suffering while silencing non-Western voices (Jones et al., 2014). The war on terror in Post-9/11 was presented in the Western literature as peace settling, while it initiated a long series of conflicts in the non-Western World. The war on terror was paradoxical- while meant to secure peace in the West, it destabilised much of the non-Western World. Post-9/11 political scenario saw an intensified long-standing history of occupation, imperial intervention, surveillance and violence. The Post-9/11 Western Literary discourse acted as a discourse that justified insurgency (Adams, 2016). The rest of the World was marginalised in dominant Western discourses, which continued to project the figure of the Muslim, the migrant, or the non-Western subject as either an object of pity or a source of threat (Amin-Khan, 2012). In contrast, non-Western fiction has increasingly emerged as a critical site for contesting these

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reductive binaries and offering alternative epistemologies and affective geographies of the post-9/11 era.

Considering the singular dimension of the American national discourse in the Post-9/11 fiction, the non-Western fiction writers reimagined the suffering of war on terror, identity and trauma of the margins of the West. Such voices offered powerful counter-narratives, resisting the hegemony of the Western framework of representation and narration. The non-Western literary landscape saw a series of fiction exploring a wide range of themes, including war, trauma, and identity. The *Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) by Mohsin Hamid, *Burnt Shadows* (2009) by Kamila Shamsi, *No Knives in the Kitchens of This City* (2013) by Khaled Khalifa, *The Corpse Exhibition* (2014) by Hassan Blasim and *The Night Mail* (2017) by Honda Barakat can be taken as exemplary and primary fiction works which raised the concerns of the non-Western World regarding the repositioning of global discursive structures of power, cultural fragmentation, western sense of social democracy and moral ambivalence of the war on terror led by America (Scott, 2020).

The singularity of Western trauma and traumatic events, as perceived by Cathy Caruth and Dominik LaCapra, was extended by non-Western writers to the sufferings of whom the West and Western literature previously failed to include and represent (Rodi-Risberg, 2022). In such an attempt, non-Western literature not only challenged the conventional structures of narrative but also the operative theoretical frameworks of Post-9/11 American Fiction, which coded these events in terms of nationalised, politicised, and memorialised visions and versions. In the global literary "market" where the trauma of the West was "made visible" by the American and Western writers, it was counter-narrated by the non-Western writers mentioned above. Thus, non-Western literature proved an equaliser rather than a peripheral literature, providing a central understanding of the ethical, aesthetic, and political stakes of global literature in the 21st century. These texts propose new imaginaries of solidarity, coexistence, and justice. The texts for review were selected based on their presentation of themes of identity, war, and trauma written by non-Western writers.

Conceptual Framework

This review article draws on theoretical understandings from trauma studies, narrative theory, postcolonial, and Decolonial perspectives to explore the narrative reconfiguration of non-Western literature in post-9/11 times. In Post-9/11 national, cultural, social and political discourse, the incident of 9/11 and the war on terror were represented disproportionately, silencing the experiences of non-Western perspectives. By using an interdisciplinary conceptual framework, this article examines how non-Western fiction reclaims narrative agency, challenges epistemic hierarchies, and constructs alternative discourses of suffering, survival, and subjectivity.

In continuation of the Orientalist tradition of "wine in new bottles", the West constructed the East as inferior and a threat to the progress and enlightenment of the West. So in the Post-9/11 context, the Muslim and the brown bodies remain invisible and voiceless in the literary and cultural productions. Bhabha's concept of mimicry and post-colonial hybridity is relevant in challenging the essentialist binaries of the West and the East. Bhabha's theoretical understandings provide non-Western writers with a resistant, contingent, and fluid literary fabric to reimagine their identity and its constructs. (Bhabha, 1994) Spivak's notion of the subaltern elucidates the systematic marginalisation of the East by a West-centric epistemology. She urges that the subaltern also speak out against their absences and fragmentation in the dominant discourse. Thus, non-Western fiction challenged the Western frameworks of epistemology to provide a counter-narrative space against the "Westernised version of truth" (Spivak, 2023).

Decolonial criticism, particularly the works of Aníbal Quijano and Walter D. Mignolo, demands the inclusion of non-Western voices. Mignolo emphasised that the Eurocentric frameworks still influence global order. The Western models of humanity are conceptualised by "coloniality of power". Thus, the decolonial stance of fiction demands serious revisions in the ongoing Western models of epistemological production and the inclusion of non-Western voices simultaneously (Mignolo & option, 2013). Post-9/11 fiction from a non-Western perspective attempted to write in a local, idiomatic expression rather than in the standardised language of the master. We see such patterns of "colonial difference in terms of Quijano in many Post-9/11 literary texts (Quijano, 2007)

The Euro-American theory of trauma located the understandings of trauma associated with the West, i.e. such a westernised version of trauma can be seen in the works of Dominick LaCapra and Cathy Caruth. While in contrast, the Non-Western Post-9/11 fiction demanded a shift from trauma as an isolated psychic event to trauma as historically embedded and politically produced in the West to the East and others of the West as well. In response, postcolonial trauma theorists such as Stef Craps (2013) have argued for a more holistic, inclusive and broader model that should be extended to the trauma and sufferings of the non-Western as well (Craps & Craps, 2013)

Arthur Frank and Martha Nussbaum emphasised the ethical dimensions of storytelling. For example, the West would be inauthentic if it narrates the trauma and suffering of the non-Western as well. According to this ethical consideration, only non-Westerners can narrate their stories comfortably. So, Non-Western Post-9/11 fiction usually raises complex questions, such as who gets to speak for whom? Who is allowed to grieve? Who listens, and what are they expected to feel? Non-Western Post-9/11 fiction is also a site of aesthetic resistance. It is a form of formal disobedience to the Western forms of content and contexts. Such writers had consciously employed magic realism, non-linear timelines, and fragmented narratives as a reaction to the aesthetic choices already established by the West. Such implied stylistic devices are also political and reactionary tools in the West. Rancière's call for "a distribution of the sensible" is a high demand among these non-Westernised Post-9/11 fiction writers (Rancière et al., 2000). This model sanctions the non-Western literature to say what was unsayable, to think what was unthinkable, and to visualise what was invisible within the Western frame of representation in post-9/11 times. This conceptual framework, therefore, not only supports but necessitates a reevaluation of Post-9/11 literature through the eyes of the colonised, the occupied, racialised and non-Western perspectives.

Data Analysis and Discussion

The non-Western Post-9/11 fiction intervened in the Western dominant narrative of war, trauma and identity on the pretext of themes. The following four interrelated recurring themes were explored in non-Western Post-9/11 fiction. 1) The reimagining of identity beyond simplistic oppositions 2) The depiction of everyday terror and structural violence 3) The negotiation of exile and the meaning of home 4) The use of narrative as an ethical counter-memory to dominant historical discourses.

A persistent theme in the non-Western Post-9/11 fiction is the deconstruction of essentialist identities that the Post-9/11 political climate has polarised into simplistic "East versus West" or "terrorist versus victim" dichotomies. Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) exemplifies this approach, presenting the protagonist, Changez, as a figure whose identity resists fixed categorisation. The novel's ambiguous narrative structure, framed as a monologue to an unnamed American interlocutor, destabilizes the reader's certainties and exposes the limits of

Western epistemologies that rely on rigid identity categories and come out to the readers as embodiment of Bhabha's concept of the 'Third space' (Bhabha, 1994; Hamid, 2009; Mishra & Manhas, 2024). Similarly, Kamila Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows* (2009) extends this interrogation by tracing the multi-generational impact of colonial and postcolonial conflicts, moving fluidly between South Asia, Japan, Pakistan, and the United States. The characters embody fluid identities shaped by migration, war, and historical trauma, resisting nationalist or essentialist definitions. Shamsie's narrative thereby critiques Western imperial narratives that impose static identities upon "the Other," emphasising instead the permeability and multiplicity of identity (Anderson; Shamsie, 2009).

These texts challenge the securitised discourse prevalent in the War on Terror, which constructs Muslim and non-Western identities as inherently suspect or hostile. The literature's focus on hybrid identities undermines the "clash of civilisations" thesis (Samuel, 1993), promoting instead a vision of identity as processual, relational, and contextual (Sardar & Davies, 2003). By emphasising fluidity and ambivalence, non-Western post-9/11 fiction opens space for alternative political and ethical solidarities beyond simplistic dichotomies. While Western media and political discourse have tended to focus on spectacular acts of terror and military interventions, non-Western Post-9/11 fiction foregrounds the protracted, often invisible, forms of violence that shape daily life in conflict zones. Rob Nixon's concept of "slow violence" is beneficial for understanding these narratives, which reveal how structural violence encompassing economic deprivation, environmental degradation, and militarised occupation produces enduring harm that unfolds gradually and is frequently obscured from public view (Nixon, 2011).

Sinan Antoon's *The Corpse Washer* (2010) illustrates this theme through the lens of death in war-ravaged Iraq. The protagonist's labour, the washing and preparation of corpses, becomes a powerful metaphor for the ongoing cycle of violence and the intimate human costs of war. Antoon's work challenges the notion that violence is limited to battlefield or terrorist attacks, instead persistently present in the social fabric (Antoon, 2013).

Similarly, Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) reveals how state policies such as surveillance, detention, and securitisation extend violence into the everyday lives of British Muslim families (Shamsie, 2018). By highlighting these "invisible wars," non-Western post-9/11 fiction problematizes dominant security narratives and draws attention to the ethical responsibility of recognising hidden forms of suffering and resilience. This focus highlights the limitations of traditional definitions of violence and war, necessitating a reevaluation of justice and Accountability in global politics. The experience of exile and the destabilisation of homeland constitute another central concern in non-Western Post-9/11 literature. The forced displacements and migrations triggered or exacerbated by global conflicts have rendered notions of belonging and home deeply ambivalent and contested. Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* (2017) articulates this through a speculative narrative that blends realism with magical elements, using mysterious doors to literalize the permeability of borders and the fluidity of migrant identities. The novel engages with Homi Bhabha's concept of the "unhomely," where displacement produces a simultaneous estrangement and reattachment to multiple places (Perfect, 2019). The novel's treatment of refugee experiences challenges reductive portrayals of migrants as passive victims, instead presenting them as agents of their survival and transformation. This nuanced representation disrupts nationalist narratives that seek to police borders and regulate belonging based on exclusionary logics.

Monique Truong's *The Book of Salt* (2003), while predating 9/11, has gained renewed relevance in Post-9/11 literary discourse for its exploration of queer diasporic identities and fractured senses

of home. Truong's depiction of displacement intersects with themes of race, sexuality, and colonial history, complicating hegemonic conceptions of exile and belonging (Gopinath, 2005; Truong, 2004)

Non-Western Post-9/11 fiction often serves as a form of counter memory that intervenes in and disrupts dominant historical narratives shaped by Western media and state discourses. This intervention is especially significant given the erasure or marginalisation of non-Western perspectives in global political histories of the War on Terror.

Yasmina Khadra's *The Swallows of Kabul* (2002) presents a grim, intimate portrayal of life under Taliban rule, foregrounding the quotidian suffering and resistance of Afghan civilians. Khadra's stark narrative rejects simplistic Orientalist depictions of Afghanistan as a monolithic site of barbarism or victimhood, offering instead a nuanced exploration of agency within constraints. Zeyn Joukhadar's *The Map of Salt and Stars* (2018) employs a dual timeline and blending of history, myth, and personal narrative to create a counter-archive that challenges Western-centric histories of the Middle East and diaspora. The novel's metafictional strategies highlight the multiplicity of truth and the ethical imperative of representing silenced voices (Joukhadar, 2018). Thus, non-Western Post-9/11 fiction not only bears witness to trauma but also performs acts of resistance that destabilise hegemonic knowledge and assert the legitimacy of marginalised experiences and histories.

Central to this literary response is the strategic deployment of language and narrative form, which transcends mere stylistic innovation to become a potent mode of political and ethical engagement. Non-Western writers utilise a diverse range of narrative techniques, including fragmentation, multiplicity of voices, linguistic hybridity, and metafiction, to articulate experiences that resist dominant Western frameworks of meaning and representation, challenge monolithic notions of identity, and foreground the complexities of trauma. Fragmented narrative structures and non-linear temporalities dominate Post-9/11 non-Western fiction, reflecting the dislocated subjectivities and epistemic ruptures engendered by trauma. Trauma theorists such as Cathy Caruth (1996) and Dominick LaCapra emphasise how traumatic experience disrupts conventional modes of remembering and narration, often rendering chronological storytelling insufficient or inappropriate. (Caruth, 2016; LaCapra, 2014)

Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) is a paradigmatic example, employing a first-person unreliable narrator whose shifting voice problematizes fixed notions of loyalty, identity, and ideological affiliation. The narrative's ambivalence invites readers to interrogate their preconceptions, thereby disrupting the binary logic of friend/enemy central to the War on Terror discourse (Mishra & Manhas, 2024). This narrative ambiguity functions as a form of resistance, exposing the violence inherent in reductive categorisations and inviting a more nuanced understanding of geopolitical subjectivities.

Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) utilises multiple points of view, including those of a British Muslim family entangled in the politics of radicalisation and surveillance. The shifting narrative perspectives complicate the binary oppositions of citizen versus terrorist and insider versus outsider, illustrating the porous and constructed nature of these categories. The polyphonic form thereby enacts a critical epistemology, foregrounding the multiplicity of lived realities and moral dilemmas that Western securitisation narratives tend to flatten.

Metafictional and self-reflexive narrative techniques in post-9/11 non-Western fiction serve to interrogate the ethics of representation and the politics of storytelling. By making the act of narration visible, these texts foreground the constructed nature of history, memory, and identity, thus resisting simplistic or voyeuristic portrayals of trauma. Yasmina Khadra's *The Swallows of*

Kabul incorporates metafictional commentary on the limitations of language in conveying suffering under Taliban rule, questioning the ethical boundaries of narrating others' pain. Similarly, Zeyn Joukhadar's *The Map of Salt and Stars* self-consciously blends myth and history, inviting readers to reflect on the power and instability of historical narratives and the importance of multiple truth claims. These strategies compel readers to become critically aware of their positionality as consumers of stories about "the other," challenging the voyeurism and eroticization often inherent in Western consumption of Post-9/11 narratives. By destabilising the authority of the authorial voice, these works create spaces for marginalised epistemologies.

In the aftermath of 9/11, the global "War on Terror" imposed dominant Western narratives that framed conflicts in stark binaries: civilisation versus barbarism, good versus evil, democracy versus terrorism (Huntington, 2004; Said, 1978). These narratives often served geopolitical agendas by legitimising military interventions and shaping public perceptions through simplified representations of violence and victimhood. Non-Western Post-9/11 literature, however, emerges as a crucial site of contestation and resistance against these hegemonic discourses. By centring marginalised voices from the Third World, these works dismantle monolithic narratives and offer complex, multifaceted depictions of war, trauma, and identity.

A defining feature of non-Western post-9/11 fiction is its insistence on humanising the so-called "Other" who is often dehumanised in Western media and political rhetoric. These texts shift the focus from abstract geopolitical manoeuvres and military strategies to the lived realities of ordinary people who endure violence, displacement, and loss. Sinan Antoon's *The Corpse Washer* intricately portrays the intimate, everyday trauma experienced by Iraqis under war and occupation. Through the protagonist's role as a corpse washer, a traditional but deeply symbolic occupation, Antoon reveals the incessant proximity to death and the pervasive grief embedded in civilian life. This narrative foregrounds the emotional and cultural dimensions of trauma often elided in Western discourses that frame war primarily through military or political lenses.

Non-Western literature significantly reconfigures trauma, moving beyond individualised pathology to emphasise its collective, cultural, and transgenerational dimensions. This expanded view draws from trauma theorists such as Jeffrey Alexander, Dominick LaCapra, and Marianne Hirsch, who articulate how traumatic histories become imprinted on group memory and cultural identity (Alexander et al., 2004).

Another vital dimension in non-Western post-9/11 literature is its engagement with the ethics of memory and witnessing. Authors grapple with how to represent trauma and suffering ethically, avoiding voyeurism or commodification while bearing witness to injustice. Yasmina Khadra's *The Swallows of Kabul* (2002) explores the moral complexities of complicity and resistance under Taliban rule, presenting characters who embody both victimhood and agency (Khadra, 2005). The novel's stark portrayal of repression and brutality demands that readers confront uncomfortable truths and challenge simplistic moral binaries. This ethical engagement resonates with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's seminal question, "Can the subaltern speak?", as many non-Western post-9/11 texts seek to recuperate silenced voices marginalised by colonial and neo-imperial histories. These narratives create spaces for subaltern agency and self-representation, resisting dominant Western frameworks that have historically excluded or distorted their experiences.

Similarly, Leila Aboulela's *Minaret* (2005) depicts the diasporic Muslim woman's negotiation of faith, culture, and identity in Post-9/11 London, navigating Islamophobia and cultural dislocation. Aboulela's portrayal disrupts stereotypes of Muslim women as either oppressed or defiant, revealing the nuanced processes of identity formation in the diasporic third space. Post-9/11 literature highlights the racialization of Muslim and South Asian identities, exposing how

securitisation, surveillance, and institutional racism reshape individual and collective identities. This securitised gaze manifests not only as external discrimination but as internalised trauma, leading to identity crises and fractured subjectivities.

Fatema Mernissi's (1991) feminist critique of Muslim women's representation in the West remains foundational in contextualising contemporary literary responses. Scholars such as Saba Mahmood (2005) have further emphasised the importance of recognising diverse forms of piety and agency within Islamic contexts, extending beyond Western feminist frameworks. Authors such as Jarrar (2010) and Leila Aboulela (Minaret, 2005) portray Muslim women negotiating faith, modernity, and identity amid intersecting pressures of patriarchy and Islamophobia. These narratives expose the limits of Western feminist universalism and highlight the need for nuanced approaches that respect cultural specificity and women's self-articulations (Jarrar, 2016).

Atiq Rahimi's *The Patience Stone* (2008), set against the backdrop of the Afghan war, uses a confined narrative space, a woman's vigil beside her comatose husband, to explore how trauma fractures identity and agency. The protagonist's confessions are acts of both resistance and survival, revealing the gendered dimension of trauma where women bear not only direct violence but also the burden of social silence and political erasure (Rahimi, 2010b). The narrative underscores the intimate entanglement of personal suffering with national trauma, challenging Western assumptions that often render Afghan experiences as mere geopolitical statistics.

Amy Waldman's *A Door in the Earth* (2017) similarly foregrounds trauma through the female perspective, highlighting the psychological toll of prolonged conflict and occupation on Afghan women's bodies and minds. Waldman's novel complicates the saviour trope pervasive in Western narratives by illustrating how trauma persists beyond military withdrawal and how local agency resists reductive portrayals of victimhood.

Dina Nayeri's *Refuge* (2017) stands as a seminal example of refugee literature, presenting a nuanced portrayal of Iranian refugees caught between the trauma of leaving and the challenges of resettlement in the West. Nayeri's fragmented narrative structure mirrors the fractured identities of refugees, emphasising themes of alienation, resilience, and the often invisible bureaucratic violence embedded in immigration policies (Nayeri). The novel problematizes Western humanitarian discourses by centring refugee subjectivities, revealing the complexities behind the headlines and statistics.

Hisham Matar's memoir-novel hybrid, *The Return* (2016), addresses the trauma of political disappearance under authoritarian regimes, situating the personal loss of the author's father within broader histories of repression and exile. The work exemplifies how memory and narrative function as tools for recovery and justice, weaving intimate loss into collective historical trauma (Ricoeur, 2004). Matar's lyrical prose engages with postcolonial memory studies, emphasising the ethical imperative to confront state violence through storytelling.

Christy Lefteri's *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* (2019) vividly narrates the plight of Syrian refugees through the lens of a couple's harrowing flight from war. Lefteri foregrounds the often-silenced narratives of women survivors, highlighting sexual violence as a weapon of war and the strength women muster in the face of relentless adversity (Enloe, 2014; Lefteri, 2019). The novel also critiques the international community's failure to adequately protect and empower displaced women, calling for a more empathetic and nuanced understanding of refugee experiences.

Leila Aboulela's *Minaret* (2005) challenges Western stereotypes by portraying a Sudanese Muslim woman navigating exile in London. The novel foregrounds faith as a source of strength and identity, contesting reductive Western tropes of Muslim women as passive victims. Aboulela's

work underscores the intersections of gender, religion, and diaspora, revealing the layered identities shaped by displacement and cultural negotiation (Aboulela, 2015)

Ahdaf Soueif's *The Map of Love* (1999), although predating 9/11, offers a valuable precursor to these themes, intertwining colonial and postcolonial histories to reveal the complex interplay of memory and identity in Egypt. Soueif's hybrid narrative destabilises linear histories, emphasising multiplicity and contestation principles crucial to understanding Post-9/11 trauma literature (Ayoub, 2019).

These narratives collectively call for a rethinking of trauma representation beyond Western frameworks, demanding a more pluralistic and ethically grounded approach to literature's role in bearing witness to war and displacement. The traumatic upheavals following the events of 9/11 generated a critical juncture for global narratives, especially within non-Western literatures, which undertook the urgent task of reimagining identity amid widespread political violence, racialised suspicion, and intensified globalisation. This reimagining challenged the monolithic and often Orientalist Western constructions of identity by emphasising the fluid, contested, and multidimensional nature of selfhood. Non-Western Post-9/11 literature critically engages with themes of hybridity, diaspora, nationalism, race, gender, and memory to articulate identities that transcend reductive binaries, such as 'East vs. West,' 'self vs. other,' or 'victim vs. aggressor.'

Leila Aboulela's *The Translator* (2005) further nuances the concept of hybridity through the intersection of language, faith, and migration. Aboulela's protagonist, a Sudanese Muslim woman navigating life in Scotland, embodies a multiplicity of identities simultaneously rooted in Islamic tradition and Western modernity. The novel challenges Orientalist stereotypes by presenting Muslim identity as dynamic and personal, rather than reductive and political (Ahmed, 2023). Aboulela's work invites readers to reconsider the politics of belonging and the coexistence of diverse identities within diasporic contexts.

Non-Western literature foregrounds these tensions, illustrating how identities become politicised in ways that disrupt social cohesion and individual agency. Fatima Bhutto's *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon* (2013) interrogates the interplay of race, religion, and nationalism within Pakistan's tribal regions amidst the War on Terror. Through intersecting narratives, Bhutto depicts characters caught between local traditions, religious militancy, and the encroachment of Western military power, thereby complicating simplistic narratives of 'terrorism' and 'security' (Bhutto, 2016). This multi-vocal approach destabilises dominant discourses and foregrounds the lived realities of communities often rendered invisible in mainstream Post-9/11 discourse.

Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003) explores the formation of identity across generations of South Asian immigrants in the United States, examining how cultural memory shapes selfhood within diasporic families. Lahiri's nuanced portrayal reveals how personal and collective memories coexist, influence identity, and challenge assimilative pressures (Lahiri, 2003). Similarly, works like Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (2003) and Kader Abdolah's *The House of the Mosque* (2005) highlight the power of storytelling and cultural memory as tools for reclaiming identity amid repression and conflict. These narratives affirm the resilience of marginalised identities through acts of remembrance and literary expression (Abdolah, 2010; Nafisi, 2008).

This multifaceted reimagining of identity in Post-9/11 non-Western literature illustrates a profound resistance to hegemonic narratives that seek to simplify or erase complex cultural experiences. By engaging with hybridity, race, religion, gender, memory, and trauma, these works reclaim agency and articulate identities that reflect the turbulent realities of the Post-9/11 world. Such literature not only enriches global literary landscapes but also challenges readers and scholars to rethink

assumptions about identity, belonging, and humanity in an era marked by conflict and cultural negotiation.

Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) also extends the ethics of representation into the diasporic context, addressing the indirect but pervasive violence of racial profiling, Islamophobia, and xenophobia in post-9/11 Western societies. Adichie's protagonist navigates the fraught intersections of race, migration, and identity, illustrating how the War on Terror reshapes social imaginaries and affects every day experiences beyond the battlefield (Adichie, 2014).

Afghan fiction, such as Atiq Rahimi's *Earth and Ashes* (2000) and Nadia Hashimi's *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell* (2014), poignantly depicts the long-term consequences of war and occupation on civilian populations. Rahimi's narrative, through a minimalist and symbolic style, captures the existential despair and resilience of a father and son navigating a landscape ravaged by conflict. Hashimi's novel foregrounds women's experiences, revealing how patriarchal structures intersect with the violence of war to constrain female agency, while also highlighting forms of resistance and hope (Hashimi & Hammond, 2014; Rahimi, 2010a).

In a broader diasporic context, works like Saeed Jones's *How We Fight for Our Lives* (2019) offer nuanced explorations of systemic violence, identity formation, and survival strategies in societies marked by racialised inequalities. Though not explicitly focused on 9/11, Jones's memoir intersects with post-9/11 themes by articulating the lingering effects of violence on marginalised communities in the United States, thereby linking global and local registers of trauma and resistance (Chambers, 2019).

Finally, non-Western post-9/11 literature often envisions literature itself as a form of healing and political resistance. By foregrounding marginalised voices, these texts create alternative spaces for dialogue, reconciliation, and imagining futures beyond violence. They reject the finality of trauma by insisting on narratives of survival, memory, and justice. Literary scholars emphasised the transformative potential of narrative to reconfigure understandings of pain and power. Post-9/11 non-Western fiction enacts this potential by offering nuanced, polyphonic testimonies that resist erasure and advocate for human dignity and coexistence.

Conclusion

To conclude, we can say that post-9/11 fiction produced within the Western literary landscape was based on "the clash of ignorance" in the sense of Edward Said (Said, 2001). Religion, which the West has been claiming as private and an individual matter of citizens in every state, was used as a political tool by the politicians. Nationalism and its defence were viewed as a privileged sense of the West only. Thus America oversaw any such construct for others (non-Western countries) by invading Afghanistan and the Middle East. War Victims of the non-Western World were treated as if they were caught red-handed planning terrorist attacks against America. The irony lies in America's two-decade conflict with the Taliban, only to ultimately negotiate their return to power. Thus, the Western political and fictional lens failed to accommodate the voices of its subalterns — the non-Western. Further, the Western World in an overrunning attempt flattened the diversity of global experiences and identities while legitimating the imperial violence.

On the other hand, non-Western fiction attempted to decolonise the hegemonic representational economy of the discourse surrounding 9/11. In such an attempt, non-Western fiction not only presented alternative stories against the dominant Western narrative but also questioned the Westernised epistemological foundations (Bhambra, 2023; Dabashi, 2011). For Example, *Changez* — the protagonist of Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* — is not under the

influence of his religious ideology, but rather disillusioned by the hypocrisy of America, which he once imagined as a promised land. Changez subverts the prevailing national discourse in America during the post-9/11 era. Similarly, *Burnt Shadows* of Kamila Shamsi traces trauma from Hiroshima and Nagasaki- war-torn cities of Japan (evidently doomed to destruction by America) to the partition of India and Pakistan (a culminating event of Western imperialism). Such a legacy of the trauma continued in Afghanistan (in the name of Jihad in disguise of political and ideological dominance against the Soviet Union) up to the incident of 9/11. Shamsi projects that the subcontinent had been a site of Western violence for more than half a century before the incident of 9/11. Thus, Shamsi participates in "the right to narrate" in terms of Homi K. Bhabha (Bhabha, 1994). This argument supports a call for "new humanism", a central claim of the non-Western literature in Post-9/11 times (Butler, 2016).

In short, the non-Western literature, by decolonising the representational discourse of 9/11, challenged the very frameworks that have shaped how the West defines terrorism, victimhood, and global justice. The non-Western post-9/11 fiction performs this decolonisation through content, form, and ethical stance, asking us to imagine a world beyond the War on Terror, beyond the Clash of Civilisations and the imperial gaze. This body of non-Western literature offers not only a counter to the Western Post-9/11 archive but also a counter future through a polyphony of narratives that speak from the margins, across borders, and toward a more just and inclusive world.

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