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Arab-Muslim Immigrants and the Limits of Cultural Citizenship in H.M. Naqvi's *Home Boy*

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Abstract

This paper examines the negotiation of cultural citizenship and identity among Arab-Muslim immigrants in H.M. Naqvi's Home Boy, set against the backdrop of post-9/11 America. Through the experiences of the protagonist, Chuck (Shehzad), and his friends AC and Jimbo, the novel explores the erosion of the American Dream for immigrants who face systemic discrimination, racial profiling, and cultural alienation. By analysing key moments of conflict, arrest, and disillusionment, this study argues that Home Boy critiques the limitations of multiculturalism and the failure of cultural citizenship in addressing the lived realities of Arab-Muslim immigrants. Drawing on theories of cultural citizenship and postcolonial identity, the paper highlights how Naqvi's narrative challenges dominant narratives of belonging and exclusion, ultimately revealing the transformative impact of 9/11 on immigrant identities. The study concludes that Home Boy serves as a powerful counter-narrative to the myth of America as a land of opportunity, exposing the fragility of cultural integration in a post-9/11 world.

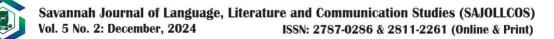
Keywords: Arab-Muslim immigrants, cultural citizenship, cultural alienation, racial profiling



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Introduction

H.M Naqvi's *Homeboy* tells the story of Chuck, the protagonist and of his friends - Ali Chaudhry, aka AC and Jamshed Khan (Jimbo). It reflects socio-cultural effects of the 9/11 on the characters.. On the superficial level, the plot of *Home Boy* exhibits characters moving from near-Edenic state of innocence and bliss of pre-9/11 realities to chaos for no apparent justification other than the expression of their social identity that differs from the one accepted in the post-9/11 America mainstream society.

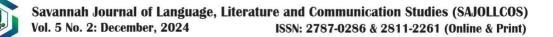
Narrated in the first-person voice of the protagonist Chuck, Home Boy tells the story of three "Metrostanis" (99) - young Pakistani men resident in New York, who are possessed of the idea of America as an immigrant's paradise until certain disconnected but similar experiences occasioned a discarding of not only their belief in their American Dreams but also their desire to be assimilated into the American society. Prior to the occurrence of 9/11, they had a great life as Pakistani immigrants in America's cosmopolitan city of New York, also known as the Big Apple. Where they used to roam the city's clubs and towns free. unhindered. and unnoticed, their realities become caught in a rude awakening after the event, with the protagonist, a New York University educated banker got fired from his job and had to become a cab-driver to make ends meet.

The central event in the novel that catalyses the experience of the three characters, propelling them to embark on a re-evaluation of their sense of place and cultural identity is the arrest and interrogation of the three by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for visiting their friends, interrogating them along the line of their religious and ethnic identity, being locked up indiscriminately for no apparent reason other their affinity to Islam and the Koran, and being told in the process that they have no rights because they are not American.

At the end of the novel, Chuck, the protagonist, becomes disillusioned and angry with the idea of cultural freedom in America, leaves for Pakistan to settle, and embraces radical Islam to underlie his rejection of America.

The aftermath of the September 2001. profoundly 11. attacks reshaped socio-political the landscape of the United States, particularly for Arab-Muslim immigrants who became targets of suspicion, discrimination, and state surveillance. H.M. Naqvi's Home Boy offers a poignant exploration of this experience through the lives of three immigrants—Chuck Pakistani (Shehzad), AC, and Iimbo-whose dreams of assimilation and success in America are shattered by the post-9/11 climate of fear and intolerance. Narrated in the first person by Chuck, the novel traces their journey from a near-utopian belief in the American Dream to a stark realisation of their outsider status in a society that views them as perpetual suspects. This paper investigates the concept of cultural citizenship as a lens for





understanding the experiences of Nagyi's characters, arguing that Home Boy critiques the failures of multiculturalism and the systemic of Arab-Muslim exclusion immigrants in post-9/11 America. By analysing key moments of racial profiling, cultural alienation, and identity crisis, this study highlights the tensions between assimilation and cultural preservation, offering a nuanced perspective on the challenges faced by immigrants in a hostile socio-political environment.

Theoretical Framework

Cultural citizenship and postcolonial theory have emerged as critical frameworks for understanding belonging. power identity. and dynamics in diverse and historically marginalized societies. Cultural citizenship expands the traditional notion of citizenship beyond legal political rights to include and cultural participation, recognition, representation. As Rosaldo and argues, cultural citizenship emphasizes how individuals and communities negotiate their identities and claim belonging within socio-cultural spaces, particularly in contexts marked by migration, globalization, and multiculturalism (57-64). This framework highlights the role of culture in shaping access to rights, resources, and social inclusion, while also addressing the exclusionary practices that marginalize minority or subaltern groups. Stevenson further elaborates on this by examining how cultural citizenship "cosmopolitan raises questions" about identity and

belonging in a globalized world, underscoring the importance of cultural rights and recognition (3).

Postcolonial theory, on the other hand, interrogates the enduring legacies of colonialism, imperialism. and Eurocentrism in shaping global structures, cultural power knowledge hierarchies. and production. Edward Said's seminal work. Orientalism. critiques the Western construction of the "Orient" and its implications for perpetuating power asymmetries between the colonizer and the colonized (12). Similarly, Gayatri Spivak's essay, Can the Subaltern Speak?, interrogates the silencing of marginalized voices and the complexities of representation in postcolonial contexts. asking whether subaltern groups can ever truly articulate their experiences within dominant frameworks (271-313). Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity, as explored in *The Location* of Culture. further complicates notions of identity by highlighting the "third space" where cultural meanings are negotiated and transformed, offering a lens to understand resistance and agency in postcolonial societies (37).

When integrated, cultural citizenship and postcolonial theory offer a robust framework for examining how marginalized communities navigate and resist systemic inequalities in their quest for cultural and political Ong, for instance. agency. immigrants demonstrates how negotiate racial and cultural boundaries in the United States, linking cultural citizenship to



postcolonial struggles for recognition (737-762). This intersection reveals the tensions between globalizing forces and local identities, as well as the ways in which cultural practices and representations are shaped by colonial histories and power asymmetries. Isin and Wood further emphasize the relationship between citizenship, identity, and culture, particularly in postcolonial and diasporic contexts. where the legacies of colonialism continue to influence belonging and exclusion (15).

In summary, the synthesis of cultural citizenship and postcolonial theory critical tool provides а for understanding the complexities of identity. representation, and belonging Arab-Muslim immigrants as explored in Naqvi's Home Boy. It underscores the importance of cultural rights and recognition in achieving social justice, while also highlighting the need to dismantle colonial legacies that continue to marginalize and exclude. This framework is particularly relevant in analyzing the experiences of diasporic communities, indigenous peoples, and other subaltern groups who strive to assert their cultural citizenship in the face of ongoing structural inequalities that compose the focus of this study.

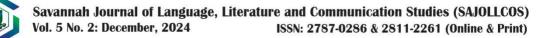
Literature Review

H.M. Naqvi's *Home Boy* (2011) has garnered significant critical attention for its exploration of the lives of three Pakistani immigrants — Chuck, Jimbo, and AC — whose experiences in post-9/11 America reflect the broader struggles of Arab-Muslim navigating immigrants cultural alienation. racial profiling. and systemic discrimination. The novel's portraval of their journey from assimilation to disillusionment has been analysed through various lenses, including diaspora studies, identity politics, and postcolonial theory. This literature review synthesises scholarship existing on *Home Boy*, highlighting its contributions to the discourse on cultural citizenship and immigrant identity in a post-9/11 context.

Ahmed (2012) commends Naqvi for amplifying the voices of young. educated Arab-Muslim immigrants. a demographic often overlooked in post-9/11 narratives. Ahmed notes that Home Boy captures the "angst" of this group, whose experiences of self-invention and cultural integration are disrupted by the pervasive suspicion and hostility 9/11. following The novel's protagonists, who initially revel in the cosmopolitanism of New York, are forced to confront their outsider status as their identities are reduced to markers of difference and threat. Ahmed's analysis underscores the novel's significance in representing the nuanced experiences of a generation caught between their aspirations for belonging and the realities of exclusion.

Sanai (2011) of *The Independent* highlights the irony of immigrants who "feel like Westerners but do not look like one." Sanai praises Naqvi for depicting the internal conflict faced by immigrants who strive to assimilate into





American society while grappling with the expectations of their cultural heritage. The novel's exploration of this tension familial between and cultural obligations and the desire for individual freedom — resonates with broader themes of identity and belonging in diaspora literature. Sanai's review emphasises how Home critiques the Bov superficiality of multiculturalism, revealing the fragility of cultural integration in a society increasingly defined by fear and division.

Mujawar (2012) examines the diasporic implications of the novel. framing it as a story of loss. love, and dislocation. Mujawar argues that the protagonist Chuck's journey reflects the broader experience of Arab-Muslim immigrants who, despite their initial embrace of American ideals, are forced to confront their marginalisation in the wake of 9/11. The novel's portrayal of Chuck's return to his religious identity, Mujawar contends, signifies the "defeat of America's claim to secularism" (p.9), exposing the limitations of cultural citizenship in addressing the complexities of immigrant identity.

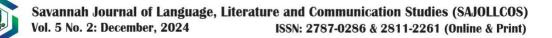
Cincotta (2011) situates Home *Boy* within the tradition of immigrant sagas and coming-of-age narratives, its exploration of the noting "Pakistani man in America." Cincotta highlights the novel's picaresque which mirrors structure. the protagonists' journey from youthful optimism to disillusionment. Bv framing the novel as a coming-of-age story, Cincotta underscores its broader relevance to the experiences of second-generation immigrants who navigate the tensions between their cultural heritage and their aspirations for integration.

Chandra (2011)offers а comparative analysis of Ноте Boy and Mohsin Hamid's The Reluctant Fundamentalist, arguing that both novels challenge the notion of hybridity as a framework for understanding immigrant identity. Instead, Chandra draws parallels between the protagonists of these novels and the "Tragic Mulatto" trope Euro-American literature. in emphasising their experiences of disillusionment. alienation and Chandra's analysis highlights how the "unacceptable Muslimness" of these characters renders them perpetual outsiders, exposing the racial and religious hierarchies that underpin cultural citizenship in the West.

Mansoor (2012) focuses on the construction of the "terrorist" identity and its impact on Chuck's sense of self. Mansoor critiques the racial and religious profiling that reduces Arab-Muslim immigrants to stereotypes, arguing that Home *Boy* exposes the dehumanising consequences of such practices. The novel's portrayal of Chuck's arrest and interrogation, Mansoor contends, reflects the broader erosion of civil liberties and the criminalisation of cultural and religious difference in post-9/11 America.

While these studies provide valuable insights into *Home Boy*'s exploration of identity, diaspora, and post-9/11 politics, there remains a





gap in the scholarship regarding the novel's engagement with the concept of cultural citizenship. Existing analyses have yet to fully examine how *Home Boy* critiques the limitations of multiculturalism and the failures of cultural citizenship in addressing the lived realities of Arab-Muslim immigrants. This paper addresses this gap by analysing the cultural novel's portrayal of alienation, systemic discrimination, and the negotiation of identity, offering a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by immigrants in a post-9/11 world.

Cultural Citizenship and the Chucking of Transnational Sensibilities

Chuck, the first-person narrator of the novel captures the cultural agitation that this study intends to expound in the opening paragraph of the novel:

> We'd become Japs, Jews, Niggers. We weren't before. We fancied ourselves boulevardiers, raconteurs, renaissance men, AC, Jimbo and me. We were selfinvented and selfmade and certain we had our fingers on the pulse of the great global dialectic (1).

According to Mansoor (2012), this passage not only speaks of the transition that has taken place in the life of the first-person narrator, Chuck, it also reflects the sense of the missed ideal past - the time of "cultural openness that was the hallmark of the American dream" (21). A consideration of the cultural historv of the ethnic groups mentioned in this passage, and to which the narrator concludes that he (and his ethnic group) now share similar socio-cultural experience with, points to the difficult situation that immigrants of Arab-Muslim origins are confronted with in the wake of 9/11.

According to Hirsh Sawhney, people of Arab-Muslim linkages suffered a preponderant increase in experience of state violence in the aftermath of the destruction of the Twin Towers:

> In the year following the terrorist attacks of September 2001, US hate crimes against Muslims increased by 1.600%. Law enforcement agencies detained more than a thousand Middle Eastern or south Asian immigrants. Government officials sometimes physically abused detainees and denied them access to a lawyer, even though the majority of these people had no connection to terrorism (18).



And it is this crumbling of their individual American Dreams of hope for freedom and a place where they could belong without a sense of fear that underscores how this observation sums up the conclusion that the story sets out to reach as it affects cultural citizenship of Arab-Muslim immigrants in this post 9/11 fiction.

Many instances abound in H.M Naqvi's Home Boy that reflects the negotiation of cultural citizenship by this ethno-cultural group. One of this the decision of the major is characters not to identify themselves by their Pakistani names of Shehzad, Jamshed Khan, and Ali Chaudhry but rather an anglicised name of Chuck, limbo. and AC (initials of Ali Chaudhry) instead. Far from cultural inferiority, this decision reflects the desire of these immigrant characters to blend into the multicultural paradise that New York embodies in their imagination. It shows а willingness to belong, to be part of the cultural mosaic that the US has come to signify in their understanding.

Things began to take a downward slide for the characters after 9/11 in the novel when they were insulted and beaten at Jake's bar in New York because of their cultural difference. This altercation, which began in the immigrant characters the rude awakening from their firmly-held view of their place as welcomed people in America despite their cultural difference was started when they were referred to as "A-rabs" (23) by another customer at the pub. The scene was captured in the following conversation:

Repeating the word in my head, I realized it was the first time I'd heard it spoken that way, like a dagger thrust and turned, the first time anything like this had happened to us at all... This was different. 'We're not the same,' Jimbo protested.

'Moslems, Mohi-cans, whatever,' Brawler No.2 snapped...

Then for some reason that remains inscrutable to me, I rose as if I had just been asked to deliver an after-dinner speech... with uncharacteristic chutzpah, proclaimed, 'Prudence suggests you boys best return to your barstools __ ' Then there was a flash, like a lightbulb shattering, a ringing in my ears, the metallic taste of blood in my mouth. I didn't quite see the fist that knocked me flat on my back (24).

After this brawl, the narrator and his friends' disenchantment with the idea of America as a place of cultural openness begins to evaporate.

Another instance that emphasised the cultural trauma of these Arab-Muslim immigrants is the event narrated earlier in the story where the protagonist, Chuck, meets a Venezuelan "Girl from Ipanema" (11) who has just immigrated to America with her family because of political persecution at her home country (Venezuela), and thus declares herself American: "They take all





Papa's houses. We are leaving. We are American" (13). After interacting with the lady, Chuck becomes quite smitten with her and decides to marry her. However, his advances were rejected when the lady discovers that he is not an Italian man as she had assumed, but a Pakistani from a Third world country. This event left him numb.

This experience was even compounded when Jimbo's wealthy white girlfriend – the Duck - begins to exhibit hints of Islamophobia towards them after the occurrence of 9/11. On one occasion when they paid a visit to her, she makes a remark that elicited the following reflection in the protagonist quoted below:

> There was something in the tenor of the phrase, in the way she said you guys, that got me hot and bothered. It might have been the offhand suggestion that we eluded her despite all the time had we spent together or that we had somehow mutated overnight. Although I felt no different, I had this feeling that the Duck wasn't the same (72).

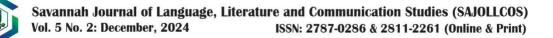
This changing in someone they used to share an intimate bonding with until the occurrence of 9/11 disclosed the suspicion that the Arab-Muslim immigrants became subjected to by the mainstream American society after 9/11. As he concludes in the paragraph that "the Duck wasn't the same [anymore]" (72), it indeed turns out the same way as the relationship between Jimbo and the lady comes to an end after this event.

Perhaps the most impactful event that made Chuck's mind up for him with regard to the culturally uneven ground that Arab-Muslim immigrants inhabits in the US is the arrest, interrogation, and detention that he and his friends undergo when they decided to pay a visit to a "Pakistani Gatsby" (148) friend of theirs – a Mohammed Shah, aka Shaman, that they haven't heard from since the occurrence of 9/11:

> ... on 9/11 we frantically dug up each other's numbers, scrawled on the backs of receipts and folded scraps of notebook paper, and called to exchange disyllabic assurances and expressions of disbelief... (36).

In order to visit him, the three Pakistani friends piled into Chuck's cab and drove to Connecticut to find out his whereabouts. On getting to his place, they did not find him at home, but entered nevertheless because they assumed it is their friend's place, drank his beer, watch his pornographic movies and cooked Pakistani food in his house until FBI agents show up at the door to arrest





them. They were then incarcerated at the Metropolitan Detention Centre, a place where Chuck refers to as "America's own Abu Ghraib" (105) for the offence of merely staying in their friend's house. Writing on the implication of this arrest as it affects their sense of identity, Asma Mansoor captures it in the following words:

> While the FBI arrests AC, Jimbo, and Chuck for being at their friend's house, the irony becomes more pronounced because as the arrests are put in effect, both AC and Jimbo are drunk and merely fooling around. So while the impact of George speech stands Bush's nullified by the irrational, paranoiac, even Hollywood style arrest of three Pakistani would youngsters, it become а maior stimulant, compelling Chuck to re-define his Self vis a vis "the notions of collective identity"

Knowing that he wasn't the only Pakistani being subjected to such political harassment, since the media reported such events with great frequency, he realizes that being Pakistani "no matter what [he] did, [he] couldn't change the way [he] was perceived" ... This realisation becomes the fulcrum that tilts the lever of his identity. The open hypocrisy of the American promise of religious freedom and the exploitation of expatriates in the name of the "Material Witness Statute" makes the pointer of his identity slide further towards a more religionaffiliated pole... (31)

At the Detention Centre, he is interrogated by a police officer whose main preoccupation is to exact a confession to terrorism from him:

Grizzly: You are a terrorist?

Chuck: No, sir.

Grizzly: You a Moslem?

Chuck: Yes, sir.

Grizzly: So you read the Ko-Ran?

Chuck: I've read it.

Grizzly: And pray five times a day to Al-La?

Chuck: No, sir. I pray several times a year, on special occasions like Eid.

Grizzly: Drink?

Chuck: ... Yes, sir

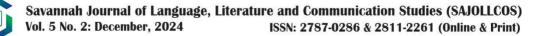
Grizzly: Won't Al-La get mad? ... What's important to Him...?

Chuck: (...) Well, I suppose... that I'm good... to people [...]

Grizzly: I want to know does the Koran sanction terrorism?

Chuck: I've read it. I'm no terrorist





Grizzly: Then why do Moslems use it to justify terrorism?

Chuck: It's all a matter of interpretation... I mean take the Bible. It's interpreted differently by, like, Unitarians and Mormons, Lutherans, Pentacostals ...

Grizzly... Look. All I want to know is why the hell did they have to blow up the

Twin Towers?

Chuck: Your guess, sir, is as good as mine.

Grizzly: Can't you put yourself in their shoes?

Chuck: No, can you? (113-117)

An examination of this interrogation reveals а preoccupation with Chuck's culturoreligious affinities, - a preoccupation that betrays a phobia for his culture because of its difference from the predominant Western culture approved of by the policing system that obtains in America. In the eyes of the interrogator, a representative of the Western culture, all it takes to be a terrorist is to read the Quran five times a day and pray to Allah activities that sincere Muslims are expected to carry out in order to be accepted by their god. Thus at the end of the interrogation, he makes the following conclusion about him: "Boy's excitable...Defended Islamic religion, terrorism (117). He is told by the police: 'You're not American!' he's told, 'You got no fucking rights.' (111). He is denied a phone call and placed in solitary confinement, a treatment that forces him to reevaluate his cultural and religious filiations.

When AC, 'the New-Jersey DJ who uses urban catchphrases such as "fo shizzle, ma nizzle" (Sawhney, 2011), and apparently "the most American of the trio" (Mirashami, 2011) is arrested on charges of terrorism and for possessing cocaine, we learn later that the charges are dismissed, yet he is sent to fifteen years imprisonment:

> [...] although the terrorism charges AC were against dismissed _ the bombmaking manual and the sinister Arabic literature turned out to be The Anarchist Cookbook Ibn and Khaldun's Muqaddimah, respectively_ the authorities four and a half grams of cocaine on his person. 'The penalty for possession in New York is the for secondsame degree murder (193).

Chuck becomes so distressed by this turn of event that he contemplates responding with violence by breaking AC out of prison "like ninjas" (195). However he could not carry this out as he suffers an epileptic seizure at the sight of a





policewoman – a development that symbolises the highly ingrained fear he has come to develop for America where there used to be trust and openness:

> The authorities gave me existential heebiejeebies. They had what become scarecrows or clowns were to some kids. of the avatars At that Bogeyman. moment, however, I realized I couldn't take a walk in the park, much less walk into a prison... (197).

This feeling contrasts sharply with the desire to assimilate himself into the American culture that is noticeable at the beginning of the novel, underscored by his declaration - "I'd since claimed the city and the city had claimed me" (3).

The unjustness of this treatment becomes pronounced when we are made to realise afterwards that the Shaman, the missing friend being sought by the three friends and on whose accounted they are arrested, is among the people that got killed in the collapse of the Twin Towers on 9/11. This is made even worse by the realisation that the police has for some time been watching Shaman's movements on the suspicion that he is terrorist. His unravelling as a hardworking man who dies a hero's death at the collapse of the Twin therefore Towers reveals the simplistic modalities with which people are categorised as terror

suspects in post 9/11 America – merely one's cultural/religious background. Michael Leonard, a character in the novel, voices this observation in the following inimitable words:

... 'Everybody thinks all **Muslims** are fundamentalists,' said Michael Leonard, а 'Muhammad coworker. wasn't like that. He was like like everybody. He us. played worked hard, hard.'[...] Mr. Shah was attending a conference at the World Trade Centre when tragedy struck. He called Mr. Leonard to ask him to cover for him. A plane had hit the building, he said. He was going to be late. [...] The story was simple, black-and-white: the man not a

was a Muslim, r terrorist (213-214).

Fed up by the discrimination due to the lack of cultural tolerance through which he could fully express his uniqueness and individuality without societal reproach, Chuck makes the decision to chuck his embracement of America in favour of his city of birth - Karachi in Pakistan. It is thus unsurprising that he gives no second thought to his decision of rejecting a new job offer he unexpectedly gets in a prestigious institution, having been fired for no just cause from his first by "the banking job Invisible Hand"(31).



Another action of Chuck that underlies his rejection of America is his refusal to stay in America despite the entreaties of his girlfriend Amo, the sister of his friend limbo. He has come to see himself as a cultural outcast and that America has become a police state. Being Pakistani, he realises that "no matter what [he] did, [he] couldn't change the way [he] was perceived" (103). He discloses his fear for the new era of America's unfriendliness to Arab-Muslim immigrants on after deciding to leave Amo, his lover behind in America to relocate to Pakistan:

[...] there's sadness around every corner? There are cops everywhere? You know, there was a time when a police presence was reassuring... but now I'm afraid of the. I'm afraid all the time. I feel like a marked man. I feel like an animal. It's no way to live. Maybe it's just a phase, maybe it'll pass, and things will return to normal, or maybe, history will keep repeating itself. (206)

Soon after, Chuck calls his mother to announce his decision to leave America and return to Pakistan (207). For person that does not fancy "wear[ing] [his] identity on his sleeve" (55), it amounts thus to a significant transition in outlook and weltanschauung for Chuck to embrace religion, as he takes up Islam to protest the intolerance of the American society towards his cultural roots and as a way of rediscover and express his identity that is about to be forcibly squelched by the iron-clad intolerance of the post 9/11 United States and New York City. He drops his Western name, and goes back to his cultural Shehzad when he is laughed at by a little girl, thus further stripping himself of markers of hybridity in favour of provinciality:

> 'Chuck,' she chuckled. 'What kinda name is Chuck?' 'Well ... I suppose, it's American.' 'Are you American?' 'Um, no ... I'm actually Pakistani.' 'Why'd ya have an American name when you're Pakistani?' (188)

In many ways, Chuck and his friends' problems can be located in their inability to merge or "reconcile their Muslim identities, sympathies and Pan-Islamic allegiances with their fidelity and devotion to their host countries (Mansoor, 2012). Despite their many attempts to be found agreeable to the western cultural milieu in which they find themselves in America, they still become rejected as a result of their difference. In the heat of the emotional flares occasioned by 9/11, the humanity of Arab-Muslim these immigrants becomes undermined, as they are categorised as enemies of the state simply because of the cognitive dissonance that cultural their standing evinces in the mainstream society.



The implication of this finding is that the American society needs to be more open, recognising that just as the mainstream Western culture and civilisation suffers from 9/11, these immigrant group also shared in the pain, bewilderment, and loss that 9/11 has come to symbolise in memorv. These losses can be accounted for in the loss of freedoms. agency, trust, and friendliness with which they were once received in the post 9/11 cultural scenario of America as immigrant groups. It is perhaps to underscore this loss that makes Chuck print an obituary for dead friend the Shaman. his proclaiming a loud protest:

Mohammed 'Mo' Shah

No Friend of Fundamentalism (213)

And it is the contention - the protest in the words of this Shaman's obituary that brings home the pain and the point that these representatives of the Arab-Muslim immigrant community in this novel are passing through and trying to make: "We are not terrorists!"

The theoretical frameworks of cultural citizenship and postcolonial theory illuminate the ways in which Home Boy critiques the limitations of multiculturalism and the systemic exclusion of Arab-Muslim immigrants in post-9/11 America. By analyzing key moments conflict. of arrest. and disillusionment, we can see how the novel challenges dominant narratives of belonging and exclusion, ultimately revealing the transformative impact of 9/11 on immigrant identities.

For instance, the scene in which Chuck and his friends are arrested and interrogated by the FBI can be read as a critique of the exclusionary logic of cultural citizenship. The interrogator's fixation on Chuck's religious practices reveals how cultural citizenship is contingent on conformity to dominant cultural norms. This moment underscores the fragility of cultural citizenship for Arab-Muslim immigrants, who are denied full participation in society based on their cultural and religious identities.

Similarly, Chuck's eventual rejection of America and return to Pakistan can be read as an act of postcolonial resistance. By reclaiming his cultural religious identity, and Chuck challenges the dominant narrative of assimilation and asserts his right to define himself on his own terms. This act of resistance highlights the ways in which postcolonial theory can illuminate the experiences of marginalized groups in a globalized world.

In conclusion, *Home Boy* serves as a powerful critique of the limitations of cultural citizenship and the myth of the American Dream for Arab-Muslim immigrants in post-9/11 America. By drawing on the theoretical frameworks of cultural citizenship and postcolonial theory, we can better understand the novel's exploration of identity, belonging, and exclusion, ultimately revealing





the transformative impact of 9/11 on immigrant identities.

Conclusion

H.M. Naqvi's *Home Boy* provides a compelling critique of the limitations of cultural citizenship and the myth of the American Dream for Arab-Muslim immigrants in post-9/11 America. Through the experiences of Chuck, AC, and Jimbo, the novel exposes the fragility of multiculturalism, revealing how systemic discrimination and racial profiling force immigrants to confront their outsider status. The characters' journey from assimilation to alienation underscores the failure of cultural citizenship to address the complexities of identitv in а globalised world. By rejecting America and embracing their cultural roots. Chuck and his friends symbolise broader the disillusionment of Arab-Muslim immigrants who find themselves caught between two worlds. Home Boy challenges dominant narratives of belonging and exclusion, offering a counter-narrative powerful that highlights the transformative impact of 9/11 on immigrant identities. Ultimately, the novel calls for a reimagining of cultural citizenship that recognizes the humanity and dignity of all individuals, regardless of their cultural or religious background. In doing so, Home Boy contributes to the ongoing discourse immigration, identity, on and belonging in a post-9/11 world.

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