

**RE-IMAGINING CULTURAL  
INTEGRATION: CONTESTING CULTURAL  
GASLIGHTING IN SELECTED SOUTH  
ASIAN DIASPORIC FICTIONS**

**BY**

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# **Re-Imagining Cultural Integration: Contesting Cultural Gaslighting in Selected South Asian Diasporic Fictions**

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The undersigned certify that they have read the following thesis, examined the defense, are satisfied with the overall exam performance, and recommend the thesis to the Faculty of Arts & Humanities for acceptance.

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Candidate of **Master of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis **Re-Imagining Cultural Integration: Contesting Cultural Gaslighting in Selected South Asian Diasporic Fictions** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of MPhil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

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## ABSTRACT

### **Title: Re-Imagining Cultural Integration: Contesting Cultural Gaslighting in Selected South Asian Diasporic Fictions**

The present study analyses three South Asian diasporic novels, *Home Fire* (2017) by Kamila Shamsie, *The Chai Factor* (2019) by Farah Heron and *Love Marriage* (2022) by Monica Ali through the lenses of Young Yun Kim's (2001) theory of *Cultural Integration*, Elena Ruiz's (2020) model of *Cultural Gaslighting* and Zeus Leonardo's (2004) concept of *White Supremacy*. This qualitative study uses the method of textual analysis to investigate the integrative efforts of the second generation of South Asian immigrants by adapting to the cultural norms and social standards of the English and Canadian societies. This research brings out the construct of cultural gaslighting and white supremacy as a hindrance in the way of transformative transition and its impact on the psyche of the second generation of South Asian immigrants. Moreover, the research highlights the struggle of South Asian immigrant to contest the exercise of cultural gaslighting and white supremacy through their integrative efforts. The Research concludes by re-imagining the concept of cultural integration and making a suggestion that the receiving attitude and acceptability factor of migrant receiving societies are needed to be viewed along with the integrating maneuvers and adaptive measures of immigrants for a broader study of the transformative efforts at the end of immigrants of color in the white dominant host societies. Moreover, this study recommends for the future researchers to excavate the devastating impacts of cultural gaslighting and white supremacy on the psychic conditions of the second generation of South Asian immigrants in diverse cultural environments of the Western countries, its impact on the integrative endeavors of the immigrants, and the contesting efforts of South Asian immigrants against the exercise of cultural gaslighting and white supremacy.

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my supportive and loving wife for her encouragement and endless support in spite of numerous bounds and challenges during this study tenure. I offer bundles of love and respect for her on this occasion.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Diasporic literature, which exposes the issues of geographically scattered people around the world, occupies a prominent position in the existing scholarship. Diasporic Literature is an umbrella term that encompasses all the literary works written by the writers who have drifted away from their native countries and cultures. According to Pokharel (2020), Diasporic Literature is the true representation of the feelings and experiences of diasporic people, which depicts their psychological, social, economic and cultural state. It contains the themes of “crisis of identity, the rootlessness, the recurring mental ambivalence, a sense of belonging and a hope to return home” (Pokharel 94). He argues about the debates and discussions on the position of diasporic literature in world literatures and states that according to “the scholars and the critics”, the memoirs and diaries as well as the literature about a particular place or region from the writers who have never been to that place or have taken short visits do not actually fall under the category of diasporic literature. Instead, they reckon diasporic literature as a form of literature which is produced by individuals living in a diasporic community for a comparatively long-term period. However, in the latest debates and discussion, a new definition of diasporic literature has got currency which claims that a piece of literature that “shows some of the diasporic sensibilities, irrespective of its creator’s state of being or geography of being, can be called diasporic literature” (Pokharel 94).

These diasporic authors not only portray in their writings the nostalgic association of immigrants with their native cultures and backgrounds, but also provide a wide range of experiences amid the location, dislocation and relocation of immigrant people. Laxmiprasad (2020) asserts that the “self” of immigrants, developed after their dislocation, establishes relation with new environment as well as connections with their past, their cultural inheritance, their geographical reminiscences and the challenges from the present scenario which ascribe two types of identities to them—the doubly privileged and doubly underprivileged. Reflecting upon the nature of dislocation of the immigrants, he asserts that the journey of immigrants is two dimensional in a sense that they have to preserve their old cultural values along with absorbing the new culture of host communities (Laxmiprasad 104).

This research probes into the transformative moves of second generation of South Asian immigrant characters into the English and Canadian cultures by investigating the selected South Asian diasporic texts and exploring the hurdles imposed by the host societal formations via the exercise of cultural gaslighting and racial superiority. Setting of the two among the selected South Asian diasporic texts, *Home Fire* (2017) and *Love Marriage* (2022), is the London societal formation while the other text, *The Chai Factor* (2019), is written in the backdrop of Canadian culture. All the selected fiction share similarity in illustrating the indulgence of both the English and Canadian societies in the hostile treatment of South Asian immigrants. The only difference in the depiction of the selected texts is that in Canadian society, the biased conduct of white people takes place on communal level and no institution or state policy gets involved in the marginalization of immigrant communities. Whereas, in the English societal setting, the second generation of South Asian immigrants is suppressed not only on public level but the institution also tends to alienate immigrant communities from the mainstream social formation.

The rationale for the selection of these texts is that they elucidate the issues and motifs related to my thesis and considerably contribute to the purpose of this study because these texts provide a deep understanding of human feelings for convincing analysis of the major characters. It is not intentional rather it is purely coincidental that the authors of the selected texts are women writers. Racialized violence by the white men against the women of colour is one of the dominant features of white supremacy, however, this research investigates all the main characters from the selected texts for racial discrimination in a broader aspect, which encompasses racialized treatment of the second generation of South Asian immigrants from both men and women members of white dominant societies.

The research questions the tenets expounded by Young Yun Kim in her work, *Becoming Intercultural: Integrative Theory of Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation* (2001), through the postulates of *cultural gaslighting*, a socially constructed narrative which seeks to dehumanize immigrants of colour in order to perpetuate and vindicate the domination and superiority of white nations through the notions of white supremacy. Gaslighting is a form of ‘Othering’ that stealthily works on the psychology of immigrant communities to make them realize their outsider position, not fitting within the social norms of the host society. In other words, cultural gaslighting operates like ‘othering,’ where white people eliminate immigrants of colour from the societal

stratum of a white dominant society. This study explores the major characters of the Second generation of South Asian immigrants from the selected texts for their efforts to integrate into the English and Canadian cultures in the face of denigrating behavior and segregationist approach demonstrated by the members of these societies.

This research makes a theoretical intervention by questioning Young Yun Kim's *Integrative Theory of Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation (2001)* as, in her work, she only reflects upon the ability and willingness of immigrants to integrate into the host societies, but the hurdles of cultural gaslighting and social discrimination from the members of host societies are not brought forward. This research thesis, therefore, re-imagines the concept of cultural integration in the light of the analysis of main characters of the second generation of South Asian immigrants from the selected South Asian diasporic works. Also, this study excavates the element of resistance presented by the second generation of South Asian immigrants to contest the practices of cultural gaslighting at the hands of host societies through integrative process and adaptive efforts.

## **1.1 Background to the Study**

In his work, *Toward a Diaspora Literature (1992)*, Gay Wilentz elaborates the concept of diaspora and states that “The term ‘diaspora’ was originally coined to reflect the scattered colonies of exiled Jews outside of Palestine; it has come to mean the forced migration of other groups as well—most prominently, the dispersion of Africans throughout the Americas after the slave trade” (Wilentz 385). It is evident from Wilentz’s explanation that at the outset, diaspora referred to the communities that were deprived of their native lands in the advent of an aggressive intrusion. However, in recent times, diaspora discusses about all communities or people living away from their homeland. Diaspora not only refers to geographical dispersal of the immigrants but also to the critical questions of identity, a sense of nostalgia, memory, uprootedness and desire for a lost homeland. In his article, *Diasporic Literature-An Overview*, P. V. Laxmiprasad (2020) quotes Bharathi Mukherjee who asserts:

“We immigrants have fascinating tales to relate. Many of us have lived in newly independent or emerging countries which are placed by civil and religious conflicts. When we uproot ourselves from those countries and come here, either by choice or out of necessity, we suddenly must absorb 200 years of American

history and learn to adapt to American society. I attempt to illustrate this in my novels and short stories. My aim is to expose Americans to the energetic voices of new settlers in this country” (Laxmiprasad 102).

Dislocation of the diaspora, caused by their migration and expatriation, creates a “sense of rootlessness, pain and agony of homelessness in a new land” (Laxmiprasad 99). Whereas, the relocation of these diaspora within the host societies provide an insight into integrative practices undertaken for the sake of survival and existence.

Cultural integration and cross-cultural adaptation is not an easy venture, as it is hampered by cultural gaslighting, the practices of racial discrimination and social alienation by the members of the host society. Cultural gaslighting suppresses communities and individuals by creating a dominant cultural narrative that excludes certain identities and practices of the immigrants who are endeavoring to adapt to their new homes and leaves little room for them to integrate into the host society. But, despite the prejudiced behaviour and hostility from various segments of white communities, immigrants of colour strive to the fullest to adapt to the cultural norms of host societies.

South Asian diasporic novels, *Home Fire* (2017) by Kamila Shamsie, *The Chai Factor* (2019) by Farah Heron and *Love Marriage* (2022) by Monica Ali, which are my primary texts, deal with the second generation of South Asian diasporic communities who endeavor to integrate into English and Canadian cultures by adapting to their language, modern education and ways of life amid the social alienation and hostile treatment by many members of these societies.

Culture and psychology are interconnected and both are heavily dependent on each other for their operation on human mind and practices. Lehman et al. (2004) posit that psychological perspectives of individuals and their actions extensively affect cultural values and practices in a society in the long run of evolution, and these cultural values and practices influence the views and actions of individuals, which eventually influence the advancement of cultures over time (Lehman, Chiu and Schaller 15). Cultural gaslighting is used as a psychological tool by the Western people and institutions to make migrants of colour realize their settler position, thus creating hurdles in the way of cultural integration. According to Tobias and Joseph (2018), “the psychological effects of gaslighting on people of colour include a sense of alienation, disenfranchisement from the community, and distrust (1). Furthermore, gaslighting can

be seen as part of a systemic, historical process of racism that has been used illegally to target people of colour” (1).

## **1.2 Thesis Statement**

Integration of the non-white immigrants into the English and Canadian cultures is a matter of survival for them, but their integration and adaptation to foreign cultures is obstructed by the exercises of cultural gaslighting, a socially constructed narrative of the white people to perpetuate white supremacy and domination over immigrants of colour. Moreover, the adaptive transformation of the second generation of South Asian immigrants in the various cultures of Western countries is hindered because these immigrants are disenfranchised and denigrated through the exercises of cultural gaslighting and racial discrimination, but the consistent transformative measures of the immigrants render them a sense of resistance which contests the constructs of cultural gaslighting and the challenges of white supremacy exercised by these white dominant societies.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

The following research questions help to explore the impact of cultural gaslighting on cultural integration:

1. What are the integrative efforts undertaken by the second generation of South Asian immigrants and what challenges of cultural gaslighting from host societies are faced by these immigrants?
2. In what ways do the selected South Asian diasporic texts share similarities in illustrating the impact of cultural gaslighting and racial discrimination on the psyche of the second generation of South Asian immigrants?
3. How does the second generation of immigrants resist the exercise of cultural gaslighting and social alienation from host societies while integrating into various cultures of the West?

## 1.4 Research Methodology

This research study utilizes a qualitative design of inquiry to explore the major characters of the second generation of South Asian immigrants from selected texts, *Home Fire* (2017) by Kamila Shamsie, *The Chai Factor* (2019) by Farah Heron and *Love Marriage* (2022) by Monica Ali, through the lens of Young Yum Kim's theory of *Cultural Integration*, Elena Ruíz's model of *Cultural Gaslighting* and Zeus Leonardo's concept of *White Supremacy*. The research study garners excerpts and passages from the selected texts and applies the method of textual analysis to interpret the relevant passages to find answers to the research questions. The research utilizes interdisciplinary approach for this investigation because the present study draws heavily from anthropology, psychology as well as from literature. The study refers to the tenets of cultural integration and cultural gaslighting, which basically come from anthropology and psychology and are integrated into literary studies.

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant from a number of cultural, social and literary viewpoints. The unique approach of this study is that it examines the main characters of the second generation of South Asian immigrants in the primary texts from a very different approach, wherein, it investigates the cultural transformative process of these immigrants into the English and Canadian social formations by adapting to their cultural values, language and education, and explores the elements of racial discrimination and prejudice exercised by the white people and its effect on the cultural integration of immigrants in host societies. This study also highlights how the discriminatory behaviour of white people, based on the cultural background and colour of immigrants, produce the narrative of cultural gaslighting which is used by white people as a tool to establish their supremacy and domination over immigrant populace. The research study also explores the element of resistance on the part of the second generation of South Asian immigrants to counter the designs of cultural gaslighting and white supremacy by the English and Canadian societies through their perpetual efforts to integrate into these cultural formations. Furthermore, this research paves the way for future researchers to explore the role of racial discrimination and offensive conduct of western people as an obstacle in the cultural integrative practices of the immigrants as

well as the efforts on the part of immigrants to negate the constructs of cultural gaslighting and racial discrimination through their consistent struggles for cultural integration and cross-cultural adaptation.

One of the primary texts, *Home Fire* (2017), has been explored from various perspectives including ‘Radicalization,’ ‘differentiated solidarity,’ ‘Speech Act Theory,’ ‘Extremism of immigrants in Britain,’ ‘Presentation of Self’ etc. However, it has not yet been explored from the perspective of Cultural Integration, Cultural Gaslighting and White Supremacy which this research has undertaken to investigate the text with. The other two texts, *The Chai Factor* (2019) and *Love Marriage* (2022), are very recent texts and no significant critical work has been carried out on them so far. Hence, the present study foreshadows the aspect of selected South Asian diasporic texts which has remained unexplored erstwhile and tries to fill up the research gap by analyzing these three texts through the lens of Young Yun Kim’s *Cultural Integration*, Elena Ruiz’s model of *Cultural Gaslighting* and Zeus Leonardo’s concept of *White Supremacy*, which form the theoretical framework for this study elaborated and explained in Chapter 3.

## **1.6 Delimitation of the Study**

This research is delimited to the critical study of the major characters of the second generation of South Asian immigrants from *Home Fire* (2017) by Kamila Shamsie, *The Chai Factor* (2019) by Farah Heron and *Love Marriage* (2022) by Monica Ali. The research undertakes textual analysis of the leading characters of these South Asian diasporic novels in the milieu of Young Yun Kim’s (2001) *Cultural Integration*, Elena Ruiz’s (2020) model of *Cultural Gaslighting and Zeus Leonardo’s* (2004) concepts of *White Supremacy*.

## **1.7 Organization of the Study**

The research study includes 5 chapters that have been organized in a coherent and orderly manner. Chapter 1 provides a comprehensive introduction of the background and focal concepts of the thesis. It also incorporates the introduction of the main theories and the primary texts employed in this project. This chapter also



comprises of the thesis statement, objectives, research questions, significance and delimitation of this research thesis.

Chapter 2 encompasses the review of previous literary works. This chapter includes a comparative as well as a critical analysis of the works that have already been done in association with the central ideas of this thesis. It provides a context for this study and highlights the research gaps that this research project aims to fill up.

Chapter 3 contains an explicit introduction and explanation of the conceptual framework employed for this research study. It provides an understanding of the theories and concepts that have been utilized as yardsticks for the investigation and analysis of primary texts.

Chapter 4 includes textual analysis of the selected texts by using the conceptual framework and methodology explained in the previous chapters. This chapter strives to answer the research questions outlined in the very first chapter.

Chapter 5 contains the conclusion of this research study derived from the critical analysis of the primary texts. This chapter also incorporates recommendations from the research study in light of the critical analysis of selected texts in relation with the thesis statement provided in first Chapter. This chapter is followed by Bibliography.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The prime purpose behind reviewing previous literary works is to position the current study in the present day scholarship and find out a research gap to focus on the validity and worth of this research project. In the first part of literature review, I reviewed literature about cultural integration, cultural gaslighting and White supremacy and in the second part I narrowed down the review to the existing literature on the selected texts, *Home Fire* (2017), *The Chai Factor* (2019) and *Love Marriage* (2022). This, in turn, leads to the identification of research gap for this study.

#### **2.1 Cultural Integration and Gaslighting**

Yusuf Adigüzel's *Cultural Integration of Immigrants* (2017) is a useful work regarding my topic which investigates the adaptive process of immigrants in the host societies. In his research, he terms cultural integration as a process of "re-socialization" of immigrants in a society to which they are alien and they have to harmonize their living standards according to that society (Adigüzel 188). Once an immigrant has culturally integrated in the host society, he has to behave in accordance with social norms of that society. Adigüzel also claims that an adult immigrant behaves like a child in an alien society, he has to replace his learned language and has to socialize again in accordance with societal norms he has joined. During this re-socialization, immigrants need intermediary institutions to facilitate the process of their cultural adaptation, which is not limited to politicians and public institutions only, but all social institutions and people that the immigrants are going to face should develop an appropriate attitude towards this integrative process. Immigrant host societies should develop their adaptation policies in a broad way to incorporate all the social sectors, educational institutions, media, non-governmental organizations, and even families and individuals. Adigüzel's work is undoubtedly very important because it brings forth the importance of harmony of immigrants with the host societies and the adaptive policies from immigrant host societies. My intervention uncovers the hampering attitude of the host societies at individual as well as institutional level in the selected texts that obstruct the process of cross-cultural adaptation and the efforts made by immigrants of colour to

counter the discriminating behavior of host societies through their integrative measures and adaptive undertakings.

Coskun Dogan asserts that integration of various cultural communities in a multicultural social setting produces an opportunity for “cultural pluralism.” In his work, *The Role of Society Translatorship in Cross-Cultural Interaction* (2016), Dogan asserts that lack of effective communication among the interacting cultural groups may cause in “interruption of relations” with other communities, which will lead to the “polarization in society”, thus impeding the social “interaction of cultures.” Whereas, meaningful communication among the various cultural groups eliminates “cultural prejudices” because interaction of different cultures mainly depends on the “knowing and understanding the differences.” He claims that “multiculturalism” is a way of political organization that provides opportunities not only for “intercultural communication” but also for “cultural privilege to the communities” (Dogan 115). He reflects on the role of translation in multicultural societies and asserts that “translation is a social phenomenon”, which plays a major role in the intercultural communication of various cultural groups in answering “the expectations of output and target nations” (Dogan 16). He further asserts that the role of “Community Interpreters” is of great importance in the sense that they tend to “recognize cultural differences”, because these are the “representatives of their own nations and also have a social role as knowing the other nations’ cultures” (Dogan 16). Coskun Dogan’s critical work lays great emphasis on the role of effective communication among the various interacting cultural groups in a multicultural social formation and foregrounds the key role of Community Interpreters in contributing to the stability of various cultural groups in an organized and homogenous social environment. However, his research work fails to cover the broader aspect of cultural integration of immigrant communities into various cultural formations of the West which encompasses the welcoming behaviour as well as the repulsive tactics of the white people while interacting with immigrants of colour. My intervention exposes the repulsive tactics of white dominant societies in the form of cultural gaslighting and white supremacy that hamper the ongoing process of cultural transformation of South Asian immigrants into the English and Canadian societies.

In her research work, *Analyzing Two Main Obstacles to the Achievement of the Local Integration of Refugees in Europe* (2018), Miracle Chinwenmeri Uche claims that “local integration of refugees” has become the new challenge for Europe. Among these challenges, “lack of early community preparation and involvement” and the

integration policies which emphasize mainly on “refugees’ economic integration”, thus placing the “burden to integrate mainly on refugees” are the factors which mainly supplement the “obstacles in local integration in Europe” (Uche 1). She suggests that the existing “shortcomings of this approach to local integration”, necessitate the re-evaluation of “practices and policies” that contribute to the integration of immigrants in order to attain a sustainable diverse host society to “prevent the perpetuation of division among communities” (Uche 1). The lack of early community preparation and involvement lead to the scenario where the local communities have “no knowledge of the reception or resettlement process” because the readiness of a community to “receive refugees” or its willingness to “participate in their integration” has an ample impact on the entire integration process (Uche 3). Similarly, the “local integration policies” of Europe should develop such mechanisms that emphasis not only the achievement of economic integration but also “socio-cultural integration” for the sack of equilibrium in the factors affecting integration of refugees, as a system of local integration that gives more consideration to one factor than the other appears to be “unbalanced and becomes a hindrance to true achievement of a sustainable local integration” (Uche 6). Uche’s critical work holds significance in the field of integration of immigrants in the European communities and the factors that hinder the process of integration. But her work is limited because it is delimited to counting of the “lack of early community preparation” and “economic integration” as the hindrance in the process of integration of immigrants and ignores cultural, psychological and sociopolitical aspects as the driving forces in the integration of immigrants. My intervention exposes the cultural gaslighting and white supremacy of the white dominant societies as the factors that impede the process of cross-cultural adaptation and the resistance presented by the second generation of South Asian immigrants to contest the prejudiced behavior of the host societies through their integrative efforts.

Sun Kyong Lee’s research work, *Refining a Theory Of Cross-Cultural Adaptation: An Exploration of a New Methodological Approach to Institutional Completeness* (2017), investigates the relationships between various ethnic groups and host societies as well as ethnic interpersonal communication while using Young Yun Kim’s work *Becoming Intercultural: An Integrative Theory Of Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation* (2001). Lee’s research work utilizes Kim’s *Integrative theory* with a different perspective and highlights the limitations of her theory regarding ethnic group strength. She argues that ethnic group strength varies for different groups

in different regions and a generalized hypothesis cannot be established on the basis of her theory regarding the interpersonal ethnic or ethnic/host communication. Lee's works is significant in its treatment of the subject but her work is limited to the interpersonal ethnic and ethnic/host communicative relationship. My intervention investigates the integrative practices of the second generation of South Asian immigrants in the selected texts, the obstacles created by the constructs of cultural gaslighting and white supremacy and immigrants' efforts to nullify these obstructs by integrative endeavors in their cross-cultural adaptation.

In their work, *Conceptualizing the Other in Intercultural Encounters: Review, Formulation, and Typology of the Other-Identity* (2018), Yang Liu and Eric Kramer theorize the concept of Other-Identity in intercultural encounter and throw light on the confusing interpretations of 'ethnic identity and racial identity.' They decouple ethnic identity from racial identity and elaborate the concepts of ethnic identity as the "subjective sense of belonging to or membership in an ethnic culture," and racial identity as a biological term which labels "people on the basis of physical characteristics such as skin colour or salience of physiology" (Liu and Kramer 5). While taking into consideration Modood's "*Differences*", *cultural racism and antiracism* and Young Yun Kim's *Becoming Intercultural: An integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation* (2001), they argue that immigrants' Otherness on the basis of racial or cultural differences is the factor that mostly contributes to the reproduction of racism (Liu and Kramer 8). This research work from Yang Liu and Eric Kramer (2018) is considerably related to my project study but I intervene from the perspective of Elena Ruíz's (2020) model of *Cultural Gaslighting* and Zeus Leonardo's (2004) concept of *White Supremacy* to highlight the discriminatory behaviour displayed by the intolerant members of the English and Canadian societies against the second generation of South Asian immigrants and the resistance to this discriminatory behaviour demonstrated by these immigrants while integrating into host cultures.

Chia-Fang (Sandy) Hsu's work, *Acculturation and Communication Traits: A study of Cross-Cultural Adaptation among Chinese in America* (2010), has explored the role of communication in the cross-cultural adaptation of Chinese immigrants in American society while using Young Yun Kim's work, *Becoming intercultural: Integrative Theory of Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation*, as theoretical framework. While quoting Kim, she has claimed that communication plays a pivotal role in the process of cross-cultural adaptation. She has argued that by getting

communication competence in the host society, immigrants can form more sustaining relationships with native people. She has further claimed that establishing strong connections with the ethnic group can limit the participation of immigrants in the host cultural activities, which can resultantly reduce the growth of host/immigrants communication, whereas, involvement in the host cultural formation can provide durable communication skill to the immigrants. Hsu (2010) has used Kim's theory to investigate the role and importance of interpersonal communication between Chinese immigrants and American communities. Her research work is significant from immigrant / host interpersonal communication point of view but her work is limited in scope and fails to encompass other factors of cross-cultural adaptation. My intervention questions Kim's theory from the perspective of Elena Ruíz's (2020) model of *Cultural Gaslighting* and Zeus Leonardo's (2004) concept of *White Supremacy* to explore the hindrance of communication gap between the second generation of South Asian immigrants and the host societies in the shape of cultural gaslighting and white supremacy as well as immigrants' struggles to overcome these obstacles from the host societal structures by their perpetual struggle to integrate into the English and Canadian societies.

Kline's *Revisiting Once Upon a Time* (2006) has reflected on the nature of gaslighting and its origin which has obtained currency in multifaceted psychological abuses and its impact on human psyche and self-esteem. He has asserted that the term has been derived from the 1944 movie "Gaslight" in which a husband uses numerous insidious tricks to manipulate his wife by re-arranging the household items time and again and the flickering of gaslights, which make the wife doubt her perception and memory (KLINE). These manipulative efforts are intended to pathologize the sanity of her wife purporting to take possession of her riches. What Kline suggests is that gaslighting is the deliberate scheme of gaslighters to exercise influence on the mind of their victims in order to question their sanity and mind capabilities. Kline's (2006) work is significant because it has brought forward the negative impact of gaslighting in interpersonal relationships but his work is limited because it is insufficient to explore the broader aspect of gaslighting on communal level. My intervention employs the term in a broader perspective in connection with cultural integration and its effect on cross-cultural adaptive practices.

Paige L. Sweet, in her article *The Sociology of Gaslighting* (2019), terms gaslighting as sociological rather than a psychological phenomenon and states that

gaslighting creates a sense of “surreality” for the gaslightees which distorts their sense of reality and irrationalizes their perceptions of everyday life. Thus gaslighting produces an atmosphere of confusion and distortion for the victim to fall prey to the manipulative traps of the gaslighter. She ascribes feminist approach to the operationalization of gaslighting in her work and, by interrelating macro-level and micro-level gaslighting, she argues that social inequalities and power-unequal relationships perpetrate gender-based stereotypes in terms of feminized irrationality. Sweet (2019) has investigated the manipulative impact of gaslighting on female psyche and perception and has limited its scope to feminist perspective. My intervention is from the perspective of Elena Ruíz’s (2020) model of *Cultural Gaslighting* which investigates the impact of gaslighting on immigrants’ exercise of cross-cultural adaptation.

Nora Berenstain reflects on the role of structural gaslighting in white feminist methodology in her work, *White Feminist Gaslighting* (2019), and states that structural gaslighting works to “obscure the nonaccidental connections between structures of oppression and the patterns of harm that they produce and license” (Berenstain 2), as structural gaslighting is the prominent characteristic of white feminist methodology. Structural gaslighting is profoundly connected with the strategy of oppression and unawareness of its nature is deliberately maintained to obfuscate its presence in the society. She argues that structural gaslighting supports oppression in the society by negating the experiences of marginalized people through the medium of suppressing and dominating apparatuses which includes “experiences of cultural genocide, sexual violence, racism, sexism, ableism, transmisogyny and transphobia, misogynoir, homophobia, heterosexism, and classism” (Berenstain 2).

Andrew D. Spear in his work, *Epistemic dimensions of gaslighting: peer-disagreement, self-trust and epistemic injustice* (2018), highlights the epistemic dimension of gaslighting by exploring the practice of calling into question the cognitive capabilities of the victim. He claims that the impulse of the gaslighter is to gain control over the victim by destabilizing victim’s perception, self-trust, thoughts and judgments. He asserts that this control of the gaslighter is the outcome of victim’s trust in the credibility or authoritative position of the gaslighter and the series of arguments or evidence that the gaslighter provides to vindicate his point. Spear’s work is significant because he has explored the grave manipulative effect of gaslighting on human perception and judgment, but his research is limited to interpersonal relationship and

fails to incorporate the broader effect of gaslighting on communal or cultural level. My intervention is using the gaslighting in broader perspective where it counts the effect of gaslighting on social and community level.

Nelson's *Five (5) Ways US Culture and Society is Gaslighting Marginalized People* (2016) reflects on the nature of cultural gaslighting in US communities and points out how a dominant cultural narrative is constructed in order to undermine certain communities and individuals (Nelson). This narrative not only eliminates certain [marginalized] identities and practices from societal formation, but also intends to eradicate every chance of their very existence in the society. Nelson's study is important as he reflects on the role of gaslighting to marginalize settler communities from the mainstream societal strata but his work sticks to American culture and fails to cover the term in a broader sense. My intervention employs gaslighting in a broader outlook which counts the effect of cultural gaslighting in the English and Canadian cultures and its effect on the adaptive ventures of the second generation of South Asian immigrants.

In their work, *Racial gaslighting* (2017), Angelique M. Davis and Rose Ernst declare racial gaslighting as a political, social, economic and cultural process which is brought into play by white people to maintain and normalizes a white supremacist reality by the policy of "pathologizing those who resist" (Davis and Ernst 1). In this context, 'pathologizing' may be referred to as the strategy of calling into question the sanity or rationality of those who resist the superiority of white people. They claim that racial gaslighting is the production of "Racial Spectacles," a cultural narrative constructed by the white people to "obfuscate the existence of a white supremacist state power structure" (Davis and Ernst 1). They further argue that these racial spectacles seek to generate media talks and private debates to normalize elicited racial responses stirred among the masses. Davis and Ernst's (2017) work is of great importance for my research project and their research is in line with my study but my intervention is to investigate the effect of gaslighting on the integrative efforts of the second generation of South Asian immigrants and the hurdles created by cultural gaslighting in the way of their cross-cultural adaptation. Furthermore, my research study also unearths the efforts on the part of South Asian immigrants to refute the construct of cultural gaslighting and racial marginalization through their practices and measures to integrate into host cultures.

In their critical work, *Sustaining Systemic Racism Through Psychological Gaslighting: Denials of Racial Profiling and Justifications of Carding by Police*



*Utilizing Local News Media (2018)*, Heston Tobias and Ameil Joseph investigate the negative role of police service and local media and claim that the Police Services and local media discourse execute [cultural] gaslighting, a form of psychological abuse which is used to manipulate and damage the credibility of the people of colour in Hamilton. They bring out the psychological effects of gaslighting and claim that cultural gaslighting, being a part of a systemic and historical process of racism, produces a sense of alienation, disenfranchisement from the host community, and disbelief in the institutions among the immigrants of colour (Tobias and Joseph). They also highlight the discourse of media which tends to mitigate the apparent systemic racism, dehumanization, and violence as an individual problem instead of a communal and social problem avoiding debates on systemic or structural issues such as white supremacy and racial discrimination. Tobias and Joseph's (2018) work is of striking significance in the field of racial gaslighting and their critical work is linked to my study but my research investigates the negative impact of cultural gaslighting on the cultural integration of the second generation of South Asian immigrants and the obstacles erected by cultural gaslighting in the process of cross-cultural adaptation of these immigrants.

## **2.2 White Supremacy**

James W. Vander Zanden's critical work, *The Ideology of White Supremacy (1959)*, dates back to the then Chief Justice Earl Warren's verdict of 1954 who summoned that in the public education of Southland (America), the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place" (Zanden 385). The ruling of the highest court regarding changes in the region's racial patterns was reckoned by the Southern white masses as "constituting a distinct threat," and the decision was resisted with massive rallies and social movements by more than 90 segregationist organizations. These segregationist organizations had convergence at one standpoint, which was hostility toward the integration of Negroes in their social stratum. These segregationist held three major ideological ground to validate their agenda:

- (1) Segregation is a part of the divine hierarchy and should be considered as eternally fixed.

(2) The Negro race is inferior to the white one or, at the least, is "different" from the white race.

(3) The de-functionalization of segregation races will unavoidably lead to racial amalgamation, which will eventually result in a multitude of devastating consequences.

Zanden (1959) quotes the then Louisiana State Senator W. M. Rainach, chairman of his state's special legislative segregation committee, who asserts: "Segregation is a natural order - created by God, in His wisdom, who made black men black and white men white" (Zanden 386). Zanden's critical work has delved out white supremacy within the populace of the same region. His work is significant for nullifying the notions of white supremacy but my intervention debunks the exercise of white supremacy by white people of Britain and Canada against the second generation of South Asian immigrants and its effect on the process of cross-cultural adaptation of these immigrants.

In his critical work, *An African-Centered Perspective on White Supremacy* (2002), Mark Christian reflects on the domination of white people over black people through various pretexts and asserts that "white nationalism is the basis of European slavery" and after the termination of [physical] slavery, the white people switched to another "form of slavery called colonialism" and colonialism ended, white supremacy took a shift to racism. He argues that White supremacy is closely interrelated to the concepts and practice of White racism and appears in the "social, economic, political, and cultural history of European expansion and the development of the New World" (Christian 180). While reflecting upon the modern day manifestations of White supremacy, Christian declares that there is a close connection between "being of African descent and middle class and suffering racialized discrimination" (Christian 183). He further asserts that "White privilege" is an integral segment of the social structure of Western societies which is apparent in all tiers of society and can be regarded as the "social reality" of these Western societies. To understand the past and present trajectory of racism and White supremacy, it is pertinent to "follow the trail of White privilege" (Christian 188). Taking into consideration the psychology of White supremacy, he asserts that the conduct of White supremacists is based on a "fear of their global numerical minority status" and this was the main motive why people of colour were extensively excluded from powerful positions all over the Western world (Christian 192). Mark Christian's work presents an overwhelming critique of the notion

of White supremacy and investigates the exercise of White supremacy against the Black African to gain White privilege. The importance of his research work is that it contributes in bringing forward the historical development of White supremacy and its various shapes over the span of more than 5 centuries. Whereas, exercise of White supremacy by the White people of British and Canadian societies against the second generation of South Asian immigrants and its impact on the ongoing process of cultural integration of these immigrants in the host societies is exposed through this study.

In her research work, *Rethinking White Supremacy, Who Counts in 'WhiteWorld'*, David Gillborn brings forward the role of White supremacy in sustaining the “white racial hegemony” in contemporary Western societies and argues that White supremacy is not only manifested in relatively small and extreme political movement instigated on the basis of race violence, but rather it is related to the execution of power to manipulate the ordinary life and policies that “shape the world in the interest of white people” (Gillborn 320). He states that it doesn't mean that white supremacy simply refers to the “self-conscious racism” of white people in white dominant societies, but it alludes to a “political, economic and cultural system” in which the white supremacists deliberately control the “Power and material resources, conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority”, where the relationship between “white dominance and non-white subordination are daily reenacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings” (Gillborn 320). He further states that white supremacy “operates in a place that most white take for granted” while the non-white people, who are assigned a low social status of “Other”, are pushed to the margins of social stratum, “recognize their location in a false and oppressive reality” (Gillborn 335). David Gillborn's research work has substantial importance in the social classification of western societies where the white people impose the social superiority over the non-white people just because of being white and mould all the policies and social settings to gather white privileges in an illicit manner. His research work is in line with my research work, where my research work investigates the selected South Asian diasporic texts to unmask the notions of White supremacy exercised by the White people of British and Canadian societies as a marginalizing scheme to obstruct the integrative transition of South Asian immigrants into the host societies.

## 2.3 Literature about Selected Texts

Claire Chambers's research work, *Sound and Fury: Kamila Shamsie's Home Fire (2018)*, has explored Kamila Shamsie's Novel, *Home Fire*, in the milieu of sound studies to investigate the positive as well as negative connotations of the term "Radicalization." In this work, she has rejected the negative meaning of radicalization and has claimed that the terms "radicalism" and "radicalization" are not essentially negative, but even more forms of radicalization exist (Chambers 203). While suggesting that literary texts have the ability to "supplement sociological, psychological, and criminological analyses of radicalization", she argues that the novel aptly challenges the "stereotypes of Muslims" and reveals the "fictionalized everyday realities" of Muslims portrayed by the white people. She further claims that the novel modifies our knowledge of radicalization by depicting the "confusion of both jihadists and those who oppose them" (Chambers 218). Chambers' research work is very significant as she has analyzed the same novel which I have analyzed in my research study, but she has used a different perspective to explore the nature and role of radicalization in the society. My intervention declares the practices of cultural gaslighting as hindrance in the ways of cross-cultural adaptation of South Asian immigrants and their integrative practices.

*An Analysis of Aneeka Pasha and Isma Pasha's Character in 'Home Fire' by Kamila Shamsie via Illocutionary and Perlocutionary Speech Acts (2021)*, a critical work by Dr. Ali Ahmad et. al. which investigates Kamila Shamsie's novel, *Home Fire*, through the lens of Austin (1975)'s *Speech Act Theory* for the function of language beyond communication as well as the delineation of prelocutionary and illocutionary speech acts by comparing major characters from the novel. Reflecting upon the importance of communication in human life, they argue that while communicating, people express their thoughts and intentions to other people by means of language "requiring action on the part of the recipient, known as speech act" which frames their contact for the understanding of other people (Ahmad and et. al. 1288). They assert that during communicative interaction among people, the "utterance can change the situation or condition of the hearer after hearing a statement from the speaker" (Ahmad and et. al. 1290). Ahmad et. al. investigate the novel, *Home Fire*, for its illocutionary acts different characters use in the novel in order to express their feelings and emotions as well as to reveal their true personality and character. But my intervention utilizes a different perspective and I have investigated the novel as a delineation of the acts of

cultural gaslighting and white supremacy from the white dominant societies against the endeavors of South Asian immigrants to integrate into the English and Canadian social formations.

In her research work, *Kamila Shamsie's Home Fire: A family tragedy rewritten*, Kuğu Tekin draw analogy between *Hone Fire* and Sophocles' tragedy *Antigone* and states that the novel brings forth the migration policies of contemporary multicultural British society tends to tolerate the immigrant groups in only if they intend to "internalise the concept of Britishness." She makes a distinction between two types of immigrants that are treated by the British government according to their tendencies. One group comprises of "moderate Muslims", who act according to British principles and are regarded as "proper citizens" with all the privileges of British citizens, while the other group consists of those people who nurture extremist ideas or get involved in some radical activities and are considered as "enemy of the State." She claims that Adil Pasha's engagement in terrorist activities makes him "an enemy of the State" who must be eliminated from the British territory at any cost, which results in his family members, being all British citizens, to be considered "a potential threat against the State" (Tekin 1176). She further asserts that the novel's main theme revolves around the radicalisation of Parvaiz who turns to be a member of a terrorist group due to his "desire to know about his dead father", but his radical maneuverings prove to be fatal for his sisters in terms of their confrontation with British law (Tekin 1177). The work of Kuğu Tekin explores the novel, *Home Fire*, for the radicalisation of British-Pakistani citizen and the stern policies of the British government to eradicate extremism from the country by depriving immigrants with extremist idea of all the facilities and privileges of a proper citizen. But my research work investigates the novel, *Home Fire*, from a different perspective, which focuses on the marginalization of law-abiding South Asian immigrants in British and Canadian societies just because of their cultural background and colour of skin. My research foregrounds the novel as a depiction of the exercises of cultural gaslighting and white supremacy by the white dominant societies against the undertakings of South Asian immigrants to integrate into the host societies. My research study also unveils those excerpts from the novel that illustrate the elements of resistance from the second generation of South Asian immigrants to contest notions of cultural gaslighting and white supremacy demonstrated by the members of English society through their efforts to adopt cross-cultural integration.

Rehana Ahmed in her article, *Towards an ethics of reading Muslims: encountering difference in Kamila Shamsie's Home Fire* (2020), explores her novel, *Home Fire*, in the light of Iris Marion Young's concepts of 'differentiated solidarity' and posits that Shamsie's novel builds up a connection between the secular world and Muslim community beyond the lines of difference through the portrayal of Muslim characters in her novel and hence "intervenes in debates about the ethics of writing and reading others" (Ahmed 1). She focuses on the academic position of Shamsie's text as a 'literary mediator' in a society where Muslims are regarded as 'others' and are frequently excluded from Western community and are stigmatized through the discourses and practices that depict them as exotics and others (Ahmed 3). She has explored the novel for its mediatory position that establishes a connection between the stigmatized Muslim community and the Western society. But my intervention employs a different angle and I have investigated the novel as a description of cultural gaslighting and white supremacy against the South Asian immigrants at the hands of Western communities and its adverse effect on the integrative practices of these immigrants, especially the second generation of South Asian immigrants. The research study also explores the novel for illustrating the efforts demonstrated by second generation of South Asian immigrants to resist the constructs of cultural gaslighting and white supremacy by various members of the English society through their endeavors to exercise cross-cultural adaptation.

In their article, *Real Selves and Adopted Personas: Performance of Self in Kamila Shamsie's Home Fire*, Zobia Alamgir et al. (2020) investigate Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) for the identity crisis of its characters through Erving Goffman's theory, *Presentation of Self*, and assert that "characters adopt different personas for their self-presentations before others" (Alamgir, Mehmood and Ajmal 15). While reflecting on the social and personal construction of 'selves,' they claim that everyone performs in accordance with his/her social setting and exercises what his/her social setting demands (Alamgir, Mehmood and Ajmal 14). Focusing on the role of identity politics in the formation of 'self', they argue that people struggle for their identity in this materialistic world by adopting different guises for their self-presentations. Zobia Alamgir et al. (2020) explore the novel, *Home Fire* (2017), for identity crisis in modern world and the role of identity in the formation of 'self'. But, my research has investigated the novel from a different perspective while using Young Yu Kim's theory of *Cultural Integration*, Elena Ruiz's model of *Cultural*

*Gaslighting* and Zeus Leonardo's postulates of *White Supremacy*. This study has examined the novel for its illustration of the integrative practices of the second generation of South Asian immigrants. This research has also unmasked the exercise of cultural gaslighting at the hands white supremacists for the imposition of white supremacy over South Asian immigrants. This study also foregrounds the struggles of second generation of South Asian immigrants to contest the constructs of cultural gaslighting and white supremacy of white people through their transformative transition and integrative moves.

Rebecca Faith Heyman's Review (2021) of Farah Heron's debut novel *The Chai Factor* focuses on the salient features of the novel with special emphasis on character development and its engagement with current events and claims "Heron's writing is serviceable but unremarkable" due to its undue focus on the role of secondary characters in the progression of plot (Heyman 1). She further asserts that the protagonist Amira's aggressive temperament behind the "real" Amira is a "protective mechanism to guard her always-breaking heart" (Heyman 1). She appreciates Heron's portrayal of brave Amira whose life experiences have made her establish these protective defenses against racism, misogyny, toxic masculinity, and prejudice which have a lot to make Black and Brown women angry and thus "Amira's characterization captures the complexity of that anger" (Heyman 1). Rebecca also reflects on the engagement of novel with the contemporary issues of race and identity politics in Western societies. While searching various websites and research libraries for research work on selected text, *The Chai Factor* (2019) by Farah Heron, it is revealed that no significant research work has yet been conducted on this novel.

Monica Ali's latest novel *Love Marriage* is the third text I have selected for this study. It was published at the beginning of 2022, therefore, it has not yet been explored much from research point of view. However a review on the novel by Lucy Atkins (2022) is accessible. She declares in her review that *Monica Ali's Love Marriage*, a novel about the unsteady engagement of Yasmin Ghorami, a 26-year-old trainee doctor whose parents are originally from Kolkata, and fellow medic Joe Sangster, the upper middle-class son of an outspoken feminist author. Atkins asserts that in this novel all the components of modern identity like race, class, gender, faith and sexuality are depicted (Atkins). The novelist explores the generational and cultural tensions of immigrants as well as modern day political issues like Islamophobia, NHS underfunding and Brexit in her recent novel.

## 2.4 Research Gap

The literature review of the selected works reveals that the two selected novels, *The Chai Factor* (2019) and *Love Marriage* (2022), have not yet been explored for any significant research work to the best of my knowledge because they have only been published in the last couple of years. A small number of research works on *Home Fire* (2017) are available, but the novel has been explored from different angles with the employment of different theoretical frameworks which differ from the angle that I have investigated it with. My research is different from the other research works because I have done my research on the selected South Asian diasporic texts which have not yet been explored from the lens of cultural integration, cultural gaslighting and White supremacy. Further, I have used Young Yun Kim's theory of *Cultural Integration*, Elena Ruiz's model of *Cultural Gaslighting* and Zeus Leonardo's concept of *White Supremacy* as my yardstick and applied them to the selected South Asian diasporic texts. Therefore, the present study has investigated Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*, Farah Heron's *The Chai Factor* and Monica Ali's *Love Marriage* from the standpoints of cultural integration, cultural gaslighting and White supremacy to fill up the unexplored area of research in the current literary scholarship.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1 Conceptual Framework**

This chapter covers the introduction and explanation of conceptual perspectives that have been employed for this research project. The primary theories which I have employed to build up my conceptual framework are *Cultural Integration*, presented by Young Yun Kim (2001) in her book *Becoming Intercultural: Integrative Theory of Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation*, Elena Ruíz's (2020) model of *Cultural Gaslighting* and Zeus Leonardo's (2004) concept of *White Supremacy*. However, for the sake of brevity, this chapter includes only the principal and most relevant theoretical sources for the introduction and explanation of researcher's standpoint. Following are the key theoretical concepts that have been utilized as the conceptual framework for this research project.

#### **3.2 Young Yun Kim's Theory of Cultural integration**

The discussion about the social position of immigrants of colour in various countries of the West lays emphasis on the significance of cultural integration in the mainstream cultures. Tamilselvan (2020) defines culture as a complete "way of living" that includes the practices, beliefs and values of that particular region, while cultural integration is "fitting together of cultural traits" where the distinct cultures and different cultural communities are "welcomed and accepted for what they are" (Tamilselvan 4).

In Young Yun Kim's critical works, cultural integration and cross-cultural adaptation of immigrants in the host societies is the main area of investigation. She has theorized in her book that immigrants to Western countries bear the drastic marks of their racial, cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds, which influence their "adaptation process in two interrelated manners: through difference and through compatibility" (Kim 98).

Psychology and culture are interdependent for their influences on human behaviour and actions because psychological standpoint of individuals decide the cultural norms and practices of a distinct society. Thus, Kim (2001) states that

difference between the cultural norms of the settlers and host society works against the transformative process of the immigrants in the form of a psychological barrier between the stranger and the natives. While the adoptive compatibility towards foreign culture helps the immigrants to “advance toward increasingly intercultural personhood—a condition in which they are at ease with the host environment and its cultural patterns, their cultural origins, and, indeed, their ongoing transformation as well” (Kim 103). She articulates that immigrants from various distinct cultural backgrounds gain the status of “cultural insiders” from being “cultural outsiders” in the process of cross-cultural adaptation (Kim 10). She claims that the experiences of cultural opposition and hostility from the receiving societies serve as a motivation for the settler ethnicities to “change their original cultural habits and conform to those of the mainstream culture” (Kim 80). Kim is of the view that unwelcoming behaviour and social repulsion from the host communities provide a sort of motivating force for the outsiders to adapt to the practices of the host countries. She further elaborates her point by iterating the fact that the native populace expects the settlers to “conform to its prevailing normative communication codes and rules.” And despite their receptive behaviour towards the outsider, they express “disapproval, prejudice, and discrimination against those who fail to meet such expectations” of adapting to the values of native culture (Kim 152). She argues that “Openness” of an immigrant towards acceptance of foreign influences facilitates him/her to “accept the duality of his or her identity”. But, as a reaction to social discrimination, most of the immigrant groups establish a strong affiliation with their ethnic identity which puts drastic impact on the rigidity of their social identity. Kim has put great emphasis on the openness of immigrants towards the recognition of foreign influences which enable them to integrate their original identity with the new identity of the host country (Kim 174). This research utilizes the theoretical underpinning of *Cultural Integration* to investigate the integrative endeavors of the second generation of South Asian immigrant characters from the selected South Asian diasporic texts and their contesting attitude towards the prejudiced treatment of White dominant societies through the textual analysis of these selected texts.

### 3.3 Gaslighting

Gaslighting, according to Podosky (2021), is a kind of psychological influence on the target's mind which creates doubts in their mind about the perception of reality. He asserts that gaslighting is a vicious way of psychological and practical control. In this context, psychological control refers to manipulative endeavors of gaslighter to baffle the reliability of gaslightee, while practical control denotes motivation of the target person towards a specific goal against his/her will (Podosky 2). Gaslighting denotes a psychological control over the victim's mind in interpersonal dealings where the perception of gaslightee is manipulated for a predetermined purpose. The offshoots of Gaslighting include Epistemic Gaslighting, Racial Gaslighting, Medical Gaslighting, White Feminist Gaslighting, Cultural Gaslighting etc.

Cultural gaslighting is a conceptual term that refers to the manipulative maneuvers of white people to exclude immigrants of colour from the social settings of white dominant host societies. This research study employs Cultural Gaslighting as a theoretical lens to unmask the biased attitude of white people towards the second generation of South Asian immigrants.

#### 3.3.1 Elena Ruíz's Model of Cultural Gaslighting

In her work, *Cultural Gaslighting* (2020), Elena Ruíz outlines the negative impact of gaslighting on immigrants of colour and asserts that cultural gaslighting is a "technique of violence that produces asymmetric harms for different populations depending on one's processive relation to/within settler social structures" (Ruíz 2). Gaslighting works against the settler communities in a way which is covert and cannot be judged for its mischievous nature, as Elena terms cultural gaslighting as a "blameless representation of the operations of power and violence in society" (Ruíz 7). She reflects on the operative position of cultural gaslighting and asserts that "the maintenance, upkeep, and regeneration of white supremacy is the true function of gaslighting; it is an "enduring process" that kicks in when individuals or groups resist white supremacist structures in any form" (Ruíz 7). Ruíz terms cultural gaslighting as a "political, social, economic and cultural process that perpetuates and normalizes a white supremacist reality through pathologizing those who resist" (Ruíz 7). In this context, pathologizing refers to the strategy of gaslighters to question the rationality of the immigrants who try

to resist the domination of white supremacists, as adaptive practice of the immigrants and their endeavors of integration in the host societies warrant their equal position within the host societal stratum. This research study employs the concept of *Cultural Gaslighting* to highlight the negative impact of cultural gaslighting on the psyche of the second generation of South Asian immigrant characters from the selected texts and establishes it as an obstacle in the adaptive process of these characters through the analysis of the selected South Asian diasporic literary texts.

### **3.4 Zeus Leonardo's Concept of White Supremacy**

Zeus Leonardo conceptualizes white supremacy in his work *The Colour of Supremacy: Beyond the discourse of 'white privilege'* (2004) and asserts that the “conditions of white supremacy make white privilege possible” (Leonardo 137). He posits that the validation and currency of white supremacy in everyday life is established “by a process of domination, or those acts, decisions, and policies that white subjects perpetrate on people of colour” (Leonardo 137). He reflects on the sole purpose of white supremacy and asserts that “racial privilege is the notion that white subjects accrue advantages by virtue of being constructed as whites” (Leonardo 137). This notion is established through the adoration of white skin colour, though white colour of skin is not actually the gauge to measure the dominant position of white people over non-whites. Bringing out racial privileges as the root cause of white supremacy, Leonardo further states that white supremacists try to present their strategic whiteness as a state of being dominant. He exemplifies the accumulation of resources in favor of white people and deprivation of the people of colour of their basic rights by stating that white people “take resources from people of colour all over the world, appropriate their labor, and construct policies that deny minorities' full participation in society” (Leonardo 138). The exercise of white privilege is concealed from the eyes of people and the innocence of whiteness is reinforced through academia in the minds of youth which tends to obscure the subject of domination by posing that all this operation is happening without the awareness of white people. Through the yardstick of *White Supremacy*, this research analyses the selected texts to unmask the construct of white supremacy as a tool of asserting the superior position of white people over immigrants of colour and dehumanizing South Asian immigrant characters by abstaining their full participation in the host cultural environments.

### **3.5 Theoretical Intervention**

Young Yun Kim (2001) solely talks about the role of immigrants in the cultural integrative process and the responsibility of transformation into the host societies is totally laid on the immigrants, but, the receptive attitude and the acceptability factor on the part of host societies are never brought into light. Therefore, this study makes a theoretical intervention by addressing what Kim has not addressed in her work with respect to the hindrances of cultural gaslighting and White supremacy in the cultural integrative process of the immigrants. Moreover, this study also foregrounds the element of resistance offered by the second generation of South Asian immigrants to the challenges of cultural gaslighting from the host societies through their consistent integrative efforts.

## CHAPTER 4

### CULTURAL INTEGRATION, CULTURAL GASLIGHTING AND WHITE SUPREMACY

This chapter investigates main characters from the selected South Asian diasporic texts, *Home Fire* (2017), *The Chai Factor* (2019) and *Love Marriage* (2022) for the themes and examples of cultural integration of the second generation of South Asian immigrants into the English and Canadian societies. The research study also explores the selected text for the construct of cultural gaslighting and white supremacy exercised by the white dominant societies to hamper the integrative efforts of these South Asian immigrants. Moreover, the study also unearths traces of the contesting endeavors of the second generation of South Asian immigrants to counter the challenges of cultural gaslighting and white supremacy through their consistent struggle for cross-cultural adaptation.

#### 4.1 Cultural Integration in the Selected Texts

This part of the chapter explores the leading characters of the second generation of South Asian immigrants from selected texts for the traces and excerpts of their integrative endeavors into the English and Canadian societies through Young Yun Kim's theory of *Cultural Integration* (2001). This segment illustrates the examples from the selected novels that are the sincere delineation of the adaptive practices and active involvement of immigrant groups in the social life of host societies. Kim defines integration of new settlers in foreign cultures as the "dynamic process by which individuals, upon relocating to new, unfamiliar, or changed cultural environments, establish (or reestablish) and maintain relatively stable, reciprocal, and functional relationships with those environments" (Kim 31). She articulates the role of cross-cultural adaptation of the settlers in the confluence of distinct cultural values by theorizing that "resettlers change from being cultural outsiders to increasingly active and effective cultural insiders" (Kim 10). The selected South Asian diasporic novels, recurrently, demonstrate the all-pervasive outlook of cultural integration of the second generation of South Asian immigrants into the English and Canadian cultures.

### 4.1.1 The Chai Factor

Integration into foreign cultures is one of the foremost shifts that stretches over the lives of immigrants in the countries far away from their homelands. Kim claims that integration into foreign cultures defines the intuitive tendency of human beings to align with their living environment.

“It is predicated on a set of “open-systems” assumptions, based on which cross-cultural adaptation is conceived of as a case of “organized complexity” and the unfolding of the natural human tendency to struggle for internal equilibrium in the face of often adversarial environmental conditions” (Kim 12).

Migration produces significant social, economic and psychological changes in the lives of those who leave their native countries and adopt their living in an alien environment. Yusuf ADIGÜZEL refers to integration of immigrants as a process of “re-socialization” in a society to which they are unfamiliar, but they are to live in harmony with that alien society. He argues that immigrants who successfully acquire cultural integration get a sense of how to behave according to the social norms of the new society. Immigrants in their adult age behave like children due to unfamiliar language and cultural standards which they are alien to. They are to replace and re-learn what they have already known in their language and culture with new environment in order to socialize to the community that they have joined (Adigüzel 188).

In the novel, *The Chai Factor* (2019), Farah Heron depicts the protagonist, Amira Khan, an engineering consultant, though having Indian background and culture, has fully immersed herself in Canadian culture by getting modern engineering education and complying with Canadian social life. From the inception to the end of the novel, the major characters, mostly South Asians, are depicted in a perpetual struggle to secure their existence in Canadian backdrop due to their brown skin colour, distinct religion and cultural background. Amira Khan is a second generation Indian-Canadian whose parents migrated from India before her birth. Her father, Mohammad Khan, is separated from his family and works as an executive at an engineering firm in Philadelphia. Her mother, Farida, is a pediatric nurse in a hospital in the close vicinity of their home in Toronto. Amira’s younger sister is a school girl and attends dance classes and is learning *Kathak* dance taught by an Indian dance teacher. In the start of the novel, while returning to her home town in Toronto, a foreigner harasser tries to chase her due to her brown complexion and inquires about her background by asking

“Are you from India?” . . . “Pakistan then? . . . Bangladesh?” but she altogether dismisses his speculations and replies with spot expressions that “I’m Indian-Canadian” (Heron 3).

Cross-cultural adaptation is a matter of “conscious (or unconscious) choice” of the immigrants which “depends on the sense of group identity they hold in relation to the dominant group in the receiving society” (Kim 25). After completion of her coursework, Amira feels invigorated for going back to her home town and thinks about her future life,

“After two crazy-hard years of work, she would be granted her master of engineering in June. She would then return to her consultant job at one of the city’s biggest engineering firms” (Heron 2).

She is aware of the fact that her grad school liberty is no more in her grip and she will soon be a professional engineer with dull expression and formal dresses but she still longs for all this because she wants respect and recognition in the society because “in her real life as an engineering consultant, tailored suits, or blouses and skirts, were Amira’s armour, not the sweats and hoodies of grad school” (Heron 4).

Kim reflects on the hybrid identity of immigrants in a multicultural setting and quotes a Japanese-American writer, Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, who asserts:

“I’ve come to accept the cultural hybrid of my personality and recognize it as a strength, not as a weakness. Because I am culturally neither pure Japanese nor pure American... does not mean that I am less of a person. It seems that I have been enriched by the heritages of both” (Kim 187).

Same is the case with Amira, whose Canadianized hybrid personality and all her dreams for future progression are infused with the presence of her birth place, Toronto, a city immensely colourful and multi-cultural for its citizens.

“There was nothing Amira loved more than Toronto in the spring. She was born and raised in the city, and she loved that her home was the kind of place with a Peruvian coffee house next to an Afghan kebab shop, next to a Jewish deli wafting with the scent of bagels from a wood-burning oven” (Heron 80).

Amira is very sociable and keeps no barrier in connecting with people regardless of her skin colour or cultural background. Even as a young school girl, she liked to be in the company of people. Her best friend is Reena, an Ismaili Muslim girl from Toronto. They have been friends since grade two, but she develops a strong association with anyone she meets. Reena shares the reminiscence of Amira’s amiability and social



connections with everyone in her school time. “You used to drag me everywhere, even going back to high-school days. Concerts, festivals, lectures, book clubs. And you knew everyone. You made new friends all the time” (Heron 78).

The second generation of immigrants in different countries of the West keenly acknowledge the penetration of foreign values and customs in their lives so that they become an active member of the host environment. Immigrants from various cultures gain the status of “cultural insiders” from being “cultural outsiders” through their active involvement in the foreign culture (Kim 10). Amira and her family also mould their routine life according to their environment irrespective of their cultural heritage and religious beliefs. One of the significant spectacles of their secular ways of life is depicted in the novel when Amira and Reena, along with four other guys, Travis, Duncan, Barrington and Sameer of barbershop quartet visit a local restaurant for lunch. Duncan Galahad, one of the white Canadian among the group, chooses to order for two pulled-pork nachos for lunch, but perceiving the presence of Muslims in the group, he retreats the order out of consideration that Muslims are forbidden to eat pork in their diet. Despite the approval of other Muslim guys in the group, Amira chooses not to intake pork like things as a meal but not because of religious restrictions. On various occasion in the course of events, she confesses that despite a believing Ismaili Muslim, she is actually not practicing all the rituals of her religion. She affirms that for her, eating of pork is not a religious matter, rather it’s a routine matter,

“the pork thing is really more habit than anything else. I never ate pork growing up, so it seems strange to do it now. Smells weird” (Heron 82).

Submission to the social standards of host society is the “individual goal of achieving an overall “fit” between the individual and the environment to maximize the individual’s social life chances” (Kim 31). Amira’s younger sister, Zahra, strives to tune her personal life in the Canadian cultural setting. She takes dance classes for the *Kathak* dance genre but she is also fond of modern ballet dances and yearn to attend a live concert of ballet dance. When Travis gets a bunch of tickets for the ballet dance show, Amira, being aware of her sister’s fondness for ballet, feels excited to take her to the concert, even at the expense of missing her school.

“Wow. That would be amazing. Zahra loves ballet. I’ll have to ask my mum if she can miss school, but I’m sure it’ll be fine with her” (Heron 134).

Zahra feels over the moon seeing her dream of attending a live concert of ballet dance comes true, thus she exclaims “this is my first time at a real ballet. These dancers came to my school once, but it was, like, a kids’ thing. They didn’t even wear tutus” (Heron 142).

Kim advocates “intercultural personhood,” which plays a significant role against the soaring nationalism and ethnic clashes around the world, and claims that in the present scenario of the world, the boundaries of cultural or ethnic identity have been turned out to be more international in the realm of economic, political, and social issues. The modern notion of identity development warrants a sustainable image of personhood, which is not only genuine but also more adaptable than the conventional ideals of rigid ethnic affinity (Kim 235). One of the major clashes of Canadian and South Asian cultures has been discussed in the novel in the form of homosexuality and the stance of South Asian immigrants on the issue. Indian culture does not approve of the concept of sexual relationship between same gender while Canadian culture provides acceptance and legal protection to such relationship between same sexes. Sameer, son of Neelam, a South Asian immigrant from Ottawa and family friend of Amira, is one of the four members of a musical group who stay in the basement of Amira’s grandmother to participate in the barbershop quartet competition. He conceals the fact from his family that he is gay and is dating Travis, his music partner and hairstylist. He reveals his anguish in front of his friends:

“I barely accepted myself as a gay man . . . I imagined my family wouldn’t care if I was gay if I came home with a surgeon or something . . . but that’s not really what I wanted. All I wanted was Travis” (Heron 200).

But, ultimately, under the influence of Canadian cultural norms and his friend’s encouragement, he manages to overcome the fear of his family’s reaction to his decision of staying with Travis and proposes him in front of his family and audience in the live barbershop quartet competition. Another such example is depicted through the character of Farida, Amira’s mother. She is also dating a nurse, Laura, and is determined to reveal her secret when the situation demands.

During intercultural evolution, “coping” with the hurdles is one of major areas of concern in the life of immigrants. These hurdles are termed as “acculturative stressors.” Language barriers and discrimination from the host community are the two prominent examples of these stressors. Among coping resources available to

immigrants, social support from the social tiers of the host communities plays a significant role in their integrative transition, which mostly depends on immigrants' "ability to establish new social support networks" (Bierwiazzonek and Waldzus 3). Amira is zealous to progress in her profession and lead a happy and unburdened life in Canada. She develops a bond with Duncan Galahad, a native singer from Omeme, to enhance her social circle. She has the ability to cope with stressors like language barrier, social interactions and professional demand but she finds it hard to cope with the discrimination and repulsive tactics of the white people, as all her endeavors are sometimes obstructed by the discriminatory behaviour of the white Canadians, who appear to be excessively xenophobic of the people of colour. She asserts her legal position in the country but also complains about the marginalizing behaviour of native people,

"I'm a Canadian citizen by birth, so I'm sheltered in ways others can't be. I can afford to lose my temper and fight back. I fought for those who couldn't . . . No one should be made to feel like less of a human being because of their religion or the colour of their skin. No one. Not in my country. In my home" (Heron 158).

The integrative strategies of immigrants are somehow affected by the ideological standpoint of the host community and the "intergroup threat and prejudice", produced by these ideological barriers, have an immense impact on "adaptation outcomes" (Bierwiazzonek and Waldzus 17). Duncan's bother, Ryan Galahad, insults Amira's family for being outsiders and calls them fanatics and terrorist. Amira, heartbroken, reveals that they, being outsiders, demolish their identity to suit the society they are living in; they accept the cultural codes and values of the country they are settled in. She laments that immigrants don't have their personal likings and position but they always tend to please the native people with their submissive attitude and behaviour and still they lack the liberty to claim their complete identity.

"You're both unapologetically yourselves. And that is a privilege people like me don't have. We're always hiding behind masks, trying to fit ourselves to what people like you think we should be" (Heron 288).

Amira wants to develop relationship with Duncan Galahad but she wants him to know the real person inside her because she has also accepted his cultural norms and customs. She wants him to accept her with all her traditions, religious background and geographical differences.

“She was falling for him, and as terrifying as that was, she didn’t want to fight against it. But before even entertaining the idea of a future, she needed to see if he could accept, or better embrace, the Indian part of her. Her family, her food, her music, and her religion” (Heron 210).

Amira is encircled by the enigma regarding the acceptance of her distinct identity during her entire life in Canada. Despite her and her family’s faithful association with Canadian society, she gets prejudiced treatment from the native people due to her skin colour, culture, religion and territorial background.

“They were so different. There were huge barriers between them. Religion. Culture. Career choices. Geographical distance, too . . . It would be an uphill battle, but maybe their perfect harmony inside would overcome all the differences” (Heron 329).

But she is determined to shatter all these obstacles of racial discrimination and intolerance for the sake of her headway on the road leading to a happy life in the company of Duncan Galahad.

#### **4.1.2 Home Fire**

During integration into a foreign culture, along with an honest “self-appraisal of [immigrants’] individual adaptation potential,” immigrants need to demonstrate “an affirmative attitude” towards the host environment and should not stand against it. This can help to diminish the “us-versus-them psychological orientation,” because every stratum of the host society is an integral part of immigrants’ new lives, wherein their lives are “affected by and dependent on it, directly or indirectly.” The integrative process is a sort of “collaborative partnership” where person-environment interdependence produce a sense of “cooperation and self-responsibility.” The host societies cannot be blamed for all cross-cultural difficulties of the immigrants who come in contact with foreign cultures because all cultural groups and societies have the right to “assert their sociocultural integrity and justifiably exert some degree of conformity pressure on strangers, subtly or explicitly” (Kim 224).

Kamila Shamsie’s novel, *Home Fire* (2017) pivots around the lives of two migrant families in England, the Pasha and Lone family. This novel is also infused with the portrayal of the integrative struggles as well as assimilative endeavors by the second generation of South Asian immigrants in the English societal flow. Isma Pasha is the

elder daughter of Zainab Pasha, who was raised in Karachi before migrating to England and Adil Pasha, who was a second generation British whose parents were originally from Gujranwala. Though, the presence of Zainab Pasha and Adil Pasha is never depicted in the novel, they are discussed on various occasions by their children and other characters in abstraction.

Isma Pasha is the elder sister and care taker of the twins, Aneeka Pasha and Parvaiz Pasha, who raises them after their mother's death. Their father, Adil Pasha has disappeared long before the adolescence of the twins. Isma manages their studies and other expenditures by working in a dry-cleaning shop which she starts after her mother's death. Aneeka gets admission in university to pursue a law degree and Parvaiz is enthusiastic about getting into music. The life of these siblings spins around the familiar routine outlined by English society of Preston Road, North London, until Isma applies for a PhD program in sociology from Amherst, Massachusetts.

Kim, while quoting Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, supports the hybrid position of immigrants who associate their new hybrid identity with their new environment and "recognize it as a strength, not as a weakness" (Kim 187). Isma also affirmatively asserts her hybrid identity whenever she encounters a situation which demands her affinity with the host society. When Isma is ready to fly for America, she encounters the interrogation of Immigration officers in the departure room. Being in possession of British passport, she is still gauged for her various diverse concepts which demonstrate the true Englishness of British passport holders. The officer emphatically asks Isma, "Do you consider yourself British?" When she responds to the bizarre question by saying, "I am British," the officer repeats his question, "But do you consider yourself British?" which illustrates their suspicions about the Britishness of a brown-skinned young Muslim girl who is being inquired during her transition to another country for her higher studies. But she clarifies her position about her identity and answers the question, "I've lived here all my life" (Shamsie 5). By stating this she meant to tell them that there was "no other country of which she could feel herself a part" (Shamsie 5).

During the interrogation scene in the departure room, Isma is asked about various issues of the Muslim world including Shia and Sunni scuffles, about Iraq and Syria, but she shows an objective and balanced perspective of any other British citizen on these religious issues or political imbalance of power and clarifies the doubts in their

minds by asserting, “as a Brit, I don’t distinguish between one Muslim and another” (Shamsie 5).

The “host conformity pressure” is one of the blatant agents that has a stern influence on the cross-cultural adaptation of immigrants, which yields a lot to the integrative process (Kim 160). The Pasha sisters also go through this conformity pressure and demonstrate their inclination towards the English society. The history of their father’s activities as a Jihadist follows them throughout their lives, a life which insists on their submissiveness to English norms and rules as a dominant factor for their existence. He left England for Syria to fight for Muslims and then joined Afghan fighters years ago and eventually died on his way to Guantanamo. Isma and Aneeka show no affiliation with their father, Adil Pasha, in their social circle in order to abstain from any clash between English standards and their inclination towards their father, “a terrorist,” who had been toiling against the interests of Britain and the entire Western world. But Parvaiz Pasha, under juvenile enthusiasm, idealizes his father and admires him as brave and prudent in the battle between good and evil, so he always adores his kinship with his father. This is seen as a weakness in his character and is exploited by the ISIS Caliphate who approach him through Farooq, a man from London who is working as a recruiter for the caliphate. Farooq’s insidious designs are never revealed to Parvaiz, but he is allured to Farooq because he pretends to be his father’s acquaintance from the battlefield and admires Adil’s bravery and honesty.

Parvaiz Pasha, blinded by the false depiction of caliphate, moves unnoticeably to Istanbul to join the group, leaving his sisters in the line of fire. He pushes his sisters in a situation which makes the institutions of the country question their loyalty towards their country of birth. Isma disapproves her brother’s desertion which puts the safety of his sisters as well as of their country in peril and informs the security personnel about Parvaiz’s intentions. When Aneeka protests her act of informing the security personnel, Isma declares that they cannot afford the opposition of British law and people as they are at the verge of a situation which can lead them to the status of infidels and traitors.

“We’re in no position to let the state question our loyalties. Don’t you understand that? If you cooperate, it makes a difference” (Shamsie 42).

When Aneeka shows her determination to side with her brother, Isma laments her brother’s betrayal and tries to dissuade her sister from supporting him in his disloyal maneuvers, “I wasn’t going to let him make you suffer for the choices he’d made”

(Shamsie 42). Isma'a stern opposition of her brother's hostility against their Britain depicts her loyalty, patriotism and her sincere integrative efforts.

Kim asserts that cross-cultural adaptation is a phenomenon in which immigrants change their status from "being cultural outsiders to increasingly active and effective cultural insiders" by adapting to the new cultural setting of host society (Kim 10). Karamat Lone, a British politician of Pakistani descent who rises to the position of Home Secretary, shows the hallmark of the integrative endeavors by the second generation of South Asian immigrants. Being a politician, Karamat adopts the British nationality and the Englishness so profoundly that he even betrays other immigrants of his constituency for the safeguard of British values and his own powerful position. The article in a magazine describes Karamat Lone as "the newly elevated minister . . . from a Muslim background" (Shamsie 33-34). Isma thinks that this is how the journalists always refer to him "as though Muslimness was something he had boldly stridden away from" (Shamsie 33-34).

Though earning a prestigious position in British parliament, Karamat Lone undergoes a scathing criticism from the media and natives because of his religious affiliation and cultural background. Near the end of his first term as an MP, Karamat's picture of entering a mosque is published in a newspaper with the headlines "LONE WOLF'S PACK REVEALED." Since this mosque is associated with its "hate preacher," therefore Karamat gets targeted by media criticism. Karamat Lone had to respond to the headlines and says "the picture was several years old [and] he had been in the mosque only for his uncle's funeral prayers," and claims "he would never enter a gender-segregated space" (Shamsie 35). In order to clear his image and appease the concerns shown by the British press, he later gives them pictures of him entering a church with his wife. On the one hand he is able to allay the fears of the British authorities, but on the other hand his disclaimer at not being a member of the mosque with a hate preacher cleric and entering the church with his wife offends the Muslim majority of his constituency.

It is manifested from the character of Karamat Lone that he is more inclined towards his English identity in comparison to his religious or cultural background. His aim at achieving the vast powers of a Prime Minister demonstrates his enthusiastic immersion in British identity. His advancement in British politics cannot be decoupled from his dedicated efforts of integration into British society.

“Karamat Lone had precisely calculated the short-term losses and long-term gains of showing such contempt for the conventions of a mosque” (Shamsie 35).

The new horizon of awareness and experience among the immigrants during their intercultural transition produces “boundary-ambiguity syndromes”, which entail the original cultural identity of immigrants losing “its distinctiveness and rigidity and the emergent identity shows an increasing interculturalness” (Kim 65). Once, during his address to the youth of a Muslim school in Bradford as the Home Secretary of London, Karamat Lone urged them to be true British above everything they belong to, because this is the criteria for acceptance in Britain. He narrows down the concept of integrative efforts to the obliteration of one’s distinct cultural identity and ideological entity to fit in the frame of British national design.

“You are, we are, British. Britain accepts this . . . Don’t set yourself apart in the way you dress, the way you think, the outdated codes of behavior you cling to, the ideologies to which you attach your loyalties. Because if you do, you will be treated differently . . . because you insist on your difference from everyone else in this multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multitudinous United Kingdom of ours” (Shamsie 89).

Karamat Lone’s son, Eamonn Lone, also denotes a major shift in the cultural heritage of his father because his name ‘Eamonn’ suggests the Anglicized alteration of the Asian name ‘Eeman.’ Eamonn also supports his father’s stand even on the “wrong” decisions he made to strengthen his political position and justifies his undertakings to safeguard British values and national interest to prove his loyalty to his British nationality.

But everything he did, even the wrong choices, were because he had a sense of purpose. Public service, national good, British values. He deeply believes in these things. All the wrong choices he made, they were necessary to get him to the right place, the place he is now. (Shamsie 51)

Karamat Lone is second generation Pakistani born British national but his son, Eamonn Lone, is a British born youth who is totally English in temper and attitude because he is completely unaware of his father’s cultural codes and native language. Very often, Karamat calls him a posh English boy,

“who is this posh English boy with my face, the father would say, sometimes with disappointment, sometimes with pride” (Shamsie 104).



When Eamonn visits America and meets Isma, she is also convinced of his English mannerism and etiquettes, “the Englishness of his humour, and his cultural references, were a greater treat than she would have expected” (Shamsie 19).

In cross-cultural adaptation, “language proficiency” of the outsiders has a substantial effect on immigrants’ integration into the host community. The immigrants’ longing for “social recognition and for an equal position” within the host community mostly rely upon the fact that their “language proficiency speeds up acquisitions” (Frittella 376-77). Most of the immigrant characters in the novel seek to gain language competence for social recognition and mainly depend on English language for their interethnic or intra ethnic interactions. Once, Eamonn visits Aunty Naseem, the elderly Pakistani immigrant and guardian of Aneeka, to deliver a parcel sent by Isma, she asks for the sugar in the tea and then reacts to his response, “You British, never any sugar in your tea. My grandchildren are all the same” (Shamsie 61). Even when Aunty Naseem asks him whether he speaks Punjabi or Urdu, he replies that he can speak neither Punjabi nor Urdu, only English and French to some extent. On an earlier occasion, Isma also asks the same question about the Knowledge of Urdu language, but his expression reveals that he doesn’t understand the word “bay-takalufi” (Shamsie 29). Even when he apologizes to Isma, he says “Jesus. I mean, sorry,” which is not the way a Muslim apologizes.

All the major characters in the novel, *Home Fire*, demonstrate a high degree of integrative openness and sensible efforts to abide by the English societal norms and values, even in the face of alienation and marginalization from the English society. Isma and Aneeka have lots of grievances against the discriminatory behaviour of the British environment towards them, but they still adhere to the English values and their social standards. Karamat is criticized and belittled because of his cultural background and Muslim constituency, but he still keeps British interests and English values at the core of all his political maneuvers.

### **4.1.3 Love Marriage**

Willingness of immigrants to accept new cultural values and societal norms allows them to surrender their “past-oriented identity” and conform to the host environmental conditions. The degree of “cross-cultural adaptation can only be enhanced by the quality of openness,” as “openness” of immigrants renders them the

ability to view their own personality and the new environment in convergence with the willingness to be “transformed as they incorporate new experiences and new learning”, because the openness of immigrants stimulates their “involvement in the host environment by making them more accessible to the local ideas and people” (Kim 174).

In her novel, *Love Marriage* (2022), Monica Ali illustrates how a migrant Bengali family, who is living in London, molds their lives according to the customs and social standards outlined by the English society. Shaokat Ghorami and Anisah Ghorami are Bengali immigrants but they are considered as Indian descendants by the native white people. Shaokat is a doctor by profession and lives a retired life in London, while Anisah is a house wife. She loves to present her traditional cuisines in parties but also has a great fondness for multicultural social standards and modern outfits. They have two children, Yasmin and Arif. Yasmin is a trainee doctor and works as a geriatrics, while Arif has graduated in sociology and has been looking for a job for about two years.

One of the striking developments among the immigrant communities, which supplement their struggle to incorporate into the host environment, is the increasing trend of “intermarriage,” which helps the immigrants to develop intimate bonds with the host communities via their spouses’ social interactions with native community (Kim 129). The novel depicts how the Ghorami family immerse their life in English principles and adapt to the English traditions in their living routine. One of the striking aspects of diasporic literature is the illustration of cross-cultural marriages in a multicultural environment which exposes the social cohesion of families bearing separate racial features. From the very start of the novel, Ghorami’s parents are depicted entering an integrating situation in which their daughter, Yasmin Ghorami, is looking forward to tie the knot with Joseph, a native English man and fellow doctor at St Barnabas hospital. The invitation card of their marriage holds the inscription:

“Yasmin and Joseph are getting married!  
Save the date: Saturday, 17 June 2017” (Ali 269)

The invitation card bearing the names of Joseph, a native English man, and Yasmin, a member of immigrant family of Bengali origin, demonstrates a high degree of interconnectedness of people coming from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The marriage between Yasmin and Joshep is being planned with the approval of their parents and Yasmin’s family is enthusiastic about the arrangements of their

only daughter's wedding. The involvement of Ghorami family in the matrimonial affairs of their daughter's wedding and their inclination to establish family terms with a white family envisages their integrative efforts into English social stratum.

“Her parents would meet Joe's mother for the first time. They'd all eat dinner together at her house in Primrose Hill and discuss wedding plans and make polite conversation” (Ali 2).

Most of South Asian communities seek to arrange marriages within their ethnic communities because of their ideological connections and cultural contacts. Yasmin's family supports her decision of marrying a white native man and shows no sign of dissent in their behaviour and treatment. Yasmin's mother, Anisah, keeps her traditional heritage alive in their household and always endeavors to adhere to her cultural identity. But, for the sake of her daughter's existence and professional survival in English society, she does not impose her traditional connection on her daughter.

“Her parents, Shaokat and Anisah, liked Joe because as a doctor he was automatically suitable, and because everyone liked Joe, he was gifted that way. If Anisah longed for her daughter to marry a good Muslim boy it was an opinion she kept to herself” (Ali 13).

The arrangement of marriages on the basis of casts or religious beliefs is a striking feature of South Asian families since long. But the second generation of South Asian immigrants, under the influence of English principles and social norms, breaks away from the outdated concepts of marriage on communal basis.

Living in London for more than three decades, Shaokat has adopted all the traits and manners of the English society. He shapes his life in relation to his settler abode more than his cultural background. His integration into English society is reflected from his willingness to adopt those foreign habits which he cannot exercise in his own traditional conditions.

“He worked, he studied his journals, ate his meals with his family, and occasionally drank a small measure of whisky from a ruby-red crystal tumbler that was kept with the whisky bottle in the top drawer of the mahogany desk” (Ali 7)

The “local culture” of immigrants living in a multicultural society demands their acknowledgement of “its historical, political, economic, religious, as well as its values [and] ideologies”, whereas, the deviation of immigrants away from their

local cultural models betray their inclination towards cultural standards of the host society as a substitute for their native cultural values (Kim 104). The religious restrictions don't permit Muslims to consume alcohol but this example shows that South Asian Muslim immigrants, under the social impact of the host society, intake 'whisky and champagne' as a matter of routine in order to adapt to the prevailing cultural practices of the host environment. Ghorami household is also following the same dominant cultural practices of consuming alcohol in their normal life circle which is evident from Shaokat's routine.

The immigrants of colour struggle to the best of their capabilities to get in line with the host societal norms and values in order to prove their dedicated presence in the host social formation. As the integrative process involves the temperament and "internal conditions" of immigrants which affect the progress of cross-cultural adaptation. Every individual takes adaptive process according to his/her own "temperament and sensibilities" (Kim 82). Anisah reveals a special bent towards the host cultural standards and modern fashion when, on their first visit of Joseph's home, she strives to pose as a modern woman who wants to keep pace with the evolving social standards of the multicultural English society.

"I was wondering . . . why don't you wear one of your saris? You always look amazing in a sari. 'Oh, no,' said Ma. 'Mrs Sangster will think, This Yasmin-Ma is backwards. Why doesn't she adapt and integrate? This is why I say, first impression counts'" (Ali 12).

The conversation between Anisah with her daughter exposes her enthusiastic inclination to adapt to the English dress codes and the decorum of public gatherings. She wants her personality to be witnessed in complete confluence with the English social attitude. It can be drawn out from Anisah's disposition that immigrants of colour make sincere efforts to adapt to the social norms of the English society regardless of their cultural background.

Cultural integration is a process which is "characterized by increased language knowledge and ability to get around in the new cultural environment" (Kim 20). Cross-cultural adaptation provides the opportunity to the immigrants of colour to gain language competence and heightened communication level to interact with the host communities. Cultural integration of Ghorami family is marked by their active participation in social interaction with the English community.

“Baba spoke English correctly. Too correctly. It made him sound foreign. He was thirty-one years old when he came so of course he was never going to sound exactly like an Englishman” (Ali 19).

The adoption and effective use of host language enhance the integrative ability of Ghorami family to engage with English community in a balanced and inclusive dialogue. The use of host language enables them to enter in a broader and homogenous status with the host society.

The “minority-majority relations” in a multiethnic cultural environment reveal that minority groups, who depend on the majority group for their survival, are “structurally integrated into the political, social, and economic systems of the host environment” (Kim 13). Therefore, the national, ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious differences of various diverse communities interacting in multicultural social structures are losing their relevance in the modern world. Cultural integration of South Asian immigrants helps them to interact with various dissimilar cultural groups for the development of their hybrid identity. Shaokat Ghorami’s integrative journey makes him revisit his religious beliefs and practices in the broader perspective of globalized world.

“He hadn’t set foot in a mosque since he left India. And he was a secular Muslim, he was fond of saying, as many Jewish people were secular Jews” (Ali 37).

Revolution in the religious perspective of immigrants is one of the prominent features of migrant life. This revolution in the religious outlook of immigrants is produced from the confluence of diverse cultural groups having distinct religious ideologies. Drifting away from his cultural and religious boundaries, Shaokat Ghorami also adopts secular outlook in religious matters under the influence of multi-cultural and multi-religious English society.

Cultural integration of immigrants allows them to establish their affiliation with the host societies through the development of a hybrid identity which incorporates the traits of both their cultural as well as new adopted identity. In one of her interactions with a white native women, Yasmin claims her association with Britain, the country of her birth, despite being a member of immigrant group. When the white woman asks about her identity, Yasmin asserts her English identity.

“London? Sometimes was enough. More often than not, it was insufficient. Yasmin sighed to herself. If you didn’t elaborate further then the follow-up questions made it seem like you’d been evasive. She could say, My parents are from India but I’m from London” (Ali 103).

The ascription of English identity by Yasmin accentuates the efforts of the second generation of South Asian immigrants to associate their personhood with their hybrid identity because cross-cultural adaptation marks a shift from the “original cultural identity” to a broader, “intercultural” identity (Kim 61). Yasmin feels more at home with her Englishness which is quite evident from her endeavors to immerse in English social life by her medical profession and marriage with a white Englishman.

Cultural integration is a dynamic and ongoing process in which the “minority groups are structurally integrated into the political, social, and economic systems of the host environment” (Kim 28). The close analysis of the novel brings out that all the immigrants of colour establish close association with English principles. The immigrants of colour take active participation in British political maneuvers. During a social gathering, a white woman, Sophie, asks Yasmin about the political position of her family on Brexit, so Yasmin responds, “Baba voted for Brexit, she and Arif voted against” (Ali 313). The admission of voting for Brexit by Yasmin’s family indicates that they are socially, religiously and politically integrated into English society and assert their integral position on various occasions.

The close textual analysis of the novel, *Love Marriage*, reveals that all the major characters of immigrant community exercise ardent endeavors to conform to the social principles and societal mannerism of English society. All of the Ghorami family members demonstrate a high degree of transformative disposition towards host society. The second generation of South Asian immigrants constantly contest the repulsive attitude of English community through their integrative practices and adaptive trends.

## 4.2 Cultural Gaslighting and White Supremacy in the Selected Texts

This section of the chapter excavates the performance of cultural gaslighting and racial discrimination as an obstacle to hinder the adaptive undertakings of the second generation of South Asian immigrants into the host societies in order to assert their supremacy over immigrant communities through the lens of Elena Ruíz's model of *Cultural Gaslighting* and Zeus Leonardo's concepts of *White Supremacy*. Moreover, it reveals the efforts of the second generation of South Asian immigrants to contest the practices of cultural gaslighting and white supremacy from the dominant white communities. Discrimination and hostile treatment of immigrants of colour from the dominant communities of the Western countries is an issue which dominates a major portion of diasporic literature. Gaslighting is used as a covert tool of violence perpetrated by the white people to undermine immigrants of colour by questioning their existence in a multicultural social formation. Elena defines cultural gaslighting to be a "blameless representation of the operations of power and violence in society" (Ruíz 7). The prime purpose of cultural gaslighting is to assert white supremacy on the immigrants of colour by downgrading them below the status of human beings with equal rights. The selected South Asian diasporic novels effectively vocalize the operation of cultural gaslighting and its impact on the smooth integration of immigrants of colour in Canadian and English traditions and customs.

### 4.2.1 The Chai Factor

The social construct of cultural gaslighting uses the "legitimizing narratives," that are deployed by the white supremacists against the racialized populations of immigrants, which work as "boundary policing" apparatuses in order to create a border between white people and immigrants of colour through "diffuse cultural practices" (Ruíz 13). The narratives of [cultural] gaslighting offer the understanding of that scenario which necessitates the "maintenance, upkeep, and regeneration of white supremacy" (Ruíz 7). White supremacy is a structure of strategies and practices purported by the white people to "make white privilege possible" in a white dominant multicultural setting which is obtained by a "process of domination" inflicted upon the people of colour by the white supremacists (Leonardo 137).

Farah Heron in *The Chai Factor* (2019) portrays complete incorporation of the protagonist, Amira Khan, in the Canadian social standards despite her Indian background and diverse cultural values. She is getting engineering education and looking forward to resume her job as a consultant at Hyde, an engineering firm. She reckons herself as an Indian-Canadian and acquires all the Canadian ethics and values by getting modern education and their ways of life. But, regardless of her sincere efforts to internalize Canadian cultural values, she is often prejudiced and discriminated on the basis of the colour of her skin, Indian cultural heritage and religion.

Amira is working as a consultant at an engineering firm, Hyde, and she is granted two years leave of absence to complete her education. After completion of her coursework, she has a meeting with her new boss, Jim Presscot, who seems to impose his notions of white supremacy on her in their first meeting because “whites as a racial group secure supremacy in almost all facets of social life” (Leonardo 140). He calls her “Pretty young thing” and endeavors to undermine her ability as a female engineer. He seeks to destabilize her confidence in coping with her responsibilities because of her gender and also ridicules her name.

“I don’t believe people should advance in the field based on anything other than ability. Not because of some letters behind one’s name, or to fulfill any . . . perceived requirement . . . Lead consultants are expected to work demanding schedules, with little time for domestic obligations. And as you have been away for so long, I see little evidence of your ability to meet our expectations” (Heron 48).

Jim implies that it would have been better for her to stay at work and impress him instead of improving her academic qualification for the job. He tries to downgrade her abilities as a competent engineer and suspects that she would utilize other tactics to keep her favorite in the field, which is an insidious form of gaslighting, a form of “psychological manipulation” which tends to induce “doubt in a target’s understanding of reality” (Podosky 2). He suspiciously assumes that Amira, as a young unmarried girl, will try to manipulate her seniors instead of moving forward in the field on merit.

“Anyway, young lady, I’m not saying it’s impossible for you to move ahead at Hyde, but I wouldn’t want you to think you have an advantage because of anything other than results. I run a meritocracy here” (Heron 49).

Gaslighting functions in interpersonal affairs in a way that reveals the gaslighter’s motivation for gaslighting to “gain total or near total control over the



victim” through “the victim’s trust in him as a credible peer or authority” (Spear 7). The same is the situation of the professional reliance of Amira on Raymond, because he is a senior engineer at Hyde and Amira asks him to be her professional mentor. She always considers him as her well-wisher and trust his suggestions in every situation of her professional life. But, eventually, Amira observes that he also disbelieves her abilities as an engineer and totally disregards her research in sound reduction area. He also appears to have typical white male domination mindset which does not allow a brown girl to excel in professional competence in comparison to white males.

“Minimizing Amira’s experiences was not something Raymond had done before. That was gaslighting. And she had been too caught up in hero worship to notice it” (Heron 204).

This shows that Raymond uses his authoritative position as her mentor to undermine her professional talent, which is a form of gaslighting that manipulates the target’s dependent position on the gaslighter.

In fact, Amira is brought to the verge of psychological numbness that makes her accept her subhuman position which the white dominant society wants to assign her because gaslighting always seek to “cause a target to form certain attitudes concerning her own reliability” and make the “target to perform actions that she otherwise wouldn’t” (Podosky 2). She leashes all her desires for achieving an honorable position through her education and engineering profession that would give her self-esteem and recognition in the society. Instead, she is made bow her head in front of socially constructed imposition of white superiority, so she decides to stop engaging with all the useless scuffle with dominant white supremacy for her own survival.

“As the world became more intolerant of people like her, part of her found ways not to be so different, not to stand out. The parts of her she couldn’t change would always be in the minority, so she may as well conform with the things she could change” (Heron 238).

Amira is brought to a position which makes her succumb to the prevalent crushing designs of white supremacy, which are inflicted upon immigrants of colour through the practices of cultural gaslighting.

One of the most recurring illustrations of the exercise of gaslighting by the white people throughout the novel is the incident that takes place on the airport when Amira wants to visit her father in Philadelphia. This incident of racial discrimination occurred

at the airport, which is alluded to in various sections of the narrative on numerous occasion, bears a drastic impact of insecurity and vulnerability on the psyche of Amira. In a later reminiscence of the event that occurs at airport when Amira is en route to Philadelphia, Amira relates the incidents,

“In the border security line, I got pulled aside. Random extra check, they said....anyway, the guy started asking me all these questions and made me open my phone . . . He didn’t seem to care that Dad’s an executive at an engineering firm. I told them I wasn’t religious. They asked about my family, what sect of Islam I belonged to, where my family lived. They gave me a thorough pat-down. Several times. I was born in Canada. I’m not from any countries on the travel-ban list” (Heron 157).

Amira is a Canadian national by birth but she is regarded as an outsider because of her brown complexion and religious background as “social inequality and cultural stereotyping provide footing for gaslighting strategies” (Spear 857). Her non-white appearance does not allow the security crew to consider her an integral part of Canadian society. The hostile gaslighting of a fragile brown girl in the guise of security check from the white people is the means to maintain white supremacy on immigrants of colour.

Amira, being a member of South Asian immigrant community who are viewed as a minority group in Canada, is well aware of the maltreatment she often receives from some white people. She is well aware of the fact that immigrants are judged on the basis of their racial background and colour of skin, and their existence in Canadian society is problematized in order to hamper their struggle to gain some importance in white dominant society because the notions of white supremacy warrants the fact that the “whites invest in practices that obscure racial processes” (Leonardo 144).

“Yes, my parents are both immigrants, and it hasn’t always been easy, but things weren’t like this before. This...endemic...sanctioned racism. It’s getting so much worse. It’s heartbreaking” (Heron 157).

Amira is concerned about the ever-growing intolerance among the Canadian people towards immigrants of colour despite their consistent efforts to come up to the expectations of the host community.

The white supremacists seek to question the rationality of those immigrants who challenge the upper handedness of white people in order to “normalizes a white

supremacist reality through pathologizing those who resist” (Ruíz 7). Amira is also stuck in same situation when she protests through media and journals against the biased treatment of security troops at airport. She is vilified for raising voice against the prejudiced behaviour of white people and she is reminded of her position and status in Canada.

“They said I should have been more obedient. I shouldn’t have flaunted my culture or religion. I needed to assimilate here. Crossing the border is a privilege, I shouldn’t take it as a right. I was a bitch. I was just another angry terrorist” (Heron 159).

The aggressive reaction from the white people against Amira’s questioning of the biased treatment of security crew at airport points to the operation of gaslighting that tends to portray those people insane and irrational who endeavor to resist the supremacy of white people.

Near the occurrence of airport trauma, Amira was enthusiastic about the awareness of people to avoid ascribing immigrants a position below humanity. She makes her appearance on every forum to disseminate her standpoint on the equal position and treatment of all immigrants on equality basis in Canada but her efforts appear to be ineffective to bring any positive change in the overall mindset of white people and even her very existence in the country is questioned and her prestige as a citizen is denied as “strategies of whiteness [...] serve to perpetuate white racial supremacy through colour-blindness, ahistorical justifications, and sleights-of-mind” (Leonardo 141). She feels that what she says or writes will not change the mindset of all these bigots. They only tend to hate her existence and are not ready to consider her human.

“All those articles she wrote for online blogs and magazines, as well as her university paper, plus all those tweets and Facebook posts, all for the purpose of raising awareness about intolerance— but she hadn’t helped anything. She hadn’t changed any minds; the world wasn’t any better. Fighting all these tiny battles was having no effect on the war. But it was killing her” (Heron 61).

Though, Amira fights against the maltreatment of all minorities and tries to highlight the social rights of oppressed migrant people, but her voice is not given due attention and she notices no positive change in the overall mindset of

white populace. Her attempts to unearth the overpowering efforts of white people thrusts her survival into a hazardous situation.

In a multicultural social formation, the relationship between “immigrants’ acculturation strategy” and the discriminatory behaviour of the members of the host society is formed by the “dominant group’s ideologies”, as the integrative bending of immigrants are mostly affected by “intergroup outcomes” which mostly appear in the shapes of “intergroup threat and prejudice.” These threats and prejudices in turn affect the “adaptation outcomes” (Bierwiazzonek and Waldzus 17). When a reporter, who wants to write an article on Islamophobia along the North of the border, contacts Amira to get her feedback on the incident she underwent the previous year, she denies to answer any question in this regard out of fear for her own safety and replies “I would prefer you didn’t write it at all, but I’m sure a Muslim’s opinion on that has no merit for you” (Heron 16). Her indifference towards the reporter’s article on Islamophobic activities shows her mistrust in the hollow slogans of equality of human beings. Even the report strives to instigate her for desired response by relating similar incidents of violent behaviour of white people against Muslim immigrants.

“I’m not sure if you’ve heard, but a woman was assaulted on the subway yesterday coming home from work. Her hijab was torn off. These incidents are becoming more common, even in liberal enclaves” (Heron 17).

The reporter’s reference to the anti-Muslim ventures of so-called liberals indicates that such intolerant behaviour of white people against Muslim migrants is brought into action in order to establish white domination on immigrants of colour. This intolerant behaviour is produced by the white people through racial spectacles, a socially constructed notion of white people which tends to problematize the existence of those immigrants who endeavor to gain equal status in the white dominant society.

Amira used to be full of exuberance and enthusiasm before the hostile treatment at the hands of security troops at the airport, but her soaring personality is dragged to humiliation and she confines herself in an unseen dungeon which remains unbreakable for everyone including her friends and family. She knows that she is prevented by the airport security to enter into the US not because she is prohibited to enter the US but just to gaslight her for her unyielding resistance towards white supremacist authority, thus she relates “one of the guys told me he didn’t actually suspect I was dangerous,

but he wanted to teach me a lesson” ” (Heron 157). Her best friend, Reena, refers to the juvenile aspect of her life and wants her to break the confines she has built around her personality but she is unable to get rid of the psychological trauma she suffered from at the airport.

“You used to drag me everywhere, even going back to high-school days. Concerts, festivals, lectures, book clubs. And you knew everyone. You made new friends all the time...you always had a huge personality. Lately, you’ve just. I don’t know.[f]olded into yourself. And you snarl at anyone who tries to unfold you” (Heron 78).

The introvert personality of Amira is not the result of her failure to adapt to the Canadian social norms and values, but this is because of the unreceptive attitude and lack of acceptance on the part of white dominant society which make her confine her ambitious posture for her own protection. Cultural gaslighting follows the agenda of white supremacists to suppress and eliminate immigrants of colour from mainstream societal formation.

Cultural gaslighting represents a kind of torture that renders “mental manipulation and deceit that distributes harms unevenly across populations” of immigrants (Ruíz 6). From the very beginning the effect of gaslighting sustains in Amira’s mind and she feels incapable to throw away the evil spell of that inhuman treatment which circles around her personality forever. She even gives up the idea of leaving Canada out of her fear of the security troops in spite of numerous encouraging attempts of her father. She confesses to Duncan that despite being a Canadian national, she refrains from traveling outside Canada because she is afraid of facing the border guards.

“She hadn’t flown out of the country since the incident last year. She wasn’t exactly afraid; she just wasn’t all that keen on the idea of facing the border guards again, especially with the giant black mark no doubt attached to her name in the database . . . maybe she was a little bit afraid” (Heron 110).

Cultural gaslighting, following the designs of white supremacy, marginalize Amira in order to ascertain her settler position in Canada. She is suppressed enough to prevent her from even wanting to fly outside Canadian territory due to her fear of facing airport security troops.

Cultural gaslighting tends to see women of immigrant community through “racial spectacles,” a perspective which is “assailed against women of colour” (Ruíz 8). Amira, on one occasion, happens to accompany Duncan to a restaurant in order to see his friend, Dale Evans, but there he starts ridiculing Amira because of her cultural background and religious rituals. Dale is aware about her birth in Canada and her nationality but he frequently asks about her head scarf and even targets her religion. When Duncan interrupts, he goes to the extent to call her a terrorist, though covertly.

“You know the old joke: What do lead guitarists and terrorists have in common? You can’t negotiate with either of them. Turns out the joke’s about you and your piece here” (Heron 189).

Dale Evans employs cultural gaslighting to target Amira’s psychological vulnerability in order to declare her settler status in the country by attaching her religious rituals and cultural background.

Amira’s sister, Zahra, is eleven year old and Amira’s family tries their best to keep Zahra unaffected of the biased treatment of Muslims all around them.

“Zahra is full of personality and unfiltered enthusiasm. She dives headfirst into everything with exuberance . . . It’s a tough time to be a Muslim girl, and we’ve tried to shelter her from what’s going on in the world” (Heron 121).

They even abstain themselves from discussing such issues in her presence but despite their desires to keep her from being contaminated by the poison of racial differences, she is still caught in such unwanted situation. She befriends Duncan’s niece, Maddie, who is also of her age. She agrees to have a sleepover with Zahra on the night of her uncle’s barbershop quartet competition. While waiting for Maddie’s arrival, Zahra receives texts from her informing that she is not coming because her father does not want her stay at a Muslim’s house and he even calls her terrorists.

“Maddie’s not coming to sleep over . . . She said her dad didn’t want her sleeping at a Muslim’s house...He said people like us are what’s wrong with Canada...He told her Maddie wasn’t allowed to be friends with terrorists” (Heron 248).

When Duncan’s brother and the perpetrator of trauma on Amira’s family, Ryan Galahad, seeks apology for his discrimination of her family, Amira dissents to excuse him because this was not a mistake but a fault of his outlook who inclines to undermine

immigrant in light of their skin colour, religious codes and cultural diversity. She advocates the innocence of Zahra and says,

“we are real people, and our mere existence has become political. Your family and their so-called conservative values hurt my little sister. She’s eleven years old, struggling for acceptance, and discovering her self-worth. And Maddie told her she’s worth less because of her race and religion” (Heron 251).

The impact of racial discrimination and cultural gaslighting on the psyche of Amira is so profound that she rejects to have any debate with Ryan at his prejudiced outlook against her family. She feels frustrated with the idea of being treated below the level of common humanity.

“If they can’t get their heads out of their own asses long enough to realize we are real people, with real feelings, then I don’t have to waste any more of my emotional effort to try to understand them” (Heron 247).

The notion of white supremacy does not allow immigrants of colour to claim equal position in a white dominant society and if they dare to do so, their existence is questioned and they are pushed below the margin of humanity. The social construct of white supremacy tends to maintain its dominance through racial spectacles which question the rationality of those immigrants who struggle for equal status in the ambit of white people. But, South Asian immigrants constantly endeavor to contest the exercise of cultural gaslighting at the hands of Canadian white people. This contesting strategy is manifested in their efforts to adopt the position of an active insiders in the Canadian society through their cultural integration in the host societal formation.

#### **4.2.2 Home Fire**

Kamila Shamsie’s novel, *Home Fire* (2017), is a clear manifestation of the adaptive measures and integrative advancement on the part of the second generation of South Asian immigrants into English social formation. All the major characters put their utmost efforts in conforming to the social standards and legal limitations of English society, but the biased treatment and social discrimination of English society tend to obstruct their endeavors of integration into English identity and social standards.

Cultural gaslighting is a “technique of violence that produces asymmetric harms for different populations depending on one’s processive relation to/within settler social

structures” (Ruíz 2). Once in her college days, when Dr. Hira Shah asks Isma for her stance about the British attitude towards people of colour, Isma draws an analogy between the colonial era and present-day British behaviour and asserts that there is no change in British rule of stigmatizing people of colour. She says that immigrants of colour in English society are still exoticized and made un-British because of their skin colour and distinct cultural values.

“If you look at colonial laws you’ll see plenty of precedent for depriving people of their rights; the only difference is this time it’s applied to British citizens, and even that’s not as much of a change as you might think, because they’re rhetorically being made un-British” (Shamsie 38).

The white supremacists employ cultural gaslighting to invalidate the existence of immigrants of colour by eliminating them from the English social stratum because cultural gaslighting is a building block for the “maintenance, upkeep, and regeneration of white supremacy” in a multicultural social setting (Ruíz 7). The second generation of South Asian immigrants too like the first generation are considered outsiders in English society and they are denationalized due to their non-White appearance and cultural heritage.

Cultural gaslighting is maintained with the help of ‘Racial Spectacles,’ a cultural narrative developed by the society to blur the existence of a “white supremacist state power structure” (Davis and Ernst 4). These racial spectacles operate media and other social forums to cater for the concealment of those strategies which eliminate and marginalize minority groups and outsiders from mainstream social structure. Isma also refers to this strategy of British government which strips the British citizen of their citizenship.

“The 7/7 terrorists were never described by the media as “British terrorists.” Even when the word “British” was used, it was always “British of Pakistani descent” or “British Muslim” or, my favorite, “British passport holders” (Shamsie 38).

In most of the multicultural societies, “cultural racism” is inflicted upon people of colour which is “grounded in certain vilified cultural attributes that are associated with antagonistic and demeaning stereotypes” (Liu and Kramer 13). The British people cannot tolerate the act of defiance from the settlers and who go against the national interest of Britain, the British government disowns their existence and they are stripped of their English identity.



White supremacists eliminate immigrants of colour from the mainstream cultural scenery by “othering”, which emphasizes on “making racial distinctions,” providing “the basis for the exclusion, harassment, and discrimination” stirred by white communities against the immigrant groups (Liu and Kramer 13). Isma applies for a PhD program in sociology from Amherst, Massachusetts and gets ready to fly to America, but she is detained by the immigration officers at the airport. In spite of holding a British passport, she is aware of her vulnerable position of her citizenship because she comes from a brown immigrant family. She avoids to pack things which may enrage the interrogation crew at the airport. But, she is still held for hours in order to search her luggage thoroughly and inquire about her origin and motives for flying to America.

“She’d made sure not to pack anything that would invite comment or questions—no Quran, no family pictures, no books on her area of academic interest—but even so, the officer took hold of every item of Isma’s clothing and ran it between her thumb and fingers” (Shamsie 3).

Cultural gaslighting pathologizes women of colour in interpersonal interaction of a settler formation. Thus Isma is careful to avoid things which can associate her with her cultural hierarchy and calls into question her identity as a British citizen.

One of the officers at the interrogation station asks Isma about her jacket, not because of its large size, but because she doubts that the jacket is too expensive for the girl who lives in London as a settler and a member of marginalized community.

“This isn’t yours,” she said, and Isma was sure she didn’t mean because it’s at least a size too large but rather it’s too nice for someone like you” (Shamsie 3).

Gaslighting operates in society in order to create doubts in the mind of its victim about the perception of reality by violating “victims’ sense of reality, distorting their perceptions of everything from minor details of everyday life to their partners’ entire biographies” (Spear 853). The officer frequently asks about her affiliation with British standards which reveals his intention to question her sensibility and portray her an outsider. Later on, another man come to the interrogation area with Isma’s laptop, phone and her passport and questions her about whether she considers herself British, thus suggesting and casting a doubt about Isma’s British identity by not considering her British citizenship and passport as proof of her being British citizen.

“Do you consider yourself British?’...‘I am British.’ ‘But do you consider yourself British?’” (Shamsie 5).

The novel encompasses numerous glimpses of cultural gaslighting in the shape of discrimination and denigration inflicted on immigrants of colour by the native white community. When Isma’s siblings shift with Aunty Naseem in her house, Isma leases out their own house on rent. But they notice that when some immigrants shift in their house, the native people show a sign of nausea towards their presence.

“Aneeka said she sympathized for the first time with residents of a neighborhood who felt aggrieved when migrants moved in” (Shamsie 24).

Owing to their inferior position in Britain as members of immigrant community, Isma informs security personnel about the absconding of Parvaiz, his true intentions and his connection with ISIS group. When Aneeka scorns her for betraying her own brother, she confesses,

“We’re in no position to let the state question our loyalties. Don’t you understand that? If you cooperate, it makes a difference” (Shamsie 42).

Amsa is well aware of the fact that if she tries to stand with her brother, the English society will disown her at the pretext of siding with a terrorist group because the operation of cultural gaslighting explains the “disenfranchisement, marginalization, and overall invisibility” of immigrants of colour in a white dominant societal formation (Davis and Ernst 2). She knows the intolerant behaviour of English society that already endeavors to criticize their very existence as an immigrant community.

Cultural gaslighting is a “political, social, economic and cultural process that perpetuates and normalizes a white supremacist reality through pathologizing those who resist” (Ruíz 7). Aneeka tries to help her brother to call him back to London but she is abstained from her attempts. When she develops relationship with Eamonn Lone, the son of Home Secretary of London, she is criticized for her endeavors to help her brother in his hour of need. She is not allowed to board a flight to Istanbul where her twin disappeared into the world of the enemy. The media severely condemns Aneeka for her resistance toward stern policies of British government. One of the newspaper publishes “THE EXCLUSIVE STORY OF “KNICKERS” PASHA,” which portrays Aneeka as a whore who “used sex to try and brainwash him into convincing his father

to allow her terrorist brother back into England” (Shamsie 204). Even a slanderous campaign is launched against the Pasha sisters by the native populace which resonates the slogan “GOBACKWHEREYOUCAMEFROM” (Shamsie 190).

Cultural gaslighting is the manifestation of “unequal power distribution” among dominant groups and immigrants communities and the “Other-identities are denied and rejected as deviant or abnormal when compared to the host cultural identity” (Liu and Kramer 9). When Parvaiz is killed in Istanbul and Aneeka demands his corpse to be buried in London, the white community and British government vilifies Aneeka for her demand to bring in the corpse of a person who has been a traitor and has gone against the interests of the country of his birth. The Pasha sisters are even not allowed to talk about their brother’s death or try to board a flight to Karachi to attend his funeral.

“We can’t even say the kinds of things Gladys said, we don’t have that liberty. Remember him in your heart and your prayers. Go back to uni, study the law. Accept the law, even when it’s unjust” (Shamsie 196).

White supremacists extend their control on all resources in a multicultural social formation in order to deprive the people of colour of their basic rights by making “policies that deny minorities’ full participation in society” (Leonardo 138). Isma knows their underprivileged position in a white dominant society and urges Aneeka not to bother the prejudice treatment of British government. She persuades Aneeka to conform to the British law even they are aware of its biased attitude.

Aneeka’s cousin conceals the funeral of Parvaiz and Aneeka’s arrival in Karachi out of fear because his own sister resides in America and he cannot afford to enter in enmity with the white people, for whom his visa application is no more than toilet paper.

Karamat Lone, who acquires the position of Home Secretary of London, is a second generation immigrant of Pakistani origin. His absolute stance on integration into English society earns him the opportunity to excel in his political career, but on other hand, his family’s immigrant background put him on the target of cultural gaslighting. He is vilified by the British media for entering a mosque for his uncle’s funeral and calls the mosque a place of “hate preacher.” As a representative of British government in the position of Home Secretary, Karamat Lone intends to present a bill in English parliament which makes amendment in the law about British nationality. According to the new law, the government would strip those immigrants off their British nationality who go against the British interests. This new law is meant to prevent the immigrants

from challenging the ways English people and British government treat them or want them to behave because when someone comes forward to “challenge white supremacy”, white supremacist agenda comes into operation and the challenger is “pathologized for noncompliance” (Davis and Ernst 11). He repeatedly claims that the citizenship of immigrant communities is not their birth right to reside in British territory but it is a privilege granted by the British government and can be stripped off the people who go against the English interests,

“citizenship is a privilege not a right or birthright” (Shamsie 198).

This cultural gaslighting in the shape of oppressive designs represents the agenda of the white people to functionalize the “operations of power and violence” on the immigrant groups (Ruíz 7). The second generation of South Asian immigrants consider Britain as a country of their birth but the British government oppose their claim of English identity and they are deprived of their basic right of belonging.

This is the reason that in his address to a Muslim school, Karamat argues that the immigrant youth should internalize British values and ideology and they should not ever go against the British standards. He advises the Muslim youth to fully fall in with the British value system and do not go against the social standards to aggravate their settler position in English society.

“You are, we are, British. Britain accepts this. Don’t set yourself apart in the way you dress, the way you think, the outdated codes of behavior you cling to, the ideologies to which you attach your loyalties. Because if you do, you will be treated differently...in this multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multitudinous United Kingdom of ours” (Shamsie 89).

The Home Secretary convinces the migrant Muslim youths to adapt to the English values and don’t stand in contrast with English principles. But, the English society doesn’t demonstrate a receptive inclination towards immigrants of colour and employs cultural gaslighting to marginalize them on the basis of their brown colour and distinct cultural norms.

In white dominant multicultural societies, the immigrant communities are disowned due to their outsider position in the society and they are “marginalized as the powerless out-group politically and culturally” (Liu and Kramer 10). Therefore, Aneeka responds to Karamat’s address and points that the Muslim community is

demanded to conform to English values and standards but they are disowned and even dehumanized in their hour of need.

“Why didn’t you mention that among the things this country will let you achieve if you’re Muslim is torture, rendition, detention without trial, airport interrogations, spies in your mosques, teachers reporting your children to the authorities for wanting a world without British injustice?” (Shamsie 90-91).

This comment on the prejudiced behaviour of British government against the immigrants of colour is the manifestation of dehumanizing agenda of white supremacists which enables them to project South Asian immigrants inferior to the white people, because white supremacy is a “process that establishes the supremacy of a racial group, its resulting everyday politics is understood as ‘dominance’” (Leonardo 140). The second generation of South Asian immigrants, who reckon Britain as their country, are disowned by British government in the hour of distress due to their colour and different cultural background.

Eamonn Lone sums up the dehumanizing behaviour of British institution and discriminating attitude of white people towards Muslim immigrants in an interview on his way to Karachi. He advocates the basic rights of Aneeka Pasha as a British national and condemns the way she is treated by the government and people of her birth country.

“She has been abused for the crime of daring to love while covering her head, vilified for believing that she had the right to want a life with someone whose history is at odds with hers, denounced for wanting to bury her brother beside her mother...Is Britain really a nation that turns people into figures of hate because they love unconditionally?...While her brother was alive that love was turned toward convincing him to return home; now he’s dead it’s turned to convincing the government to return his body home. Where is the crime in this?” (Shamsie 245).

It is evident from Eamonn’s analysis of the situation that she is condemned for demanding her brother to be buried in the country of his birth. But her very survival is impeded in white dominant country and she is stigmatized enough that she prefers to fly for Pakistan to have her brother buried. The process of cultural gaslighting employs “racial spectacles” that “obfuscate the existence of a white supremacist state power structure” in order to alienate migrant communities from the mainstream society by depriving them of their hybrid identity and assigning them a lower position in settler formation (Ruíz 7).

The British government and white people tend to deprive South Asian immigrants of their basic rights but, even the second generation of immigrants who claim Britain as their birth place are also not given equal position in English society on the basis of their racial difference and cultural heritage. The white supremacists utilize cultural gaslighting as a tool to question the credibility of those settlers who resist the upper handedness of white people. Cultural gaslighting asserts dominance on immigrants of colour through the construct of racial spectacles. Racial spectacles use media talks, debates and social media forums to contaminate the situation for immigrant communities who strive to integrate into English society for acquiring equal position within the English societal formation. But immigrants consistently contest the cultural gaslighting of white people and British government through their unyielding struggle for cultural integration and cross-cultural adaptation in their settler formation.

### **4.2.3 Love Marriage**

The outsider position of immigrants of colour in a multicultural white dominant society is deliberately reduced through the deployment of cultural gaslighting. In a white dominant society, the operation of cultural gaslighting “offers a way to understand how white supremacy is sustained over time.” White supremacy tends to dominate all strata of society through incorporation of such laws and narratives which protect white privileges by eliminating immigrants of colour from the mainstream cultural formation, because there is a direct relationship between the “promulgation of these [racial] narratives and the creation of law” (Ruíz 9).

Monica Ali, in *Love Marriage*, illustrates various aspects of intercultural contacts, interpersonal interactions and communal behaviour in the English society. The immigrants of colour are presented in a perpetual struggle for acceptance and recognition in their settler formation regardless of their racial aspects and traditional background. But these immigrants of colour are always judged and treated in the backdrop of their geographical differences, cultural association and colour of skin. The novel also incorporates numerous instances which betray the prejudiced outlook and negating attitude of white people towards immigrants of colour in the English society.

Cultural gaslighting aims at targeting the fragility of immigrant women in multicultural societal formations as the “functionalization of violence against racialized women is a structural feature of colonial violence and settler white supremacy” (Ruíz

7). The Muslim women of immigrant communities are often observed in their religious background and their adherence to religious codes are often ridiculed irrespective of their integrative efforts into the host environment. Arif refers to an incident in which two women are maltreated for wearing hijab. The intolerance against women of colour is the manifestation of the marginalizing intentions of white people. The choice of dress is the basic rights of every woman regardless of their religious practices.

“Today, right, I interviewed two women who’ve been spat at in the street for wearing hijab...This violence against women has to be stopped” (Ali 138).

In a white dominant social formation, the women of colour are subjected to discriminatory behaviour and social abuses because the “differences in social location are relevant to experiences of sexual harassment”. But these social abuses and dehumanizing treatment of the women of colour fade in oblivion because such treatment of the women of colour “are relevant to the creation of knowledge about these experiences and their relationship to structural domination” (Berenstain 18). Another instance of the denigrating attitude of white supremacists is illustrated in the novel where a mother is forced to leave her son’s school. Rania, one of Yasmin’s school friends and an immigrant girl of Iranian origin, alludes to the dehumanizing behaviour of so-called liberal school teachers who force a mother to leave her son’s school just because she is wearing niqab.

“This woman, this mother, got kicked out of her son’s school because she was wearing niqab. She went to a parents’ meeting and a teacher told her she had to leave” (Ali 151).

Cultural gaslighting intends to functionalize oppressive strategy against the women of immigrant groups because these women are reckoned as a delicate entity to become “targets of state-sponsored epistemic warfare that promote cultures of silence and violent retribution” (Ruíz 20). The history of white supremacy reveals that women of colour are violated and brutalized through various oppressive apparatuses, acts, decisions, and rules. The women of colour are denounced by white male dominant society for their attire choices which is their basic human right. Rania comments on the prejudiced behaviour of white people against the Muslim immigrant women.

“We who choose to wear hijab – or niqab or burka – are the ones who make active choices. It’s we who are fish out of water. And when you criticise our

choices you're criticising many of the people who are already vulnerable, already targets, already experiencing discrimination and hate crime" (Ali 349).

Women are already marginalized and given low position in human society due to the social construction of their gender identity. Cultural gaslighting perpetuates the racialized agenda of white supremacists who observe immigrant women in the context of their suppressed racial identity. Thus, cultural gaslighting, working on the designs of white supremacy, doubly marginalize immigrant women of colour in a multicultural social structure. Cultural gaslighting leaves immense stress on the psyche of women of colour and aggravate their already marginalized status in the society.

Gaslighting is a sort of psychological influence in the interpersonal interaction of majority-minority groups that involves offensive behaviour or pressure tactics to enable the gaslighter to "get inside the heads of their intended victims for the purposes of asserting power and/or establishing control" (Ruíz 2). The white people often use blame game to dispute the existence of those immigrants who do not submit to the superiority of white people. One of the glaring examples of the oppressive tactics of white dominant community emerges from the clash of Yasmin and a white native woman who visits the hospital to inquire about her uncle's health condition. Yasmin introduces herself as a doctor but she insists on seeing a British doctor.

"Can I see a doctor qualified in Britain? [Yasmin replies] No problem. I qualified in London. How can I help? [Mrs. Rowland says] I mean a British doctor. [Yasmin replies] I'm British. I was born here. Is that okay?... Do you mean you want to see a white doctor?" (Ali 176).

Mrs Rowland's preference for a British white doctor betrays the true intentions of white dominant people to undermine the abilities of immigrants of colour. Their superiority complex cannot tolerate the professional competence of immigrant people and they always look forward to degrade their abilities and competence. Yasmin is a British citizen by birth and she is English in behaviour and mannerism because of her nurturing and education in multicultural English society, but her English identity is invalidated due to her brown complexion and cultural diversity.

Mrs Rowland is enraged by Yasmin's unyielding response to her suppressing attitude and enters into a dispute with Yasmin. She blames Yasmin for calling her a racist, a world which bear an abhorrent implication in Western societies because white people "become overconcerned with whether or not they 'look racist' and forsake the



more central project of understanding the contours of structural racism” (Leonardo 140).

“How dare you? Don’t you dare play the race card with me! Are you calling me a racist? What I’d like . . . what I’d like right now is an apology. You need to say sorry and you need to say it now or else” (Ali 176).

Mrs Rowland compels Yasmin to apologize for the crime she never commits. This demonstrates the operation of cultural gaslighting that perpetuates insidious violence on immigrants of colour in a white dominant society. Yasmin has no say against the false allegations of a member of white dominant community.

Gaslighting is a hidden tool of white people that targets the credibility of the victims to harm their reputation and self-esteem as the white supremacist mindset treat the women of colour with “unfair credibility ascriptions, inadequate conceptual resources” (Berenstein 6). Yasmin is stuck in a situation in which she is blamed for ‘display [of] open hostility’. She is humiliated and disgraced due to her subjugated status in the country of her birth. She claims her innocence but her voice remains unheard in the white dominant society.

“But I didn’t call her a racist. I never used that word. She used it, not me” (Ali 241).

Yasmin seeks to vindicate her position by repeatedly claiming that she has not called Mrs. Rowland a racist, but the hospital management doesn’t seem to agree to her stance. They persuade Yasmin to settle the scuffle by making an apology to her regardless of the fact whether Yasmin is the perpetrator or not. The system also compels Yasmin to admit what the white woman claims to be right and justified. This demonstrates that cultural gaslighting is a dominant factor in multicultural environment that mobilizes the exercise of violence against immigrant women of colour. It is a structural feature of colonial violence and white supremacy.

Gaslighting is a process that eradicates the progressive opportunities from immigrant communities and prevent them from acquiring prominent positions in settler societies in order to prevent them from challenging the superiority of dominant white community. The operation of racial gaslighting in a settler social formation “offers a way to understand how white supremacy is sustained over time” (Ruíz 9). Arif has graduated in sociology but he is unemployed for the last two years and all his endeavors

to find a permanent job have remained futile so far. He claims that despite various interviews, white candidates are given priority over the people of colour.

“I’ve applied for...I don’t know...lost count. Hundreds of jobs, and what have I had? Five interviews and six months in a call centre, one month in telesales...you’re 74 per cent more likely to make a successful application if you have a white-sounding name” (Ali 65).

Socioeconomic stability of South Asian immigrant community offers them the chances to struggle for an independent status in a settler formation. But, it is clear from Arif’s experiences that white people intend to disenfranchise immigrant communities in socioeconomic arena so as to extend their dependent position on white people. Invisible discrimination is one of the tools of cultural gaslighting which operates in multicultural societies to sustain white supremacy by reducing chances of progression for immigrant communities.

Cultural gaslighting is brought into action by white supremacists to dispute the presence of immigrants by creating suspicions about their identity in order to target the vulnerabilities of these migrants in a white dominant social formation because such “discursive strategy” is employed on purpose to conceal the “insidiousness of structural privileges” (Leonardo 141). Arif also goes through such situation when he is imprisoned for being radical because he is found doing a research on the current shape of Islam in the UK in his second year of university. But his university teachers misinterpret his research project and he is detained in the police station. Arif feels humiliated on the prejudiced behaviour of his teachers and the injustice of police.

“He wasn’t a professor. Just some junior lecturer who couldn’t tell the difference between a research project and a terrorist...I’m sick of being the leper in my own home” (Ali 73).

Cultural gaslighting also appears in those narratives which present Muslims as radicals in white dominant environment. These narratives tend “to create the appearance of an objective, value-free world that contradicts the lived experience of oppressed peoples” (Ruíz 16). Arif, too, is punished for his research project and he is portrayed as a terrorist who intends to find some Islamic material to design a terrorist activity in London. The situation Arif faces in the police station puts grave impact on his mind because everyone turns his back on him, including his father, friends and

teachers. He abandons his home for a short time and has his sojourn with his friends because he reckons himself as an outcast in his own household.

Cultural gaslighting is employed as an instrument for berating the existence of migrant population which, in any respect, can pose a threat to “the existence of a white supremacist state power structure” in multicultural societies (Ruíz 8). The marginalized position of immigrants keeps them on the verge of susceptibility, which can easily push them in a hostile conduct from the white dominant agents. Arif, being a member of immigrant community, is also trapped in such a situation when he is detained in police station for his research project on Islamism in the UK.

“it had happened four years ago, when Arif had just started his second year of university. A librarian had alerted Mr. Faherty, who had reported the concern to the police...If he had [talked to Arif] he would have understood that Arif was simply (and for once) a keen student, intent on researching his thesis about Islamism in the UK. (Ali 73).

In English societal structure, the operation of cultural gaslighting protects the interests of white supremacy by suppressing and relegating the second generation of South Asian immigrants. The marginalizing designs of white people prevent immigrants of colour from acquiring a position which can resist the construct of white supremacy. White supremacy intends to gain racial privileges in a multicultural social setting by disenfranchising immigrants of colour from their basic human rights. Because, with the help of the socially structured white supremacy, the “whites enjoy privileges largely because they have created a system of domination under which they can thrive as a group” (Leonardo 148). But, in spite of the impositions of cultural gaslighting and white supremacy, second generation of South Asian immigrants perpetually struggle to contest the hostile treatment and discriminatory behaviour of white people to ensure their integral status in English society. The contesting measures are evident from the transformative struggles and cross-cultural adaptation of South Asian immigrants to incorporate into English social formation.

From the close contextual analysis of the selected South Asian diasporic texts, it is excavated that South Asian immigrants try to the fullest of their capacities to integrate into the English and Canadian cultural settings for the survival of their hybrid identity. They exercise their adaptive openness towards the principles and values of host societies in their every endeavor to keep pace with the evolving social environment of multicultural English and Canadian social structures. However, the construct of

cultural gaslighting and white supremacy obstruct the ongoing process of their integrative efforts and incorporating measures through the prejudiced behaviour and overpowering tactics of white people. But, South Asian immigrants contest the marginalizing strategies and biased attitude of white people through their perpetual struggle to fit in the English and Canadian societies via their integrative efforts and transformative struggles.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides the conclusion of this research study. This research thesis conducts a close textual analysis of the main characters of three South Asian diasporic novels that are *Home Fire* (2017) by Kamila Shamsie, *The Chai Factor* (2019) by Farah Heron and *Love Marriage* (2022) by Monica Ali. The research study employs Young Yun Kim's (2001) theory of *Cultural Integration*, Elena Ruíz's (2020) model of *Cultural Gaslighting* and Zeus Leonardo's (2004) concepts of *White Supremacy* to vindicate the statement of the problem and answer the research questions stated in Chapter One.

The main purpose of this study is to bring out the integrative efforts and adaptive advancements of the second generation of South Asian immigrants in the English and Canadian societies through the theory of cultural integration presented by Young Yun Kim. Also, this research excavates the similarity of endeavors shared by the selected South Asian diasporic texts to bring to attention the exercise of cultural gaslighting by the white people to assert white supremacy on immigrants of colour by stigmatizing their existence in white dominant social formations. Moreover, this research also foregrounds the undertakings on the part of second generation of South Asian immigrants to contest the construct of cultural gaslighting and white supremacy in multicultural societal structures.

Kim's theory of cultural integration asserts that in the multicultural convergence of various cultures, minority groups structurally integrate into the political, social, and economic systems of host societies to secure their existence in foreign environment. She argues that cultural difference and compatibility are the two main factors that affect the integrative efforts of immigrant communities (Kim 98). The difference in the outlook of interacting cultural groups obstruct the adaptive progress of immigrants, whereas, the integrative compatibility of intermingling groups facilitates the immigrant communities to adapt to the cultural norms and values of host societies. She declares that the repulsive approach and hostile treatment from the host communities motivate the minor cultural groups to conform to the mainstream cultural standards by discarding their cultural origin. Kim ignores the acceptability element and receptive attitude of

host societies and the responsibility of integrating into the host society is placed on immigrant communities.

Cultural gaslighting is a technique of manipulation and denial that operates in intercultural interactions of diverse cultural groups. Elena Ruiz calls cultural gaslighting a blameless operation of power that perpetrates harm on immigrants groups in a settler social structure (Ruíz 7). Cultural gaslighting enables dominant white communities to invalidate the existence and perspectives of marginalized groups. Elena Ruiz argues that cultural gaslighting is a social, political, economic and cultural process that vindicates the maintenance and regeneration of white supremacy over immigrants of colour. Thus cultural gaslighting disputes the sanity and rationality of those who challenge the operationalization of white supremacy.

White supremacy asserts the dominance and superior position of white people over immigrants of colour. Leonardo claims that the construct of white supremacy enables the white people to get racial privileges in a multicultural social formation. The edifice of white supremacy is built on the resources of minority groups where marginalized people are deprived of their basic rights. Leonardo asserts that white supremacy is imposed on the people of colour through various acts that include policies, decision and academia.

In the first part of the analysis which incorporates *Cultural Integration* in the selected South Asian diasporic novels, this research makes a theoretical intervention and re-imagines the concept of cultural integration by analyzing major characters from the primary texts while using Kim's theory of cultural integration. After the detailed critical analysis of the selected South Asian diasporic novels, this research points out that cultural integration is a reciprocal process where the willingness of immigrants to conform to the settler environment and the receptive attitude of the host societies go hand in hand. Kim claims that most people of immigrant communities who settle in a new social environment "need and want to be better adapted to the local culture, so as to achieve some level of functional proficiency in their daily lives" (Kim 25). The analysis of the prominent characters from the selected South Asian diasporic texts reveals that all the major characters of immigrant groups make sincere efforts to integrate into English and Canadian societies. But, their adaptive measures and conforming tendencies are obstructed through dehumanizing treatment and discriminatory behaviour of the host societies.

Kim terms the hostile treatment of immigrants of colour at the hands of host communities a helping factor in the integrative process and claims that “experiences of discrimination tend to serve as a motivating force for ethnic minorities to change their original cultural habits and conform to those of the mainstream culture” (Kim 79-80). But it is discovered from the analysis of characters in the selected South Asian diasporic texts that the discriminatory behaviour of English and Canadian societies hurts the self-respect and dignity of all the South Asian immigrant character, thus hampering their endeavors to integrate into English and Canadian social formations. Hence, the narrative accounts of South Asian immigrants in the selected texts establish that the second generation of South Asian immigrants strive to their best to fully immerse in their adopted societies in order to align with the cultural values and social norms of the host societies. But, their adaptive transition and integrative efforts are perpetually obstructed through the challenges of cultural gaslighting and the constructs of white supremacy. Thus, the study answers the first research question: What are the integrative efforts undertaken by the second generation of South Asian immigrants and what challenges of cultural gaslighting from host societies are faced by these immigrants?

The second part of the analysis discusses the construct of cultural gaslighting inflicted upon the second generation of South Asian immigrants as shared by all the three selected South Asian diasporic texts. The main purpose of cultural gaslighting is to establish white supremacy over immigrants of colour. The exercise of cultural gaslighting, however, gravely injure the psychic conditions and self-esteem of the second generation of South Asian immigrants who seek to secure a well reputable and agreeable status in the host societies through their struggles and adaptive measures. The study, thus, answers the second research question: In what ways do the selected South Asian diasporic texts share similarities in illustrating the impact of cultural gaslighting and racial discrimination on the psyche of the second generation of South Asian immigrants?

The contesting endeavors of the second generation of South Asian immigrants against the construct of cultural gaslighting and white supremacy is also incorporated in the second part of analysis. Despite the discriminatory behaviour and dehumanizing efforts of the white people, the second generation of South Asian immigrants persistently strive to contest the exercise of cultural gaslighting and notions of white supremacy by keeping pace with the host communities and adapting to the social standards and cultural values of the host societies. Here, the study answers the third

research question: How does second generation of immigrants resist the exercise of cultural gaslighting and social alienation from host societies while integrating into various cultures of the West?

The analysis proves with logic that the reception of host cultures towards the immigrant groups and willingness of immigrants to incorporate into foreign societal formations are the two major aspects that contribute to the process of cultural integration and the transformative interaction of immigrants with a foreign cultural setting. Nonetheless, despite the sincere transformative endeavor of South Asian immigrants and their willingness to adapt to the cultural values of English and Canadian societies, the exercise of cultural gaslighting and white supremacy hinder the process of cultural integration and cross-cultural adaptation. This research, therefore, intervenes Kim's theory of Cultural Integration and suggests that along with the transformative willingness and incorporating traits on the part of immigrants, the acceptability factor and receptive attitude of the host societies are required to be considered for smooth integration and transformative struggle of immigrants of colour in the white dominant host societies.

This study is, hopefully, the debut work in existing scholarship, which re-imagines the cultural integration of immigrants of colour by focusing on the integrative endeavors of South Asian immigrants in various Western cultures and pointing out how cultural gaslighting and white supremacy obstruct the process of cross-cultural adaptation of the second generation of South Asian immigrants. The study paves the way for a productive development in the future examination of diasporic literature in the milieu of Yung Yun Kim's theory of *Cultural Integration* and Elena Ruiz's model of *Cultural Gaslighting* for the interactive dynamics of immigrants in the host communities. Cultural integration serves immigrants of colour to incorporate into the host societies, whereas, cultural gaslighting unmasks the repulsive tactics and marginalizing attitude of various multicultural Western societies.

Keeping in view the importance of the integrative endeavors of immigrants in diasporic literature, it is recommended for future researchers to use the theory of *Cultural Integration* to investigate diasporic works of literature written in the backdrops of other host societies. It is also recommended that in future researches, cultural integration of immigrant into migrant receiving countries may not be view with respect to the capabilities and willingness of immigrants to transform into the host countries,



but the receptive attitude and acceptability feature of the host societies may also be considered while exploring the integrative process of immigrant communities.

It is also recommended for the future researchers to bring to limelight the adverse effects of cultural gaslighting and white supremacy on the overall psyche of the second generation of South Asian immigrants in different cultural settings of the Western countries, its impact on the adaptive procedures of the immigrants, and the contesting efforts on the part of South Asian immigrants to counter the construct of cultural gaslighting and white supremacy, which this study fails to address in detail due to limited and prescribed scope of this study.

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