

# Forge, Farce or Force: A Study of Cultural Capital and Identity Capital in Pakistani Novels

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to explore cultural capital and identity capital as portrayed in the novels— *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*, *Exit West*, *Red Birds* and *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. Although these works are written with different themes in mind, there is an overarching semblance that persists in Pakistani literature regarding the dismemberment of cultural capital and identity capital that occurs through the forces of war, displacement and class disparities. This study hopes to capture and expound on those themes in order to understand how cultural capital and identity capital can lead to the fomentation of identities in fractured societies.

**Keywords:** Culture, Capital, Identity, Refugee, Class

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In attempting to create an essential and systemic application of cultural theory, I have embarked to take into account various texts that help purport the meaning and develop a coherent message in regards with the hypothesis. My primary texts include four novels from two different Pakistani origin authors. The texts are highly political and reactionary in nature which reinforces the idea of a destabilised country's inherent effects upon the workings of its people. Mohammed Hanif's "A Case of Exploding Mangoes," is perhaps the best example I can give and have taken with this theme in mind. It showcases General Zia-ul-Haq's last few months and the political turmoil that lead to his assassination, a serious topic, albeit depicted in a highly humorous and satirical manner. If we are talking politics, Mohsin Hamid's, "Exit West," is another novel that I have chosen to illustrate the example of refugee status and ensuing political tensions referencing a clear allusion to destabilised middle eastern countries. It showcases the indomitable human spirit of chasing pleasure even in dire and fatalistic circumstances. My second Hanif novel is, "Red Birds," which is thematically extremely similar to Hamid's work but it uses some different themes like magical realism to depict the absurdity of genocidal intent and capitalist profiteering. The final text that I had actually chosen the first is Hanif's highly popular, "Our Lady of Alice Bhatti." This is perhaps his most incisive work as it lays bare the status of minorities and the treatment of women in a pseudo-theocratic patriarchal society. The treatment of marriage and the state of corruption in sectors like medicine is also an important theme in the novel.

My secondary texts that will help me formulate a narrative from a cultural standpoint is Bordieu's work on cultural capital and its effects on education among children. While this is a sociological study and is used in research to understand educational implications; there is an undeniable cultural imperativeness that can be used to understand literary texts and the author's intent to present culture(s) in their respective

works. Pierre Bourdieu's, "Forms of Capital," is my main secondary text. I have also taken up various related researches done in anthropological and sociological studies. For example, John Goldthorpe's, "Cultural Capital": Some Critical Observations', was really helpful in understanding Bourdieu's ideas and also analysing the various criticisms that his theories have faced, especially in an educational backdrop. According to Goldthorpe, "Cultural capital has been rightly described [Lareau and Weininger 2003, 568] as one of Bourdieu's "signature concepts," and it plays a key role in the grand project that he pursued of integrating an explanation of social class inequalities in educational attainment into a much wider-ranging theory of social reproduction." (1) So it arises primarily as a sociological theory that focuses on educational attainment and how the structural inequalities result in not just a metastructure of inequality but of inequity as well. This also ties in with Bourdieu's idea of social reproduction, viz. "the reproduction of the structure of the relations of force between the classes" (Bourdieu 1990a, p. 11; Bourdieu 1990a, p. 54). The reproduction of the structure of social class and the objective relations among social classes demand sustainable social positions of individuals in the social space of positions. The conversion of economic capital into cultural capital is one of the strategies (Bourdieu 1990a; Bourdieu, 1984, 1996) that individuals use for maintaining or enhancing their social positions in the social space..." (Farid et al.) Therefore we can understand social reproduction as a mechanisation that is manifested through the inter generational "reproduction" of culture that is transmitted within the crucial context of identity.

This takes me to one of the most important parts of my research, which is identity formation. "framing the "culture-identity link" with concepts representing three social-structural periods at three levels of analysis (the macro, micro, and psychological). The concept of "identity capital" is derived from this framework, depicting how individuals can negotiate life passages in an increasingly individualistic, complex and chaotic world. These formulations place existing research in a broad perspective..." (Côté 417) I have looked into the concept of identity capital and the various ways in which society as a framework operates in determining identity formation and "cultural-identity link" which leads to this formation through establishing culture and identity as interdependent entities and is a central idea in my work. For this James E. Cote's "Sociological perspectives on identity formation: the culture-identity link and identity capital," presented itself as a useful resource. These are the major theoretical frameworks that I have decided to use for my research and which will help in developing a groundwork of the interconnectedness between cultural capital and identity capital in a literary context.

## INTRODUCTION

### HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis of this study posits that within "A Case of Exploding Mangoes," "Red Birds," "Our Lady of Alice Bhatti," and "Exit West," the characters' cultural capital significantly influences their identities and social trajectories. Specifically, it is assumed that characters with greater cultural capital will exhibit a more pronounced influence on their identity development compared to those with less cultural capital. The relationships, choices, and social mobility of these characters will be closely linked to the variations in their cultural capital. Cultural capital, in this hypothesis, is conceived as both a resource and a marker of social distinction. Characters with robust cultural capital are expected to have access to better educational opportunities, broader cultural horizons, and a heightened capacity to navigate society effectively. This is anticipated to reflect in their identity development, allowing them to forge more

nuanced, multifaceted identities, which may encompass elements of tradition, modernity, and cosmopolitanism.

## METHODOLOGY

This study is conducted using textual analysis along with contextual analysis employing two theoretical frameworks along with it. I have used James E. Côté's Cultural-Identity link along with Pierre Bourdieu's ideas on cultural capital as my theoretical basis. I have contextualised these theories on the chosen texts using textual analysis in order to understand the structure, function and content of these texts and their relevance in cultural studies. It is a qualitative study and contains subjective analysis of literary texts and socio-cultural theories.

## OBJECTIVES

- To understand the nature of the characters and study how cultural and identity capital exist in the literary texts.
- To isolate and study Pakistan's political influence on the progression of these novels.
- Realise how identity is formed by subjective as well as objective forces in society, beyond the scope of the characters.
- Conceptualise the various types of cultural capital and identity capital markers and make them fit into a literary framework.
- Further scope of this research can be in revision of theories chosen or dissecting the characters' identities using psychoanalysis.

"The notion of cultural capital initially presented itself to me, in the course of research, as a theoretical hypothesis which made it possible to explain the unequal scholastic achievement of children originating from the different social classes by relating academic success, i.e., the specific profits which children from the different classes and class fractions can obtain in the academic market, to the distribution of cultural capital between the classes and class fractions." (Bourdieu 17) In a hierarchical society, there exists the problem of unequal levels of success and the main culprit we can identify as such is capitalism which rears its head to retain a level of meritocracy that is a direct causality of institutional profiteering. Bourdieu talks of scholastic achievement and the notion of cultural capital as a force that results in a disparity of success. My application extends to literary studies where I analyse the presence of such notions of capital and conclude if or not the differential presence of social and cultural resources result in a significant shift in identity formation and resultant changes in decisive actions taken by the characters in question.

"Depending on the field in which it functions, and at the cost of the more or less expensive transformations which are the precondition for its efficacy in the field in question, capital can present itself in three fundamental guises: as economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; as cultural capital, which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and as social capital, made up of social obligations ("connections"), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility." (Bourdieu 16)

It is integral to understand the definition given by Bourdieu of these various forms of capital and its underlying extensions to the various characters in the novels chosen. Economic capital is the basic tangible property that can create value in a monetary sense and can be understood as all assets that a person possesses. Cultural capital on the other hand is not so easily obtainable or convertible. It includes all the

knowledge, ideas and behaviours a person acquires that are rudimentary in the advancement of social standing. Bourdieu states that, “Cultural capital can exist in three forms: in the embodied state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.), which are the trace or realization of theories or critiques of these theories, problematics, etc.; and in the institutionalized state, a form of objectification which must be set apart because, as will be seen in the case of educational qualifications, it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee.” (Bourdieu 17) By this we can understand that Bourdieu’s categorisation of capital extends further in the form of:

- Embodied cultural capital- An intrinsic value and skill system that is obtained through socialisation or is inculcated through filial training. Embodied capital is something that does not require thorough training and can be attained by a person’s environment over time hence symbolising a person’s basic identity and cultural currency.
- Objectified cultural capital- This is a tangible element of cultural capital that includes things like books, music, paintings that signify cultural capital through the possession of imperative cultural goods. These types of capital are symbolic of culture gathering that is tantamount to a representation of the persona of the possessor.
- Institutionalised cultural capital- This type of capital consists of recognition of a certain amount of knowledge or qualification earned through the process of education or experience. This type of capital usually includes a party that is an authority on a particular subject and is capable of certifying the fecundity of a person’s knowledge on the respective subject.

Bourdieu’s work has most influentially been used as a locus for analysing cultural phenomena and how inter-generational social inequalities are reinforced by individuals daily along with the power dynamics that are at play in cultural (re)production and consumption. It is a sociological framework that has been applied to literary studies so as to understand the cultural influence within art that in turn reflects the impact that art has on society. It is an incisive form of study used primarily to unfictionalise narratives and analyse them in a verisimilitudinous light.

Social Capital is the last type of capital that Bourdieu talks about and is perhaps the most practised form of capital as it forms the basis of human relationships and social networks. This type of capital exists in close-knit, inter-communal and formal institutions for promoting social cohesion and communal harmony. It refers to the relationships, social networks and titles conferred as a sign of authority in society. It can be converted into economic capital if certain conditions are met and is incredibly useful in inter-personal identity formulation.

## **HYPOTHESIS**

The hypothesis of this study posits that within "A Case of Exploding Mangoes," "Red Birds," "Our Lady of Alice Bhatti," and "Exit West," the characters' cultural capital significantly influences their identities and social trajectories. Specifically, it is assumed that characters with greater cultural capital will exhibit a more pronounced influence on their identity development compared to those with less cultural capital. The relationships, choices, and social mobility of these characters will be closely linked to the variations in their cultural capital. Cultural capital, in this hypothesis, is conceived as both a resource and a marker of social distinction. Characters with robust cultural capital are expected to have access to better educational opportunities, broader cultural horizons, and a heightened capacity to navigate society effectively. This is anticipated to reflect in their identity development, allowing them to forge more

nuanced, multifaceted identities, which may encompass elements of tradition, modernity, and cosmopolitanism.

## CHAPTER 1

To gain an understanding of cultural capital and its various types, I have analysed the primary texts to elucidate where these types are present and I later elaborate on its implications on the development and utility of said capital in the plot progression and identity polity. In Hanif's, "A Case of Exploding Mangoes", embodied cultural capital is depicted almost firsthand where we see an enmeshing and confluence of the west and the east at the garden party hosted by the ambassador in his residence. "THE THREE-MEMBER TEAM of marines stationed at the gate of the ambassador's residence was having a hard time matching their guests with the guest list. They were expecting the usual tuxedos from the diplomatic corps and gold-braided khakis from the Pakistan Army, but instead they were ushering in a steady stream of flowing turbans, tribal gowns and embroidered shalwar qameez suits. If this was a fancy-dress party, the ambassador had forgotten to tell the men guarding his main gate. The invitation did say something about a Kabul-Texas themed barbecue, but it seemed the guests had decided to ignore the Texas part and gone all native for the evening." (Hanif 257)

The entry sequence of the diplomats is an interesting observation that Hanif makes to showcase appropriation by western officials of Eastern culture in what seemed to be an attempt to establish their superiority in the way they have adapted themselves to the native culture. But if we speak about it in terms of embodied cultural capital, we can see that there is an exchange of identities and the embodied state is actually something that is intrinsically 'embodied', but in this sequence where the officials trade their identities in, relinquishing the Texas theme, we find a subsequent occurrence that reflects shedding of personal qualities. Although they are still the same officials underneath, fashion serves as a locus and primary indicator of embodied capital and is exploited by them to establish a semblance of belonging. "The US Cultural Attaché came wearing an Afghan Burqa, one of those flowing shuttlecocks that she had tucked halfway over her head to reveal the plunging neckline of her shimmering turquoise dress." (Hanif 258) It suffices enough to say that this instance in great detail illustrates how foreign correspondents retain their identity of belonging to a first world country by imbibing first world attires with traditional dresses and twisting cultural relevancies to reveal a mutated embodiment.

"Bannon had designed his room like a bunker; there was no bed, just a king-sized mattress on the ground, covered by a camouflaged canopy he had improvised with four bamboo sticks. On the floor, a little fat Buddha sat on a copy of Stars and Stripes. The Buddha had a secret chamber in his stomach where Bannon kept his supply of hashish. His uniforms hung neatly in the doorless cupboard. The only liberties he had taken with his designer bunker were the air conditioner and a life-size poster from Game of Death, which covered the entire inside of the door." (Hanif 109) Major Bannon was an important character in the novel whose Machiavellian tendencies actually led to the assassination of General Zia as he was one of the major orchestrators of the deed. Hanif describes his room in immaculate detail to show how his objectified capital is different from others like Obaid and Ali whose living conditions being a part of the cadet corps is governed by limitations and sparse ownership. In fact when Obaid disappears, the first possessions that are confiscated are his *shayari* books. Bannon's room encapsulates a high ranking foreigners possessions mixed with a notion of neo colonialist tendency. There is a slight perversion of eastern culture in the sense that the Buddha, which is a symbol of eastern philosophy and ascetic wisdom in contrast with ambitious western philosophy is defiled by a supply of narcotics. This also brings into perspective the divisiveness



in the East wherein Pakistan being a Muslim republic actually denounces the presence of idols and the rooms design is a denigration to the fact which is harmonious with Hanif's anti-theocratic style.

In the same vein, we can notice that Hanif uses a particular character that perhaps is a symbol for the nation and its condition. "EVEN IF ZAINAB WASN'T blind she would not have been able to read her own interview in the newspaper because she was illiterate. Her news came from smells, birds, textures of the wind. And this morning she could feel the bad news in the air. She could hear the sound of impatient birds in the wind, she could feel migration and long lonely nights marching towards her." (Hanif 209) Zainab is typifying the epitome of innocence, who, as a victim of gang rape is still imprisoned by Zia's impractical and devious application of the Sharia law by converting the crime against her onto her. The fact that she doesn't possess an important sensory organ like sight and that itself is used against her speaks of the scarcity of institutionalised capital that a citizen with limited agency can exercise.

She is sentenced to death by stoning and she ends up cursing General Zia to death and her wish actually comes true in the end, indicative of a sense of poetic justice. But all in all, how is a minor sub plot and character important for understanding institutionalised capital in the novel? The symbolism that Zainab carries is of a marginalised person, a subaltern that is requisitioned as a non-force of oppressed femininity. Under General Zia, the oppressive, educated dictator, who probably holds the highest amount of institutionalised capital in the country, the person with the least amount of the same, Zainab, is sentenced to death. The problem that this posits is the fact that Zia's capital is in no way remunerative for his subjects. Zainab's non-capital is further slighted in addition to the crime by her being subjected to years of imprisonment by her death sentence. General Zia is no Caesar and his misuse of his capital is inherent to the toxicity that abounds extreme theocratic societies.

"My PhD thesis is on the Teenage Muslim Mind, their hopes, their desires; it might come out as a book called *The Children of the Desert*. But I am trying to extend my academic work, I want to put my ideas into practice, she says. 'I intend to use this community as a laboratory for testing my hypothesis about how our collective memories are actually our cultural capital...'" (Hanif, *Red Birds* 44)

"Red Birds" by Mohammed Hanif is incisive enough to directly talk about cultural capital and its inherent effects on displaced people; however, since Hanif is a master of satire, he deals with it in a fourth wall metaphorical sense. Like most of Hanif's characters, Lady Flowerbody is a symbol that serves as an embodiment of western academia and is, "...lazy, tautological bullshit with a purse full of recreational hash." (Nayeri) She serves as that part of the collective western global consciousness that is riddled with white man's guilt but more so of a need to serve those she thinks are "chosen" to suffer. "'Yeah right, why can't we? Tell me. I volunteered to come here after you forced these people out of their homes. You should have stayed home.'" (Hanif, *Red Birds* 181) This is where she differs from Major Ellie, who is influenced by his senior Colonel Slatter in pre-conceived notions of the people from the refugee camps being, full of "goat-fuckers" (Hanif, *Red Birds* 8) and, "'Basically a real bad place full of bad bad people. You can smell the evil from the skies. Nobody is going to miss this lot. Trust me on that.'" (Hanif, *Red Birds* 8). We can see a stark difference in the embodied capital that Lady Flowerbody and Major Ellie possess. Flowerbody's attitude carries a profound sympathy, although she comes under the guise of obtaining knowledge as an academic. Major Ellie on the other hand, is the embodiment of USA's neo-imperialist policy. He has been hardened by his militarised environment to think of poor refugees as evil individuals whose only intent is to threaten his country's freedom and democracy when it actually couldn't be farther from the truth. Characters like Momo are testament to the fact that subjugation reigns supreme in the camp where he lives

with his family. “Right you are. We are fugees and we can't do a thing about it. We have been fugees for such a long time that it's difficult to tell today's kids that we were not always fugees. We were like normal people. We were nomads. We had goats and buffaloes and we followed the rains and stored our own grain in our own stores. We were becoming better, we built houses with flushing toilets, we bought tea sets and sofa sets and we bought electric fans because electricity was about to arrive, and it did come for a few seconds, and we all remember those few moments and are waiting for it to return. Now it's all gone—...” (Hanif, *Red Birds* 110)

There is little to no possession of objectified capital in a refugee camp. As described by Hanif it almost seems like everything is loaned. Something to be returned after a while. “They eat USAID grains, get USAID injections. These children think there was nothing before it and there will be nothing beyond this Camp. Well they know there is the desert but that's also like nothing. I mean when it rains, it livens up a bit, but it's not really Disneyland, is it?” (Hanif, *Red Birds* 110) There is a sense of wanting that is showcased in Father Dear's monologue, he wishes to obtain something permanent for once. A viability that is not second to the West's self-centeredness. We can observe that there is an inherent ignominy present in the way he describes the camp to Major Ellie, coupled with nostalgia. For him, even animals like goats and buffaloes carried a symbolic meaning and was key to their identity as people of the desert. The animals were the objectified capital, the only possessions that can be a marker for truth and abundance. The same thing is passed on to the next generation wherein we can see a similar relationship between Momo and Mutt. However, there is a clear difference. Father Dear's world was razed to the ground by the hegemonic western rule and instead of their own freedom they were foisted with aid that was not needed in the first place. There is a loss of objectified capital and it shows in the way that the future generations are stripped of their identity. Refugees are so bent upon survival that their posterity ends up believing that there is no life other than survival and that there is “nothing” beyond the camp. The desert itself, which was a major marker of their identity is now reduced to nothing, all of their objectified capital is looted and replaced with their own makeshift resources; another symbol of the neo-capitalist totalitarian regime.

“Bro Ali taught me many things. You're gonna ask what kind of skill set you need to live in a fugee camp. You need a ration card and of course you need some serviceable English to convince the foreign dogooders who used to run the Camp that you are at least half human...Bro Ali was a man of science, just like I am a man of commerce. He tried to teach me to build a transistor radio with shiny components and copper wires he brought from the Hangar.” (Hanif, *Red Birds* 63) Since this novel is primarily based around US foreign policy and refugee plight, there is a notion of semi-diasporic dismemberment of identity and living status. According to diasporic studies diaspora is, “Historical and modern ethno-national diasporas are cultural-social-political entities, created as a result of either voluntary or forced migration from a homeland, whose members are and regard themselves as of the same ethno-national origin and who permanently reside as minorities in one or several host-countries.” (Sheffer) However there is a key difference which I want to posit as per the depiction of Hanif. The above definition states that diasporas are “permanently reside(ing) as minorities in one or several host-countries,” but the dismemberment as shown in the novel is a nebulous one in the sense that there is a constituent derealisation and deactualisation of the homeland of indigenous folk by the use of military power, as clearly illustrated in the novel, which has an inlay of psychological subsuming in the guise of PTSD and generational trauma. Therefore, the often overlooked aspect of the effects of war on institutional capital points to the fact that these phenomena take place long before the generation on the receiving end is even born; as is seen in the case of Momo and Ali. Both of them have no opportunities for institutional education and are mired in an

environment which purports a foisted hierarchy of western supremacy. The reason this happens is not only due to a limitation of resources but also the inability of Father Dear's generation to pass on a secure heritage to his children to establish a sui generis identical sensibility. Instead, he relishes the company of foreigners and carries an inherent inferiority bias.

“What I really wanted him to teach me was how to pick locks. It took some convincing on my part but he relented. ... ‘If you are going to grow up and become a thief just like them, you better learn to pick a lock properly.’ Bro Ali was joking of course but it hurt. He went around picking targets for the people at the Hangar but I never called him a traitor. And I want to pick a little lock to take what's rightfully mine and I become a thief.” (Hanif, *Red Birds* 64) There is a singular most imperative distinction between Ali and Momo which typifies the sensibility in which Hanif has portrayed the development of Momo. Ali is not present for most of the novel yet he seems to have an effect on every relevant character in the refugee camp and this proxy presence is indicative of an important sort of capital that is capitulated through his institutional capital which he gained through colluding with the people at the hangar and helping them bomb terrorists. The convertibility of Ali's capital is different from Momo's capital. In fact the way in which Ali magnifies his knowledge onto Momo also entails an aspect of generational culpability similar to what his father had done to them. However, Momo seems to have morals that extend a little further than that wherein he realises the irony of the situation and can understand that Ali's work at the hangar was a self-inflicted wound to the family and the responsibility fell on Momo to propensate this situation as Father Dear's institutional capital did not have the capacity to enable any improvements. We can see a trifecta of institutionalised capital that is intertwined with implications on inter-generational fixations on trauma and this is what sensationalises the ending of the novel and brings about an interpretation laden with claims that would refer to it as symbolical shams.

## CHAPTER 2

“She tries to maintain a nondescript exterior. She learns the sideways glance instead of looking at people directly. She speaks in practiced, precise sentences so that she is not misunderstood” (Hanif, *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* 98) “Our Lady of Alice Bhatti,” is a novel that treats tragedy in a different manner when compared to Hanif's other works or even with Hamid's. There is an element of feminist empowerment that is critical in understanding this novel and which is by nature of our investigation, a key player in discovering the nuances of cultural capital and most obviously embodied cultural capital. “The novel revolves around small, disappointed Christian community of Pakistan which has constantly been pushed towards the edges of the mainstream Muslim majority and particularly the problems faced by females in a society which is ruled by men. There is a long history of prejudices, subjugation and injustice against this substratum that is actually large in number but still treated as a minority because of their gender.” (Sara Baig 96)

Alice Bhatti is a character that belongs to the “choohra” community, which is the subjugated lower class in modern day Pakistan echoing to the condition but not vividly resembling the Dalit's in India. On top of that, Alice's nature of being a working woman and operating not just in a patriarchal but an extremist society means that whenever she is in public, she has to behave a certain way so as to not attract any unwanted or unwarranted attention or to be involved in any sort of “misunderstanding”. Having also been in a Borstal, we can see that through the flashbacks and all the instances of the novel, Alice's embodied cultural capital is dynamic in nature. Since Alice is a “Choohra” woman, she is thrice removed from regular societal standings. She faces oppression for being a “Choohra” and for being a woman which is



then transmogrified into being treated as “...loose change in a deal made on a street corner” (Hanif, *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* 96) Therefore, to survive in a place like this, it is important to learn certain trades of the world to ensure that there are no practical or impractical, which is more so the case, injustices done to her and she can ensure a life that is centred mainly on survival.

“She chooses her words carefully, and if someone addresses her in Punjabi, she answers in Urdu, because an exchange in her mother tongue might be considered a promise of intimacy” (Hanif, *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* 98) Languages and their potency are one of the chief features of embodied cultural capital; Alice can speak Punjabi, Urdu and English but she navigates through society and uses her knowledge of languages in a situated way. She makes sure that she uses appropriate markers in conversation with people to prevent from a fallacy of communication occurring. Language as a pointer for intimacy even with the absence of romantic intention is indicative of the fact that women are viewed as objects that are to be capitalised and subsumed into a form of objectified capital. It is a remnant of the feudal and patriarchal system that was prevalent in south asian countries. Therefore, we can understand that embodied cultural capital which depends a lot on pre-adult conditioning, also carries a connotation of forced learning; and this learning is something that is restrictive but also enables a heightened sense of survival skills and Alice is forced to develop these in order to live in the sort of a society and function as a para-human being.

“LESS THAN THREE MINUTES in front of the interview panel and Alice Bhatti knows in her heart that she is not likely to get the job advertised as Replacement Junior Nurse, Grade 4.” (Hanif, *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* 1) To gain institutional cultural capital it is necessary, above all, to ensure that the environment wherein one is gaining said capital over time is conducive to the overall growth of the person and also doesn't negatively impact any other aspects of cultural growth. However, in the case of Alice Bhatti we notice that Hanif is showcasing a character that is ensnared in a system where there is barely any opportunity for women, let alone women from her “Choohra” background. She spends a few years in a Borstal and over there studies to become a nurse and after she enters the real world, realises that opportunity may not always come directly and may have to be created.

“There might be things in the application she has embellished, but her name is not one of them.” (Hanif, *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* 5) We are presented with an instance that perfectly encapsulates the protagonist which is a symbiote for the spirit of the novel. Alice's case when connected with institutional cultural capital falls in the region of an allegorical reference to a stratified divine female. As we can also collect from the ending, it is no secret that Hanif uses this in “Red Birds” as well where the instrument of his depiction were the red birds that appear in the end. Here, it is Alice herself who is cited as an authority that transcends her reality into a surrealist manifestation of sacrosanct womanhood. “The first witnesses were the residents of Charya Ward. All twelve of them swore that they saw a likeness of Sister Alice Bhatti dressed like our Holy Mother in a blue head- scarf, a halo around her head, ascending on a throne held aloft by a flock of peacocks.” (Hanif, *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* 224) One might get the impression that Hanif is trying to paint the image of a woman who in her sacrificial fervour, is exoticised and immortalised to an attainable symbol but the truth is heavier than that in the fact that, “The incident of acid attack on Alice by her husband indicates that love is not an escape from subaltrenity. While Teddy approaches Alice to throw acid on her, he keeps on claiming his “eternal love” (Hanif 224) for her.” (Sara Baig 100) Therefore, the image created is an illusory but also indicative of the fact that even with the possession of exemplified and practised embodied cultural capital that Alice uses again and again; it was altogether not possible to escape the dictates of the patriarchal regime and her life is unequivocally marred by the assault of her husband.

We can also learn from this that the institutional capital that Alice possesses is in fact only enough to land a job that is not reserved by male candidates and/or taken up by those who are able to afford good educational facilities and therefore enjoy financial immunity and no supposed discrimination on the grounds of gender and religion as illustrated by Hanif in “ says Dr Pereira. 'And if my colleagues here have objections, we don't have to, we can advertise externally. But there are not many qualified candidates with experience. Privates snap them up. Or they go to Dubai or Toronto.’” (*Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* 4) Alice does not possess enough capital to leave the life she currently has and that is the reason she is not able to exercise her agency, which at surface level would raise the question from an anti-feminist viewpoint that she is working and has a job even after being a “Choohra” woman. But this is quickly disproved after taking a quick survey of her circumstances and emotional dilemmas.

“His name was Saeed and her name was Nadia and he had a beard, not a full beard, more a studiously maintained stub- ble, and she was always clad from the tips of her toes to the bottom of her jugular notch in a flowing black robe. Back then people continued to enjoy the luxury of wearing more or less what they wanted to wear, clothing and hair wise, within cer- tain bounds of course, and so these choices meant something.” (Hamid 1) *Exit West*, categorically speaks at an altogether different wavelength when compared to the other novels chosen for this research, however; there are some integral unifying similarities that are of course highlighted to establish an important framework for understanding various elements that encapsulate cultural capital and its varying biases. For example, the primary focus of interest, thematically and even in terms of format is the obvious emphasis on the romantic element of the work.

It is essentially a story of two individuals who meet in a time of turbulence and are not just attracted but are entrenched with each other in a way that results in a shared intertwining of cultural and other forms of capital which I call symbiotic cultural interfacing. Saeed and Nadia are two nodules in a turbulent setting that interact with each other as a result of their said surroundings and exchange various habits and cultural information resulting in a fluid social interlocking. As mentioned above (1) Hamid starts the novel with typifying two characteristics that are logical markers of embodied cultural capital; that is, the appearance that is later pontificated upon to reveal the nuanced substance that these characters carry in their cultural make-up.

“...the first clause of the novel is extremely pejorative about refugees: the city being ‘swollen’ by their arrival seems to liken them to the cause of some debilitating ailment, and in this construction the conjunctive ‘but still’ implies that refugees inevitably bring conflict with them.” (Perfect 4) There are obvious references to Islam and the sadly synonymous nature of refugeeism that is now all too common in these countries. Although, Hamid refuses to outrightly mention the religion practised by the protagonists, Nadia’s black robe is an instant allusion to the burqa. This act of knowingly transmuting culturally relevant facts is perhaps to appeal to a global sensibility and reinforce a parallel accountability of alternate realities. This is perfectly conjugal with the presence of refugees in the opening scene and the eventual transformation of Saeed and Nadia into refugees themselves; as it reflects the subversive conflict that is wrought on by war and its inherent product of refugeeism coupled with obvious cultural interfacing. “She interrupted him. ‘I don't pray,’ she said. She continued to gaze at him steadily. He watched as she walked out to the student parking area and there, instead of covering her head with a black cloth, as he expected, she donned a black motorcycle helmet that had been locked to a scuffed-up hundred-ish ce trail bike, snapped down her visor, straddled her ride, and rode off, disappearing with a controlled rumble into the gathering dusk.” (Hamid 3) Religion as an ideological enforcer is one of the most important tools for enabling social and cultural upheaval, whether communal or individual. Nadia, although brought up in a

sufficiently identifiable and similar environment as compared to Saeed, possesses some key markers that differentiate her from him. As we learn through the progress of the novel, Saeed possesses an insurmountable love and fondness for prayer that perhaps is an indication of the efficacy of religion in determining one's cultural affiliations. But it doesn't just stop there for we can also analyse religion as a modicum of capital; an enabler and transmuted of cultural knowledge and information. It can be categorised as an embodied cultural capital as most children in Asian families are taught the importance of religion from their nascent years. Certain elements can also be categorised as objectified cultural capital, like prayer mats and rosaries which are indicative of cultural practices and hold symbolic significance within various cultures.

"...Saeed felt it might be possible, in the face of death, to believe in humanity's potential for building a better world, and so he prayed as a lament, as a consolation, and as a hope, but he felt that he could not express this to Nadia, that he did not know how to express this to Nadia, this mystery that prayer linked him to, and it was so important to express it." (Hamid 203) There is a gulf between Saeed and Nadia and the cultural vehicle that Hamid uses to express this is prayer. As Saeed gets closer to God through prayer, we witness a growing dissonance between Nadia for various reasons but one of them certainly is religion as well. Nadia is not necessarily sceptical regarding prayer but she is certainly averse to religion and this is a direct result of her upbringing wherein she was forced to certain standards that resulted in her disenfranchising her own family and moving out on her own. However, the most important facet that is gleaned from even a superficial reading of the novel can be understood by the residual cultural forces that continue to be a part of her life when it comes to operating in daily society. For example, donning the robe even though she does not follow any other facet of the religion followed in her country (an obvious euphemism for Islam) is a straight giveaway of cultural cadences that are utilised to acclimate to the surroundings through eventual communal understanding and grounding. In Nadia's own words, "So men don't fuck with me" (Hamid 16) reinforces the cultural difference between Nadia's own ideas and those shared collectively by the majority of the nation. This is another example of cultural capital and its underlying implications on the collective consciousness of the masses which in turn affects the cultural practices.

"Nadia and Saeed were, back then, always in possession of their phones. In their phones were antennas, and these antennas sniffed out an invisible world, as if by magic, a world that was all around them, and also nowhere, transporting them to places distant and near, and to places that had never been and would never be." (Hamid 39) The doors that appeared and transported people everywhere throughout the world are also quite similar to the phones that almost everyone uses today. Objects of institutional capital can be assumed to be instruments of relaying authority and confer a certain right upon the person using them. In the modern world, information is more or less democratised and Saeed and Nadia, as young, modern folk use phones as their gateway to communicate with people across the world and to receive and even send news about the circumstances of the 'door' phenomenon that was taking place. However, there is also an interesting corroboration between the doors and the phones. The doors connect the world physically leading to changes that will alter the environment of their surroundings permanently and in a tangible way; whereas the phones, in their communicative essence, are used to establish a difference that is more or less institutional. The knowledge that is gleaned from these devices confer that authority that is essential in a systematic hierarchy of upending binary between the East and the West. These gateways, in a postcolonial analysis can also be thought of as a restoration of truthful hierarchy and retribution of equity and equality.

“In times of violence, there is always that first acquaintance or intimate of ours, who, when they are touched, makes what had seemed like a bad dream suddenly, evisceratingly real. For Nadia this person was her cousin, a man of considerable determination and intellect, who even when he was young had never cared much for play, who seemed to laugh only rarely, who had won medals in school and decided to become a doctor, who had successfully emigrated abroad, who returned once a year to visit his parents, and who, along with eighty-five others, was blown by a truck bomb to bits, literally to bits, the largest of which, in Nadia’s cousin’s case, were a head and two-thirds of an arm.” (Hamid 31) Hamid’s explanation of the concept of refugeeism also pontificates upon the nature of war and its implications that are often considered by outsiders as a form of immolation and martyrdom. However, the truth is that the realisation of the brutality and reality of war and a predilection of the terror only sets in when someone near to the subject is compromised due to the atrocities. In Nadia’s case we find her cousin brother to be a victim of this as he is quite literally blown to bits by the ensuing circumstances.

Moreover, there is something else that Hamid is insinuating in the given excerpt. He says that the man was of “considerable determination and intellect”; a man we can assume to possess significant institutional capital and even cultural capital in general. However, he also states that he was someone who had “successfully emigrated abroad,” meaning that moving West, away from the centrality of their own culture posits a situation of superiority. Anyone with enough institutional capital and the requisite opportunity needs to move away from the destabilised centre of their own nation and move to a stabilised country which was actually destabilised by them in the first place. Hamid insinuates this in a faux-appreciative tone of the cousin’s “success” as he utilises the metric of success as an abstract quality that is only acknowledged with a significant possession of institutional capital. However, the identity of a person is a marker that can not be escaped by possessing more and more forms of attainable cultural capital. Everyone else in the truck where the cousin was killed possessed the same identity as him and lost their lives in the same way. The idea that Hamid perhaps wants to present is that— there is no relevance of cultural capital in death; everyone is equal in suffering and its end.

### CHAPTER 3

Côté says in his work, *Sociological perspectives on identity formation: the culture–identity link and identity capital* that, “the question of the extent to which, and the ways in which, culture and identity are interrelated has not been answered in a systematic and empirically testable manner.” (417) the importance of culture and its inherent, obvious and also the unobvious part of it is wholly intertwined in the fomentation of identity and the influence of culture on identity rests on multiple parameters that signify the extent and the nature to which this influence rests. He also goes further in delving into psychological factors that have an impact on identity in a cultural context. But what does this mean in a literary context? Literature is an exploration of fictitious characters in fictive settings often mired in fantastical and sensational problems and plots. A study of such characters doesn't necessarily reveal any underlying truths found in reality but it points to the factors that can perhaps influence society in the future. A psychoanalytic study of a character like Macbeth may be limited in a literary setting to Shakespeare himself; but it provides inspiration to future works and also in turn affects the present society as an auxiliary force to the art. This itself proves to be a recurring event and we can witness a testament to the viability of the interrelation between culture and identity.

Côté talks about the culture-identity link as a necessary aspect of the theory of social human behaviour, which serves as the backdrop of his focus on this link. He talks of various levels of analysis that are

essential in learning this theory. i. Social structure: this structure includes the overarching institutions of the society that serve as a macro lens in understanding the cultural effect on identity as a whole. It includes political and economic systems.

ii. Interaction: This is the most practised and interpersonal level of cultural-identity link. It comprises patterns of behaviour and characterises daily connections that are formed and maintained by people in social institutions like schools and families.

iii. Personality: Personality is the individual essence of the individual and is the micro focus of Côté's culture-identity link. It comprises the dimensions of the character, self and psyche and subparts like ego and identity. The focus on personality is the central theme of the culture-identity link's idea of social psychological tradition.

In addition to the levels of analysis and the parameters stated above, Côté takes it a step further and collates it with social-structural periods that provides a well rounded study of the interlink between culture and identity. However, it is important to note that, "The three social-structural periods are meant to portray what has prevailed during the past several centuries among Western societies, and societies influenced by the West." (Côté 418) This is an important consideration because this study primarily focuses on Eastern societies and a central theme of the study also resides in refugeeism, therefore, all the ideas that corroborate with Western ideals may not necessarily reflect with the utmost authenticity when studying Asian and Eastern texts.

When it comes to the framework of the social-structural period, Côté suggests that on the level of social structure there were and are three types of societies, namely- pre-modern, early-modern and late-modern. Pre-modern societies, according to him, were largely completed during the 19th century; and the sociological distinction between pre-modern and early-modern is that of the . popularly illustrated difference of agrarian versus industrial, folk versus urban etc. Production was one of the highlighted features of defining social relations in the early modern era, typifying it as an era of "modernism". Due to the defining aspect of modernised production being a part of society, the transformation of early-modern heralded its logical successor as the late-modern period which had a similar amount of focus on consumption thereby being a direct answer to the early-modern period, fitting perfectly as a simple paradigm of demand and supply.

On an interactional level, the social-cultural period morphs into the types of ways in which individuals interact with each other and operate in society. The three types of cultures specified are: postfigurative, cofigurative and prefigurative. In postfigurative societies, children primarily learnt from their forebears or their parents. This is a sort of primitive culture that usually corroborates with Pre-modern understanding of social structure. The parents or forebears operate in a society that is largely based on experiential learning and therefore knowledge can only be passed on through individuals who have accumulated knowledge in the form of diurnal incidents. In cofigurative societies both children and adults learn from their peers. This is a departure from the previously mentioned structure and brings into reference an ideological shift in society that witnesses a rise in ambiental learning. Diurnal incidents from forebears is not enough and in order to exist in a society with a nascent sense of competition, peer learning is at the helm of cultural dissemination. Prefigurative societies witness a complete transition in this regard and there is a paradigm shift in learning. Adults learn from their children and younger folk seem more at home with keeping up with cultural shifts in society. The best example of this is the current generation's comfort and accessibility with technology in contrast with the previous generations.



In terms of personality, the social-structural period comprises tradition, inner and other-directed forms of culture. “a tradition-directed character-type characterizes pre-modern type societies, wherein the “important relationships of life [are] . . . controlled by careful and rigid etiquette, learned by the young during the years of intensive socialization that end with initiation into full adult membership”” (Côté 419) The formation of societal dispositions and discourses in pre-modern society were heavily rooted in customs and traditions as compared to late-modern societies; therefore, rigid etiquettes were key in establishing a social order that needed to be passed on to enable the reinforcement of a certain social structural period. This passing on of customs was key in fomenting an identity that characterised an entire community/clan instead of a particular individual. Therefore, we can conclude that tradition-directed culture, in confluence with pre-modern culture, is a system which was heavily communal and anti-individualistic.

In an inner-directed personality framework, it is often conflated with early-modern social structure and for good reason; as there is an obvious syntactic similarity with the way with which both of these frameworks are the results of tradition-directed and pre-modern cultures. How exactly does this work? “Inner directed character types emerge to...counteract the disruptive forces of early industrialisation.” (Côté 419) What this means is that in the times of industrialisation there was an obvious shift in the societal structure due to an economic upheaval. The resulting implications of urbanisation, capital-accumulation, mass production etc. led to forebears realising that their children need to be prepared for a world that is more competitive and holds the possession of economic capital in the highest regard. In a sense, certain aspects of social capital were slowly transitioning into economic capital. With this in mind, parents and forebears instilled a “gyroscope” which gives a certain sense of autonomy to the children but there is no actual self-responsibility as the elders decide certain destined goals that need to be fulfilled in order to live a life of acceptable social value. Their behavioural pattern is set in stone and they achieve goals that have been decided for them instead of by them. The most obvious example of this can be seen in Asian parenting which reinforces the idea of academic excellence and anything less than the targeted expectations is met with disciplinary action. Côté says that this character type doesn’t topple the existing social order by their own initiative alone due to the heavy influence of the omnipotent gyroscope.

Finally we arrive at the other-directed character type that directly corroborates with the late-modern social structural period. Being a result of the early-modern period, we notice that there is an obvious notion that the idea of overproduction is supplanted into overconsumption and people end up craving and investing in a capitalistic framework. There is a constant need for the other-directed individual to gratify societal notions of an ideal life and these ideals are mostly promoted by the media prevalent in this time period to regulate people into being other-directed individuals. The most important aspect of this personality type is that, “parents providing less guidance and having less influence over their children’s identity formation, children will turn to others for direction.” (Côté 420) The other-directed person’s ideals are dynamic in nature and constantly keep shifting to reveal the accepted standards of the particular time and place and the relevant cultural code. There is a uniformity that they are supposed to maintain to ensure the societal order understands and validates their existence. The sense of validation arises from the other-directed character type being, “taught early in life to constantly monitor the social environment to ensure that their consumption patterns (especially in appearance and behaviour) conform to whatever are the accepted standards of the time and place.” (Côté 420)

Côté states, “(1) that the term social identity designate the individual’s position(s) in a social structure; (2) that the concept of personal identity denote the more concrete aspects of individual experience rooted in

interactions (and institutions); and (3) that the notion of ego identity refer to the more fundamental subjective sense of continuity which is characteristic of the personality.” (420) Therefore, there are abundant similarities when talking about identity but their fundamental differences lie in the ways with which different dimensions of the identity framework interact with the different facets of society.

The interrelation between identity and societal elements form an unaccrued relationship that in turn is an impetus in forming complex identity formations within society. These formations are paternal and can be identified through the metanarratives that govern societal progression. In most of the information specified in this chapter, we can assume that the overarching metanarrative in early-modern and late-modern societies have been capitalistic. Through obvious cause and effect workings from overproduction to overconsumption it is without a doubt that there has been an unsubtle but gradual development in capitalist tendencies. These economic ascendancies have a direct impact on the cultural “warehouse” of societies and there is almost always a direct addressal to these factors in literary works as will be seen in the next chapter as we analyse the selected texts in the light of identity capital and its various implications on character formation and plot progression.

#### CHAPTER 4

Hanif’s *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* was his first attempt at long format fiction and it takes heavy inspiration from his own life in the army. It delves into complex relationships like Zia-ul-Haq’s relationship with his wife and his bodyguard, a web of political affiliations that even include an appearance by Osama Bin Laden. It is an extensive description of the political ambience of the nation of Pakistan in its most cumbersome period. However, there is also a dimension that Hanif has added to the novel that is previously unseen or rather unaddressed in Pakistani novels focussing on political embroilments. “He moved my vest upwards, the chilled air sent shivers through my chest and my nipples turned shamelessly erect and purple; my belt was unhooked. I sucked my stomach in and held my breath as his hand wandered into my pants. He didn’t hold me, just let the back of his hand rest against my cock as if it was a chance encounter. I was scared of the lips that were gently brushing their way towards my chest. I was scared of being kissed.” (Hanif, *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* 207)

Hanif’s main character, the only fictional character of note in the novel is depicted as a junior army officer of an Islamic nation with homosexual proclivities. It is an essential divestment that has been characterised in light of the nature of Ali’s character. Obaid or “Baby O” had been portrayed in the novel already as a soldier with effeminate and unsoldierlike characteristics like an inkling for poetry and an overall sensitivity to physical combat. Therefore, it can be assumed by the reader that a “city boy” like Obaid could have tendencies of homosexuality that have often been touted as a result of western influences. However, Ali Shigri, son of Colonel Shigri, an ex-high ranking official in the Pakistan army who grew up in the mountains with a stern father figure who inculcated disciplinary values that were codified in an army Islamic state, although we see that the colonel himself didn’t completely adhere to these values, an example of which , is his his drinking problem; we see that Ali exhibits an anti-state attitude that can be ascribed to a cofigurative or a prefigurative culture.

Côté suggests that a cofigurative culture is one wherein children and adults are learning from their peers prefigurative is one where adults learn from their children. There is no mention of Ali’s homosexual tendencies before he meets Obaid and the fact that he experiments with his sexuality in Bannon’s room instead of his own dorm which he shares with Obaid is proof that there is an inherent sense of western ideals that pervade his thought process. We can also claim that Ali’s character is other directed as he fits

the characterisation of striving to meet goals that are constantly shifting. Ali has the overarching goal of assassinating General Zia-ul-Haq but they realise that it is not possible to commit a crime of this scale as they are caught and “disciplined” almost immediately by General Akhtar. Although Ali still hates General Zia with a passion he realises that his priority has shifted from assassinating the leader to surviving in the best way he can, although his passion is rejuvenated in the end and he manages to poison General Zia without the help of any external powers apart from his squadron.

We can see that there is a dynamism in his fervour for achieving his goal and this makes him an other-directed individual; along with the fact that, “with parents providing less guidance and having less influence over their children’s identity formation, children will turn to others for direction.” (Côté 420) The dimension of his sexuality is still under question in reference with the fact that the influence to explore his sexuality comes extrinsically. Since Pakistani society in its cultural language is a tradition-directed society, even in this late-modern world; matters of sexuality are considered taboo and something that Colonel Shigri most likely had never discussed with Ali. Therefore, he looked towards “others for direction” and Obaid’s subjective affiliations influenced Ali’s character traits or rather shifted his character orientation towards an other-directed character type. Especially since the primary influence of his tradition-directed culture— his father is now absent from his life. Thus, we can also assume that in absence of forebears tradition-directed cultures fall apart resulting in an unexpected guidance deficit in the socio-cultural order; especially in a category that can potentially lead to a disastrous rise in the population of disaffected youth. There is also potential for good influences, however, the dimension of inadvertent risk comes into play causing a chaotic and subjective atmosphere stemmed in paranoia and distrust. We can ascribe Pakistan’s current political climate to the same as the novel is a work of historical fiction and clearly echoes Hanif’s own experiences as a Pakistani child and army camp service. Overall, we can state that the majority of the novel deals with Pakistan’s tradition-directed culture in a late-modern atmosphere but also brings into question hints of configuration and prefiguration along with an other-directed character type twist.

*Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* is a mature work of Mohammed Hanif that addresses various themes that corroborate with *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* and the overarching cultural archetype that is portrayed in it. However, the key difference obviously lies in the fact that Hanif is dealing with the plight of the minority in a majoritarian theocracy. He aims to showcase the unviability of cultural hybridity and class differences that also reflects in Indian society as well as other South-East Asian societies. “...although someone from French Colony getting a nurse’s job is not unusual, a trainee nurse coming out of the household of Choohra Joseph Bhatti, whom even other Choohras consider untouchable, is a sign that the next generation is ready to move on.” (Hanif, *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* 92) Joseph Bhatti, the father of Alice Bhatti is famous for curing ulcers by reciting quranic verses and also worked to clear sewage just as a lot of other Choohras did in their country. Joseph’s attitude is of someone who has realised that life as marginalised is of survival and doesn’t consist of happiness in the way that it does for the dominant classes. Alice Bhatti, on the other hand does acknowledge the fact that survival is a necessity but also wants to move on from the sort of lifestyle that Joseph had adopted, mainly due to his circumstances.

We realise that Alice in this sense is not tradition-directed and is actually a prefigurative person, also combined with the fact that her character type is other-directed as she pursues her own wishes and doesn’t respond to the wishes of the society. An example of this is clearly illustrated by Hanif in chapter 7, “...Alice reaches with the other (hand) into her coat pocket and only looks up when she hears him scream.” (Hanif, *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* 60) Alice is assigned to a bourgeois Begum in a private ward of the hospital;

she is asked to perform a non-consensual sexual act but she responds by an equal force of violence, a mechanism we learn that has been instilled in her from countless acts of aggression and exploitation. Her survival mechanism is a trait developed by the ravages of society and it can be ascribed to her developing an other-directedness and a prefigurative disposition; where Joseph himself relents and realises that is the best for Alice to make her own decisions as she proves her worth by becoming someone of note despite her circumstances.

We can prove Alice's other-directedness also by establishing the fact that her demands and wants change over time, reflecting the dynamism of an other-directed individual in a tradition-directed society; a crossroads that drives most of the conflict in the novel and showcases the run-ins that Alice faces with being a non-conformist in the society. Her first need is to land the job at the Sacred Heart Hospital; then it shifts to being married to Teddy, who turns out to be abusive and abrasive and ultimately takes her life out of his own twisted imagination of "love"; later her priority turns to raise a baby who she brought back to life by a miracle. "She holds the baby's palm in both her hands and starts to pray. She prays like she never prayed before as nobody prayed before. She just conjures up her Lord Yassoo and gives it to Him. She holds him by his throat till he can't breathe, she hangs from His robe...she accuses Him of being a deadbeat Lord leaving poor wretched girls to bring dead babies into this world." (Hanif, *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* 166) After realising that staying with her husband who was turning into a dangerous man slowly day by day and still being unaware of his profession; she comes to the conclusion that she needs to separate herself from him and concentrate on raising the baby that she had saved.

Along this route, it is Sister Hina Alvi who provides the most support to her as she learns that Sister Hina was actually a Christian but showcased herself as a muslim for the sake of survival. Thus, this proves another locus for guaranteeing Alice's other-directedness as she is influenced by Sister Hina Alvi but does not possess the power to change the direction of her life as her own dynamic wishes had wrought a significant loss in controlled direction. Therefore, within her intrinsic other-directed culture, she is unable to survive and eventually succumbs to the follies of a tradition-directed society as Teddy sprays acid on Alice's face killing her and martyring her in the sense that her popularity as a person who performs miracles is immortalised, proving to be a sacrosanct resemblance to Jesus and the Virgin Mary; thereby influencing local culture once again without the provisions of the reality of her imperfect life, misunderstanding her motives and struggles. Therefore, we can conclude that Côté's paradigm of cultural-identity link is not directly applicable to the world described in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* as the tradition-directed culture does not correctly align with pre-modern social structure or postfigurative interactional culture.

Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* presents a fractured display of refugeeism, western neo-imperialism and cultural breakdown. It is a story of the challenges that the protagonists: Saeed and Nadia face in the impending collapse of their country and further obstacles that lay in their path as they travel to various places in order to survive. Their journey is fraught with difficulties not just on the exterior but even their relationship suffers. They are oftentimes forced to rekindle their romance which is a stand-in for their codependency. There is a stark contrast between the type of people that Nadia and Saeed are even though they hail from the same socio-cultural background. "Saeed desperately wanted to leave his city, in a sense he always had, but in his imagination he had thought he would leave it only temporarily, never once and for all, and this looming potential departure was altogether different, for he doubted he would come back, and the scattering of his extended family and his circle of friends and acquaintances, forever, struck him as deeply sad, as amounting to the loss of a home...Nadia had long been, and would afterwards continue



to be, more comfortable with all varieties of movement in her life than was Saeed, in whom the impulse of nostalgia was stronger, perhaps because his childhood had been more idyllic, or perhaps because this was simply his temperament.” (Hamid 94)

Both Saeed and Nadia are well aware of the situation that they have found themselves in. As they are getting attached to each other and forming relationships, there are also people around them whose lives are falling apart, this includes most of their own country as it is getting run over by insurgents and societal order is falling apart; the effects of this is felt by them in immediacy when Nadia’s cousin is blown to bits and Saeed’s mother is shot in the head by a stray bullet. As the reality of their situation dawns on them, they realise that it is in their best interest to salvage what they can and move to a more stable place. The presence of the doors, that lends the fantastical theme to the work, is an instrument used by Hamid to showcase a sort of reimbursement of generational trauma on the West, justifying the title. Saeed and Nadia are forced to use this phenomenon to travel to other places in search of a home, and this journey dictates important socio-cultural links that indicate identity formation. For example, as mentioned above, Saeed is hesitant to move especially in the light of leaving his old father to the insurgents, whereas Nadia is ready to move as her bond with her family had deteriorated to the extent that she moved out of her own home to live an individualistic life. This is why it is easier for her to leave their home country, something that she is very comfortable doing because she keeps herself as her first priority.

The culture of the home country of Saeed and Nadia is one that is tradition-directed, even in a late-modern time period. This is why Nadia wears a robe, which is a stand-in for the traditional Burqa worn by muslim women as a religious garment. She wears it so that men don’t “fuck with her”. Although she doesn’t follow any other religious duty, she doesn’t even pray, which is something very important for the religion of her family and country. Saeed on the other hand, prays often but the frequency of his prayers increase towards the end as he settles down in Marin and Nadia leaves. He is also more family oriented and portrayed a good relationship with his family until he was forced to leave by his dad and leave him behind. When it comes to carnal relations, Saeed doesn’t engage in intercourse but practises oral sex, citing his vacillation to the fact that they aren’t married and for him intercourse would be a sin. Nadia has no such qualms as she has already lost her virginity outside of marriage to an underground musician. Saeed over time, does change and with the ravages of war and displacement, eventually starts having intercourse with Nadia.

These are the key differences between Saeed and Nadia and their various character types. However, there are also other similarities such as the fact that they both share marijuana joints, something that is forbidden by their religion and the government. Even Saeed, who is somewhat religious, shares this practice with her and it is one of the main bonding points between the two in the beginning of the novel as they are gradually building their bond. Both of them are young working individuals who are trying to carve out their own space in a politically and economically challenged state, which is also a factor that leads to a cultural fluctuation. For example, when the insurgents take over the city, they change the way women can dress in public, state facilities like electricity and water also cease to operate, the internet is also turned off so there is no communication with the outside world. These changes result in paramount identity shifts. Saeed can be identified as an inner-directed individual who is prepared by his parents with certain information for him to be successful. However, he also possesses his own motivations and desires, for example the desire to be in a relationship with Nadia, which is a non-conformist activity. He is also equipped with the inner-directed gyroscope that doesn’t fail him even in the end as he reverts to his religious practices and even marries a preacher’s daughter in Marin. We can also confirm that he has grown up in a prefigurative environment, wherein certain qualities in his early years are taught to him by



his parents but as he grows up, he becomes responsible for his forebears and he makes sure that his father is reliant on him, at least as long as he stayed in the country. We can say that it is a prefigurative environment as the focus shifts from the parents to the children. Therefore, Saeed comes across as a person who is an anomaly for Côté's theory, as he is an inner-directed personality type, with a cofigurative culture existing in a late-modern social structure. Nadia too can be examined in a similar light with key differences. For example, her dissonance with her family and the relevance of her gender in the socio-cultural climate. Nadia is in a tradition-directed society and her life at her home is also a postfigurative culture as the viability of her parent's wishes always trumped her own desires. She is also bisexual as we later discover when she leaves Marin and settles down with a woman, which is completely adverse to the values that have been instilled in her. She is most definitely an other-directed character type in constant conflict with the tradition-directed values at home. Her needs and wants are constantly shifting; once she escapes from her home country with Saeed and they find their way to London and develop a stable enough life, she wishes to shift again and they find themselves in Marin. In Marin, she realises that her life is not aligned with the vision that she wants to pursue and in this realisation she again leaves Saeed for independence.

Therefore, we see a constant flux in needs that is a trait of other-directedness. However, she is not able to become prefigurative as she decides to leave her family to explore her own life, perhaps because she understands that they will never understand her needs and accept her differences. This is why we can assume that she possesses a cofigurative mindset but is not successful in assimilating it into her family and developing a new cultural undertone. To conclude, we can say that Nadia's character type is an other-directed personality in a cofigurative interactional space along with existence in a Late-modern period. Therefore, Côté's theory once again does not hold true in the case of Nadia.

Another novel that explores refugeeism and displacement politics along with reactionary elements is *Red Birds* by Mohammad Hanif. His latest novel is written in the first person point of view from a plethora of characters but most notably from Major Ellie, Momo and Mutt. These three characters form the major trifecta of narration in this novel. If we are to talk about identity, Mutt would not be a good candidate to discuss about since he is a dog and animalistic identities are not addressed in Côté's work. If we are to talk of Major Ellie and Momo, there are obviously differences that Hanif himself has prioritised in addressing. It is the fact that Major Ellie is from the USA and Momo doesn't have an identity except his "fugee" status and the accompanying title of the "people of the desert;" but this hardly provides any concrete semblance of belonging or cultural identity. Momo's dad, a remnant of the past era before the refugee camps says, "Right you are. We are fugees and we can't do a thing about it. We have been fugees for such a long time that it's difficult to tell today's kids that we were not always fugees. We were like normal people. We were nomads. We had goats and buffaloes and we followed the rains and stored our own grain in our own stores." (Hanif, *Red Birds* 110) There was a bygone era of identity that has been destroyed by the military interests of the US government on the pretext of solving terrorism. A kid like Momo cannot fathom a world where his father has a reputable identity because he has always seen him trying to curry the favour of the Americans at the hangar where he worked as a logistics supervisor.

Therefore, he doesn't possess a tradition-directed sensibility and this fact is further exacerbated when we see him trying to assemble a "team" that will help him get Bro Ali back from the hangar. He drives a jeep at an age where he shouldn't even be riding a motorcycle, he also rescues Major Ellie from the desert as he is on the footsteps of death. We can see that Momo is a headstrong character that likes to be independent and who, despite his teenage years, can be a reliable person. He even succeeds in storming the hangar with

his team towards the end of the novel. Thus we can presume that he possesses an other-directed personality. This is further supported by the fact that he is perhaps the most dynamic in the novel as he wishes for countless things at once, the primary ones being money, colleagues and various businesses. It is his dream to be in the Forbes list of top CEOs and he has ambition uncharacteristic of his surroundings, especially considering the fact that most of his education comes from the television channel National Geographic. Thus, we can conclude by saying that there is no intergenerational exchange between Momo and his father and no cultural identity was passed on for him to realise and exhibit. All the people in the camp in fact carry weapons and clothing that are labelled USAID. The irony, however, which is displayed through the character of Major Ellie is the fact that Americans have not realised that they expend resources by bombing other countries and end up despising them for being terrorists and “goat fuckers” according to Colonel Slatter. The end all of these circumstances lead to a fractured society, if that is what we would consider the refugee camp to be, and in turn a disjointed identity. The fact that there is a constant shift and innumerability of wants that Momo possesses even in a society with painfully limited resources, we can quite comfortably confirm that Momo is an other-directed character. He is also prefigurative in the sense that he is the most important leading figure in the family, even more so than his father, especially after Bro Ali was taken away by the people in the hangar. In this respect we can consider him to be prefigurative as even the adults follow his lead as he tries to stabilise the situation in his family that had been upset since Bro Ali went missing. Another important consideration we can explore is Mother Dear’s character. Mother Dear is extremely religious and doesn’t believe in Father Dear’s prowess to get her son back, which of course is her main motive in life. Mother Dear is a tradition-directed character, so much so that she is reviled when Miss Flowerbody, a PhD student, arrives at their home to study the young muslim mind. She doesn’t trust her and believes that it is a sin to keep an unmarried woman and a teen son in the same home. These are all tradition-directed traits that have been passed on from generation to generation since early modern societies. Furthermore, she doesn’t develop a substantial enough presence until the last part of the novel: To The Hangar. It is until then that she is a prefigurative character embroiled in a system wherein she has to allow her younger son to lead them all. It is only in this part of the novel that she takes charge to get to Bro Ali and transforms a prefigurative character to a postfigurative character as she attacks the ghosts in the hangar and stabs them into transforming into red birds. Therefore, there is a reversal of her submissive character trait into becoming a dominant pawn in the narration of the plot. Her drive to be united by her son, a singular goal in contrast to Other-directedness, is a clear example of tradition-directed character type, all occurring in a Late-Modern period.

## CONCLUSION

The hypothesis of my research suggests that the cultural capital within the chosen texts significantly influences identities and social trajectories. It also suggests that the characters with a higher amount of cultural capital will have a more pronounced effect on their identity development. Through the course of this research, we have found out that characters with more cultural capital in fact do command a higher potency in social settings. Characters like Alice, Momo, Nadia, Saeed and Ali Shigri have lesser ability to navigate society as comfortably as perhaps characters like Teddy, Major Ellie, the insurgents and Major Bannon. From the study we have also gleaned that there is an effectual lack of capital in women and they have to make more efforts to create a robust capital and develop an independent and typifying identity. Zainab, Nadia, Mother Dear are such examples who lack necessary cultural and identity capital in contrast with their counterparts.

In terms of identity capital too, we have noted that there is a complete disarray in the way that Côté has developed his theory and the way the texts reflect the paradigm of the identity. But this is also a given since his theory is mainly focussed on Western societies and only a character like Major Ellie, Major Bannon or Colonel Slatter be correctly placed in them. This thus calls for a revision of the theory of identity capital that can properly coincide with Asian societies and can be used as a marker for further research on the subject. Refugeeism and war have been major topics covered in this research and contribute to the idea that tradition, modernity and cosmopolitanism do indeed play an imperative role in identity formation. I would also like to conclude by saying that identity is a complex concept and the representation of identity in literary texts cannot be fully analysed to the extent of subjective thought processes as there can always be a clear divide between characters' actions and their motivations. An identity complex theory is however, the closest we can get in deciphering that. This study can also be used in further works using psychoanalytic theories. From a cultural standpoint, we can say that there is a direct correlation between identity and culture as is proven through ample examples.

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