

Representation of Chuck as a National Allegory in H.M Naqvi's *Home Boy*

A Dissertation Submitted to the Central Department of English in the Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements for Master of Arts

In English

By

Aavash Devkota

Roll No. 22

TU Regd. No. 6-2-1077-111-2015

Tribhuvan University

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

14 November, 2022

Abstract

Representation of Chuck as a National Allegory in H.M Naqvi's *Home Boy*

The novel, Home Boy by H.M Naqvi, tells the story of Pakistani men who migrate to America to fulfill their dream of freedom and prosperity. The novel is set during tragic event of 9/11 terrorist attack on USA and involves the aftermath faced by Muslim citizens with nostalgic autobiographical representation of past, in form of sharing memories hugely associated with Pakistan. The concept of 'home' is highly stressed in the novel. The title Home Boy itself contradicts regularly in the text. The space between the character's present and his home is maintained by association of his home and homeland memories. So, the research investigates Chuck's role in the formation of the meaning of the text in light of Fredric Jameson's theory of allegory and ideology. Naqvi in his novel uses Chuck as national allegory to represent the various elements experienced by immigrants away from their homeland and to put forth the American response to the 9/11 event. He uses memories and nostalgic representation of past associated with the homeland of experiencing agent to deploy the meaning. Most common elements represented are hardships, fear, suppression, racism, stereotyping, inequalities, issues of identity and inhumane treatment suffered by the immigrants.

Keywords: National Allegory, Representation, Agency, Immigrant, Stereotyping, 9/11

This research paper explores the notion of Frederic Jameson's term "National Allegory" from his theory of allegory and ideology in H.M Naqvi's *Home Boy* in order to investigate how Naqvi executes the concept of nation and nationality through the agency of the protagonist. There are some reviews and researches conducted on this novel as the novel is infested with diverse issues raised after 9/11 incident such as racism, stereotyping, identity issues and immigrant issues but still how Naqvi maintains the bridge between two worlds in order to put forth both perspectives on a table is still unexplored. So this research investigates how he succeeds to break the monotonicity and establish the bridge across the cleavage in light to Fredric Jameson's theory of allegory and ideology.

Naqvi, a London born Pakistani citizen who grew up in Karachi later travelled to USA for education and academic purposes in 1997 and published this novel in 2009, after his return from USA in 2007. The novel is based on the story of Naqvi's protagonist 'Chuck', who is also shown to have migrated from Pakistan to America for his study purpose. *Home Boy* is one of the most admired novels by H.M Naqvi. The novel is set in the historical background during the terrorist attack in USA most commonly known as 9/11 attack. Naqvi himself was in USA during this attack which points this novel can be regarded as autobiographical fiction. The novel is written in first person narrative in the voice of the protagonist Chuck. The novel is full of autobiographical elements such as narration of past events, memories and experiences of protagonist living in America.

All the major characters in the novel are Pakistani immigrants. There is regular engagement of the protagonist and other immigrants in the novel. This engagement leads to better understanding of multiple stories of the immigrants from third world country living in a first world country. The novel explores the experiences

of Pakistani immigrants before 9/11 attack and after 9/11 attack in America through the narration of the protagonist. The issues of national identity, stereotype, religion and racism are highlighted in the novel. However, the sense of nationalism is also entertained in the novel. The belonging to same origin is also celebrated although privately. The concept of nation/motherland is employed through the protagonist mother in an allegorical sense.

Since the novel is a third world narrative, it is highly infested with issues of identities and discrimination. However, the research is mainly focused in the engagement of narrator as a national allegory and how his association contributes to the text.

The text *Home Boy* itself is a mere representation of Muslim people in a non-Muslim state or a hybrid sphere. The story hovers over the life of the main three characters; Shehzad (Chuck), Ali Chaudary (AC) and Jamshed Khan (Jimbo). Among them Chuck is the protagonist of the novel and the whole novel is narrated through his perspective. Along with the narration of their lives in a land away from home, Naqvi, through his protagonist Chuck deliver a parallel ground of representation of homeland through the use of Chuck's recital of past memories associated with his homeland.

The novel is set during the tragic 9/11 event, September 11, 2001 when, Al-Qaida hijacked passenger jets and crashed it in US Twin Towers and killed around 3000 people which ignited hatred and fear inside the native against the Islamic people and religion. The novel was released 8 years after the incident in 2001 which sums up the overall experience of common Islamic people in USA. A report by Hirsh Sawhney shows that:

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. These grave injustices are brought to light in HM Naqvi's flamboyant debut novel. (1)

Naqvi himself had experienced the aftermath of 9/11 incident in USA as a common Muslim or Islamic individual, so he uses his experience as a base ground to develop this novel and shed light on the other side of the coin: LeylaSanai writes, " Naqvi is particularly good at showing the conflict in the lives of young immigrants; the family expectations of academic success and marriage within the Pakistani community, versus the reality of growing up in a liberal Western society and wanting to fit in" (1).

The title *Home Boy* is also frequently contradicted in the novel in an arbitrary manner as in the beginning part of the novel the title is a slang used by the natives to address Naqvi as someone of their own but at the later parts the same word is used by feds who were interrogating Chuck in Metropolitan Detention Center to order him "Go home, boy" (119). Mira Hashmi writes, "When the title of the novel morphs from an-ever-so-slightly bastardized slang term at the beginning into a gentle, poignant urging of an inner voice at the end, the author has done his job"(1). The concept of home or belonging to an origin is problematized in the novel and the American nature of coordinating with non- natives is highlighted in the novel. In this regard StephenHongshon states, "We see how the rambunctious and more care-free attitudes exuded by these characters change as a result of their imprisonments, where questions of home and safety emerge alongside the development and articulation of Asian American racial subjectivities" (1).

Naqvi's protagonist Chuck is not simply narrating the events in the novel he is rather delivering a fertile ground for representation of the Islamic perspective on the incident which Ambreen Hai asserts, "Counter-discursive post-9/11 fiction from a Muslim cosmopolitan perspective that seeks to intervene in these modes of representation inevitably has to contend with globally dominant epistemological frameworks of suspicion" (1). Naqvi provides a view from an Islamic window on the discourse to inform people about the trend of stereotyping and othering and its impact on common people's lives as Asma Mansoor explains, "The identity based issues faced by an average Pakistani on the streets of New York or any other American city were highlighted in many post 9/11 Pakistani English novels. The Pakistani writers of English fiction placed the varying notions of identity under the microscope of their penetrative insights" (1).

The novel covers a wide range of social dynamics politics, religion and identity which takes a whole of creative potential as well as some daring heart to speak up upon a controversial and critical subject which is miraculously manhandled by Naqvi. Nawaz Ahmed writes, "The prose, a wicked amalgam of slang and dazzling wordcraft, swerves and hurtles like the virtuosic hijinks of a cabdriver in Manhattan traffic. If the journey's end is a bit unsurprising and unsatisfying, it is because Naqvi handles the controversial sociopolitical issues tentatively" (1). Naqvi was not playing around with words but rather executing the reality of American unethical response against the Muslim community as stated by Shaye Areheart, "Immigrant stories are often appealing not only because they dramatize the longing to trade oppression for freedom and prosperity, but also because they have the perfect antagonist: America itself" (1).

This research uses Fredric Jameson's theory of allegory and ideology to investigate how Naqvi succeeds in representing the concept of nation through his protagonist Chuck who is stuck in a hybrid sphere. Jameson in his book *Allegory and Ideology* defines the term "national allegory" as the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society. In his elaboration private or personal refers to national. Jameson states that the literatures from third world countries are full of such national allegories which provide a fertile ground for different dimensions of perspectives from which the texts can be understood properly. Being an American (first world citizen), he is fully aware of this distinction of margin between first world and third world literature. He acknowledges how first world readers perceive third world literature as he writes:

We sense, between ourselves and this alien text, the presence of another reader, of the Other reader, for whom a narrative, which strikes us as conventional or naive, has a freshness of information and a social interest that we cannot share.(161)

He insists that America needs to reinvent their approach to world literature as he states, "All of this, then, is provisional and intended both to suggest specific perspectives for research and to convey a sense of the interest and value of these clearly neglected literatures for people formed by the values and stereotypes of a first-world culture"(163). With that being said, Jameson puts forth his hypothesis, "All third-world texts are necessarily, I want to argue, allegorical, and in a very specific way: they are to be read as what I will call national allegories, even when, or perhaps I should say, particularly when their forms develop out of predominantly western machineries of representation, such as the novel" (165).

Jameson states that "Third-world texts, even those which are seemingly private and invested with a properly libidinal dynamic necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegories" (165). His statements suggests that third world literatures might seem one dimensional story explicitly but there are representation of much more deep dimensions implicitly. To support his claim he provides an example from a Chinese writer Lu Xun whose novel *Diary of a madman* holds his term 'national allegory'. Lu Xun's text *Diary of a madman* is all about his narrator who gets psychic delusions and thinks everyone is a cannibal; his brothers, neighbors, doctors and the whole society he's familiar with. The character's nervous breakdown and illusions of cannibalism suggests much more than literal meaning which Jameson explains:

Lu Xun's proposition is that the people of this great maimed and retarded, disintegrating China of the late and post-imperial period, his fellow citizens, are "literally" cannibals: in their desperation, disguised and indeed intensified by the most traditional forms and procedures of Chinese culture, they must devour one another ruthlessly to stay alive.(167)

The above mentioned brief introduction of Fredric Jameson's term national allegory is also clearly manifested in the novel *Home Boy*, as the novel belongs to the third world literature and resistance for national and oriental identity is stressed throughout the novel. With light shed on Jameson's theory of allegory and ideology this research explores the text *Home Boy* by H.M Naqvi.

The novel *Home Boy* begins in USA, with slight introduction of the characters, firstly the protagonist narrates the introduction of his fellow characters AC and Jimbo casually. However in his part of introduction he states "As for me they called me Chuck and it stuck. I was growing up but thought I was grown-up, was and remain not

so tall, lean, angular, like my late father, have brown hair, tinted eyes, and a sharp nose, 'like an eaglet,' my mother liked to say"(3). Here the narrator's use of words "my mother liked to say" is a sign of initiation that his identity is fully based on his mother's account. Although, the introduction of his mother is not exposed directly, it is employed chronologically along with the development of the text.

Later in the novel it is explored that all of them three main characters were associated with Naqvi's narrator, Chuck. As the story develops the narrator exclaims that AC, who was sustained in USA by his sister Mini Auntie was best friend with narrator's mother which is stated in these lines; "I frequented AC's sister's place,.... And you were welcome whenever....she was a one woman institution, a pillar of the city's expatriate Pakistani community. To us,children of her pals back home, she was a foster mother"(17).

Then for the third character, Jimbo, who lives with his father, Old Man Khan, and sister, Amo, it is depicted that Old Man Khan and Chuck's mother had a pathological relationship between them although they had never met. His mother and Old Man Khan are also represented to have polar similarities; both had lost their life partners. It is clearly stated in these lines when Chuck narrates his first visit to Old Man Khan; "He was genuine, affectionate, like a father should be.' Now tell me' he said, 'how is your mother?' Old Man Khan always asked me about Ma, as if they were friends back home, even though they had never met. Although, he might have imagined her to be like his late wife" (50).

These associations of the main characters to his mother signify their orientation and roots they happened to be dispersed from. It is a sign of unity and belongings to a single entity. This leads to a spatial and cultural distinction among the immigrants and the natives which allows narrator to deliver the other dimension of

existence and experiences which is resisted in the novel. Jameson in his book *Allegory and Ideology* states:

Judging from recent conversations among third-world intellectuals, there is now an obsessive return of the national situation itself, the name of the country that returns again and again like a gong, the collective attention to "us" and what we have to do and how we do it, to what we can't do and what we do better than this or that nationality, our unique characteristics, in short, to the level of the "people". (159)

Here in the novel also we can see how the collective "us" is maintained by Naqvi while introducing the characters and that nationality signification is established through the agency of narrator's mother who is referred as 'Ma'.

Jameson argues that, "Third-world texts, even those which are seemingly private and invested with a properly libidinal dynamic necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegory: the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society" (163). After the 9/11 incident the Pakistani Muslim identities are stereotyped as Chuck narrates, "Oh, all you Pakistanis are alike" (2). And the novel is all about resistance against the misinterpretation of their identity, religion and nationality. So, there is a spatial difference provided by narrator between the first world public and third world private story, Chuck describes the aftermath public environment in America; Chuck along with his two compatriots get kicked out of their regular bar after they pick up a fight with two native brawlers who were racially abusing them using words like "A-rabs", "Moslems", "Mo-hicans", "they've fucked up my city! They have fucked up everything" (23).

Chuck used to work as a banker but soon after the incident he was fired from his job with some wise words from his boss, "you're taking one for the team" (30). Although, his intentions were clear that he wanted to settle in America despite everything as he narrates "and the grand plan was that after the bank sponsored my green card, a process that in those days took about three, four years, I would sponsor Ma's, then we'd live happily ever after like a happy, all-American family" (28). These distinctions between 'private' and 'public' are simultaneously maintained by Naqvi in the novel while narrating the novel. Naqvi's protagonist narrates the life in public/political sphere of first world country and chronologically projects his private affairs.

Further in the novel Chuck provides the information of day to day lives in USA after he's out of job, he goes on seeking new job to work for. He did not wish to tell his mother about the incidents as he did not want his mother to worry about him. He used to send his savings fortnightly to his mother and he cut off his home appliances to save the bill. Soon after being out of job he finds a new one as a cab driver whose owner was also a Pakistani named Abdul Karim. After he gets the job he feels like his all American dream is still alive and tries to phone his mother and realizes that there's already a message from his mother which he reads "Ma, in a voice stretched over thousands of miles, time zones, static.... Things are tense here beta— there is talk of some Afghanistan campaign-shampaign. I don't know what it means for us, but it is not good" (40). Jameson states, "In these last years of the century, the old question of a properly world literature reasserts itself. This is due as much or more to the disintegration of our own conceptions of cultural study as to any very lucid awareness of the great outside world around us" (162).

Naqvi is strategically deploying his protagonist, Chuck, who first narrates the present 'public' life in the first world country, USA, to lay bricks on the ground where he can parallelly impose the private third world story through the agency of his mother who is source for his 'private'. As mentioned in above paragraph Chuck provides the details of his aftermath situation in USA as a Pakistani immigrant, he highlights the hardships, fears and racism faced by them. Whereas, on the other hand he narrates about his mother's message as "a voice stretched over thousands of miles, time zones", it is from his country/nation situated far away from where he is right now, in a different time zone. Through his mother's voice he is mapping his nation to provide different dimension of existence from the first world. He is also executing the point that it is not only America who is facing terrorist invasion; the message from his mother signifies that even Pakistan was facing threats from Afghanistan regarding border issues and their engagement with Taiwan, which is clearly stated by Elizabeth Therlkeld on her report as she writes:

Over the last seven decades, a tenuous and often grudging coexistence has emerged between Pakistan and Afghanistan, propelled by both internal and external developments. These include Pakistan's formation during the partition of British India, which Afghanistan refused to recognize; a dispute over their shared border; alignments with competing sides during the Cold War; US- and Saudi-backed proxy warfare; the emergence and Pakistan's sponsorship of the Taliban. (1)

As the story develops Chuck narrates about the Islam religion and their practices, he insists that the old disciplined way of following religion at its ultimatum is not necessarily compulsory today and one can have morality outside the appearance.

He develops an analogy with hijab wearing Amo and his Ma (mother) to reflect upon Islamic religion, as suggested in these lines; "Besides, I figured Amo and I were not on the same page anyways. The hijab weirded me out. Donning the thing was a matter of interpretation, faulty interpretation; Ma, a paragon of virtue and grace, never wore one" (54). Following this analogy of his mother, he further provides the information from Koran regarding hijab which was to clarify that the use of hijab was not otherwise as faulty interpretation in USA. He relatively defines hijab using these lines from the text which clarifies the point of difference between its use and its misinterpretation, as Chuck narrates:

Like most Muslims, I read the Koran once circa age ten and, like some, had combed through it afterward. There were issues in the Holy Book that were indisputable, like eating pork but the directives concerning liquor could be interpreted either ways.... As for the hijab the Koran mentions that women should cover their 'ornaments', and any way you look at it, that means breasts and beyond. (55)

Chuck is neither encouraging nor disavowing the Islamic religion and the culture of wearing hijab, he is fairly representing the both sides of coin the purpose of wearing hijab according to Islamic religion and how it is perceived as a threat in USA. Before reciting the climax of the story Chuck delivers a small insight of his memory with his mother when they were driving around Karachi; "I kept my eyes on the road, avoiding potholes, dodging errant cyclists, and slowing down before speed bumps, but later, feeling confident, I did managed to wave to a family of lost picnickers and glimpse the sunset over the frothy grey sea" (60). Later, he hits a car in front of him which gets him nervous but his mother takes care of it as if nothing had happened.

This recital of his memory of driving with his mother in Karachi is crucial as the novel heads towards the climax, which starts with Chuck's drive to search his one of the friend named Shaman from whom Chuck and his friends had never heard after 9/11 and they assume that he has gone missing since then. First, Chuck describes his memory of driving in a pleasing environment of Karachi with his mother, "feeling confidence", "waving at picnickers", and scene "glimpse the sunset over frothy grey sea" (60). Afterwards, he describes the driving experience of present in USA as:

The streets were helter-skelter, cars weaving in, swerving out, cutting each other off, caravans of buses lurching past like rampaging elephants. Drivers honked, cussed, raised fists and fingers, and there were cops everywhere: in patrol cars, on horseback, and in twos and threes on the street. It was as if everybody were escaping some epic catastrophe: tidal wave, airborne toxic event, Godzilla. (61)

This narration of driving experiences in two different countries where one is presented in a pleasant manner and other in not so convincing way which Jameson regards as "a study of third-world culture necessarily entails a new view of ourselves, from the outside, insofar as we ourselves are " (163). At the beginning parts of the novel, let's say, his early stages at USA he had the spirit of living his all-American dream, he'd regard himself as, "metrostanis" and state that "I had claimed the city and the city had claimed me" (3). But later in the novel after 9/11 aftermath strikes him his thoughts begin to fade. He reflects on his present life in a third world space and compares it to his life at home/homeland on the basis of his memories with his mother and starts to get tilted towards his origin.

The notion of home is highly stressed in the later parts of the novel. The title itself is contradicted in the novel as when Chuck was going to pick up AC to go in

search of Shaman, he is engaged in a conversation with a gangbanger with a butterfly knife calling him out, "yo, homeboy... you wanna tattoo" (64). It leaves him wondering: *Am I a home boy?* (64) Following the incident, AC and Chuck head towards Jimbo's place to fetch him and Chuck meets Duck who is Jimbo's girlfriend and she is not quite so happy with their actions of roaming around and boozing up regularly. Again the notion of home boy is marked in Duck's dialogue when she confronts Chuck saying "I mean you guys are like one way here, like hardcore, homeboys, whatever when you guys go home, you become different, all proper and conservative" (73). In this regard the notion of homeboy remains a literal slang for "an acquaintance from one's own town or neighborhood, or from the same social background", as stated in oxford dictionary. Ducks statement provides clear evidence that there was a gap maintained by Chuck and his compatriots between the public and private life from hardcore homeboys to conservative.

Whereas, in the final part of the novel the term 'homeboy' is problematized, after Chuck and his friends reach Shaman's home they find out that he has gone missing and they break into Shaman's house assuming he would return. Although, instead of Shaman two policemen arrive the next day and arrest them assuming they were involved in terrorism. The FBI's take them to Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) and after many interrogations Chuck is set to be free. It is also shown that Chuck's visa was expiring soon and the FBI made him clear that they wanted him to go back to his country and they will be watching him. While releasing Chuck, there is the recital of the term 'homeboy' by the FBI in a contradictory manner which is narrated in the text as "Go home, boy" (119). The statement is made clear here that America can never be his home, he does not belong there; he belongs to his real home where his Ma is.

Following their arrest from Shaman's place they were taken to Metropolitan Detention Center where worst prison abuses took place after 9/11 incident. They were put on different cells having no idea of one another. The next morning after Chuck wakes up in prison he again narrates his memory back home with his mother, “Although the items have been from a different galaxy, a different war, and I had moved on, to other exercises of the imagination, it was a winning gesture. There were always consolations back then (112).

After the recital of his past he then narrates his present in the prison cell of MDC, “It seemed routine, the incentive, the casual violence, the way things are, the way things are going to be: doors would open, doors would close, and I would be smacked around, molested, hauled back and between cells and interrogation sessions" (112). Naqvi is presenting the fact how the innocent immigrants were abused by the US deprived of contacting their concerned authorities. As the previously mentioned report of 2021 by HannanAdley on the newspaper *North Jersey* suggests that even in 2021, detainees are still fighting to get bailed even though they are not proven particularly guilty. Her Report shows that:

In total, the United States has imprisoned 780 men—all Muslim—at Guantanamo since the 9/11 attacks. At its peak in 2003, the prison held around 660 men. The last detainee arrived in 2008. Nine died at the facility. The Bush administration released more than five hundred; President Barack Obama transferred out about two hundred; President Donald Trump just one; and President Joe Biden three. As of September 2022, thirty-six remained. (1)

This strategic narration of past and present is employed as a therapeutic manner. The narrator's present is situated in a first world country which is far away from his home

and he is suffering a crime he didn't commit and has anything to do with. Whereas, his narration of his past memories from his homeland, a third world country, provides him therapy for his traumatic experience in present. The narrator proclaims that there were consolations back then but at present there's no mercy shown. The narrator laments in his memories of his home and homeland, he also signifies that his mother was his consolation. Back with his mother he was 'good and brave' (111); but at present he is a terrorist and helpless.

The narrator is providing details of his present experience in a world, as well as, he is creating an imaginary world through his memories, which provides a spatial ground for readers to distinguish his situation clearly, and the narrator is using his mother as the source of his memories and past in order to build this imaginary homeland. After several weeks on MDC and inhumane interrogations finally Chuck is freed from detention and on his way back from the MDC on the train he saw poetry in motion poster which Chuck narrates, "you ask me about that country whose details now escape me, I don't remember its geography, nothing of its history. And should I visit it in memory, it would be as I would a past lover, After many years, for a night, no longer restless with passion, with no fear of regret. I have reached that age.... When one visits the heart merely as a courtesy" (124). This recital of poem is crucial as Jameson explains:

It is a process comparable, as a literary effect, only to some of the processes of western modernism, and in particular of existentialism, in which narrative is employed as a powerful instrument for the experimental exploration of reality and illusion, an exploration which, however, unlike some of the older realisms, presupposes a certain prior "personal knowledge". (167)

After Chuck reaches his room with the mental breakdown he tries to figure out a way out of the rattled situation as he narrates, "The world stopped making sense. I needed to talk to somebody, anybody, a mandarin, Ma. I needed to hear platitudes, cooing words of reassurance" (127). These statements from Chuck clearly signify that the world he imagined to be was not the same anymore it didn't make any sense to him. He went through all those incidents which made him realize he didn't belong there, his American dreams had collapsed. It is the stage which Jameson borrows from Freud as 'withdrawal of libido'.

Furthermore, Chuck insists that he needs "somebody, anybody, a mandarin, Ma" to provide him "cooing words of reassurance". This statement is what Jameson suggests both poetic and political. On the one side he needed to talk to his mother for confession and sympathy which gives a poetic justice but on the other hand it denotes a bigger picture. Here Chuck stands for common Muslim immigrants facing the inhumane exploitation whereas his mother is an allegory for the nation who got to hear about the situation they are trapped in and provide some legal reassurance.

Chuck then visits to Mini Auntie's place to tell about the incident they been through and overhears a conversation from a guest who was a federal minister of the cabinet saying "We've suffered a singular calamity. Thousands of innocents have died in the most cruel and most spectacular way. Now we need to take the fight to them. We have secure our borders and way of our life...we need to seek the terrorists in our midst, and if they happen to be Muslims, Arabs, or South Asian so be it! Security is our inviolable right!" (136). And Chuck narrates his reply to him as:

And now it's us. It's me. Fueled by adrenaline I continued, I've been in jail for the last forty-eight hours. I was humiliated, starved, physically and mentally abused. Mini Auntie's brother, Ali is still inside. We are not model citizens—

I'm not a citizen at all—but I can tell you this much: we've done nothing wrong. This is no way to treat human beings, and this is no way to achieve security! (136)

These brutal statements by Chuck directed to the guest who was a Federal Minister of the state signifies his tolerance had broken down. He was the one who used to claim the city regard himself as metrostanis but now he is denying to be a citizen which also adds up to the term withdrawal of libido. Chuck then narrates his phone call with Ma when she worries about his whereabouts since he hadn't called her for long and she says:

Then somebody told me that your number was disconnected because the building you worked in had collapsed several weeks ago... I told myself, be calm, there must be an explanation for this. I called Mini, and she told me she hadn't heard from you or Ali. I didn't want to frighten her so I acted casual, but I was very frightened, I've been very frightened. I haven't slept for two nights. (137)

These statements were not just from Chuck's mother rather it was whole Pakistan mourning for their innocent citizens who were detained with accusations of terrorists and report shows that some of the detainees are still fighting to be freed.

HannanAdley writes:

UmairAnser came home from middle school on Oct. 3, 2001, and found his house in Bayonne torn apart after some 20 federal agents had swept in to question his parents. His father, Anser Mehmood, was one of 1,200 Muslim men detained in the anxious weeks after the Sept. 11 attacks. The Pakistani immigrant believed he would return home after the agents cleared him of any link to terrorism. (1)

There are several reports showing that hate crimes arose drastically after 9/11, a report by KiaraAlfonseca shows that, "Hate crimes against Muslims rose 1617% from 2000 to 2001, according to the FBI marking some of the highest numbers of Islamophobic hate crimes ever in the U.S." (1). Another study by Lisingoli shows that, 'anti-Muslim hate crime incidents spiked after September 11th, 2001, jumping from 28 incidents in 2000 to 481 in 2001' (1).

The novel starts to downfall towards resolution as after Chuck is free he's still struggling his way out. He has his best mates still locked up he has no job and no money with his visa expiring within days. He chooses to go to Mr. Khan's and tell him about his son's whereabouts but later he finds out that Mr. Khan had a cardiac arrest and was hospitalized so he chooses to delay the message. Luckily he gets a call for a job interview which he had applied for before detention and Chuck narrates the interview to put forth more insights about Pakistan's situation as the interviewer asks about his country and he narrates:

We've had war on our border, on and off, for the last thirty years. We live in one of the toughest neighborhoods in the world: we are bordered by Afghanistan on the north, a collection of warring fiefdoms, then there's nuclear aspirant and fundamentalist Iran to the west, and on the east there's India, a country with million men standing army. (158)

Here Naqvi is presenting the both worlds and comparing the hardships of each to maintain peace and security in the country and still Naqvi suggests that Pakistan suffers more. Later in the hospital Chuck is reunited with Jimbo who was recently freed from the MDC and when Chuck visits Mr. Khan in ICU Mr. Khan whispers to him ' "My son... They took my son" with these words chuck realizes that the reason for Mr. Khan's cardiac arrest was the news about his son. Naqvi keeps on bombarding

against the US response to aftermath of 9/11 and how it effected on the innocent lives of Muslim people. After Mr. Khan's visit Chuck heads towards Abdul Karim's house whose cab was still detained in MDC for they had rented it to visit Shaman's place where they were arrested. After some arrogant curses from Abdul Karim finally he listens to him and chooses to acknowledge the situation.

Chuck while having conversation with Karim's daughter realizes how far he had moved on from his origin as he narrates, "As I chatted with her, I realized I had not interacted with a child since leaving Karachi. In fact I had not attended a baby shower or funeral for that matter. It was, in some ways, a strange, disconnected existence" (188). Chuck, after all those hardships is shown to have undergone maturity as he starts to realize his true self it is more like a wakeup call from his American dream.

Later in the novel Chuck learns about his friend AC who was still detained in MDC as he narrates the message from Mini Auntie, "although the terrorism charges against AC are dismissed—the bomb-making manual and sinister Arabic literature turned out to be *The Anarchist Cookbook* and Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah*, respectively—the authorities found four and a half gram of cocaine on his person. The penalty for possession in New York is the same for second-degree murder" (193). Following the news Chuck realizes that that's around 15years of imprisonment which makes him panic and he starts running towards Mini Auntie's place. While running through periphery Chuck narrates an idea which hits his mind:

I was thinking sabotage, acts of terrorism. We would arrive at Metropolitan Detention Center after making appointment to meet AC—people meet friends and relatives all the time—and on the way up, we could make a pit stop at the

nearest john. There we would detonate several rudimentary smoke bombs:
pierced Ping-Pong balls wrapped in foil. (195)

Naqvi here is suggesting that the American brutal policy of safety and security against terrorism by detaining the innocents didn't solved the problem but it just worsened it as men like Chuck are now compelled to choose terrorism in order to seek justice. Further in the novel Chuck takes rest in the park as he is about to faint for having ran couple of miles non-stop. Chuck sits on a wooden armrest where kids were playing around. Suddenly Chuck sees a cop approaching towards him which totally freaks him out and passes out for some minutes. After he regains consciousness he finds himself surrounded by people along with the cop. The cop asks if he needed an ambulance or if he was on drugs, which is denied by Chuck and he is helped up by the cop. He later comes to know that the cop wasn't coming for him, she was coming for kids. After the incident Chuck narrates:

It was later that I realized I had been in the throes of some sort of culture-bond psychosomatic psychosis, like the hysteria in fin-de-siècle Vienna that had inspired the Great Quack, or brain fog in West Africa that periodically turned men and women into zombies or anorexia and bulimia that ravaged prep-school and party girls in Manhattan. The authorities gave me existential heebie-jeebies. They had become what scarecrows or clowns were to some kids, avatars of Bogeyman. (197)

Naqvi is clearly presenting the fact that chuck was mentally broke. This signifies the failure of response of America against terrorism. Many innocent sons of Muslims specifically Pakistan In this context were brutally abused and their life were totally exploited. Many mothers like Ma lost their son in chaos of American exploitation. As Chuck returns to his apartment he decides to take bath and finds out that he ran out of

soap and while looking for soap he finds some tablets of Ativan, Lexotonil and Klonopin which were given to him by AC when he was fired from the job. He describes the prescriptive literature had a warning:

Pre-existing depression may worsen during use. The drug is not recommended for use in patients with a depressive disorder or psychosis... In mild cases symptoms might include drowsiness, mental confusion, paradoxical reactions and lethargy. In serious cases, and especially when other drugs or alcohol are ingested symptoms may include ataxia, hypotonia, hypertension, cardiovascular depression, hypnotic state, coma and death. (200)

Chuck narrates, "They tasted like aspirins, like chalky mush. I remember taking note of water cascading over the wall of the tub and spilling and spreading across the floor. Straddling the divide, I responsibly turned the faucet clockwise before losing my balance. I tumbled for the second time that day. I felt dead like my father" (200). Although, he wakes with a ringing phone and finds out that he had puked all over the place which had saved him from the suicide attempt. Naqvi is completely intensifying the Chuck's story he is pushing Chuck to the farthest point where there is no return to the normal.

After waking up he checks the message on the phone from the company he applied for and it was a positive response to him. He then decides to call Ma to deliver the good news. First he talks normally and tries to hide the incidents he been through but at last he couldn't hold up his mental state anymore and tells his mother about the detention and terrorist charges and finally Chuck admits that he was wrong about America it could never be his home as he narrates the phone call:

You know, there was a time when a police presence was reassuring, like at a parade or at late night, on the street, in the subway, but now I'm afraid of

them. I'm afraid all the time. I feel it's just a phase, maybe it'll pass, and things will return to normal, or maybe, I don't know, history will keep repeating itself...I stopped, I was talking to myself. Ma had fallen silent.... I heard myself say, I want to come home. (207)

Jameson states that, "it is projected in such works turns on the phenomenon of what Gramsci called "subalternity," namely the feelings of mental inferiority and habits of subservience and obedience which necessarily and structurally develop in situations of domination-most dramatically in the experience of colonized peoples(174).

Furthermore, Jameson adds:

We have allowed ourselves, as first-world cultural intellectuals, to restrict our consciousness of our life's work to the narrowest professional or bureaucratic terms, thereby encouraging in ourselves a special sense of subalternity and guilt, which only reinforces the vicious circle. That a literary article could be a political act, with real consequences.(174)

In light to the Jameson's elaboration Naqvi through this novel is executing the same theme, Naqvi's novel is all about the resistance and through his character Chuck he is providing the act and consequences, subalternity and guilt. This novel is more informative than entertaining Naqvi is delivering insights to two polar worlds from a single window through the experiencing agent Chuck. The novel ends with Chuck preparing to go back to his real home, Pakistan; he delivers his final goodbye to AC's sister Amo, whom he loved unconditionally. Although at the end he pours out his good will for Amo as he narrates:

After producing progeny, we would live out the rest of our days with an SUV in the garage, assorted objets d'art in the drawing room, and a view of a

manicured lawn. At the end of the day, it was a vision I found I could not quite commit to". (212)

The above mentioned paragraph contains the narration of Chuck's fantasy. The purpose of this narration is that he's abandoning himself; his dreams, his projection of future plans, his friends and almost every character is mentioned on these paragraphs whom Chuck was engaged with throughout the novel. Naqvi ends the novel leaving his character Chuck as a brutally devastated, broken and helpless victim of 9/11 heading home to his mother.

The novel starts with Chuck with full of enthusiasm to live the all American dream and reaches a peak point from where it falls down into a vicious circle where he gets so broken and fragmented that he's unable to collect himself. The title of the novel is placed purposefully by Naqvi as the novel hovers around the concept of home. Naqvi's protagonist Chuck was on pursuit of making home far away from home which shatters at the end and only place that could make him feel better or heal was the place where his mother was; his original home in Karachi, Pakistan.

At first Chuck is shown to have enjoying the shift in his life after coming to America where he writes, "We'd become Japs, Jews, Niggers. We weren't before. We fancied ourselves boulevardiers, raconteurs, renaissance man, AC, Jimbo and me" (1). He also asserts that, "I'd since claimed the city and the city had claimed me" (2). He seems to have enjoyed the space far away from his culture and identity. But later 9/11 strike and after he along with his friends got detained realization hits him so hard that his cosmopolitan identity vanishes in thin air. He acknowledges how a certain event can trigger a harsh reality; turn his religion and identity against himself. He realizes that he was drifted far away from his culture so blindly that, "I realized I had not interacted with a child since leaving Karachi. In fact I had not attended a baby shower

or funeral for that matter. It was, in some ways, a strange, disconnected existence" (188).

Furthermore, he narrates the poem, "you ask me about that country whose details now escape me, I don't remember its geography, nothing of its history. And should I visit it in memory, it would be as I would a past lover, After many years, for a night, no longer restless with passion, with no fear of regret. I have reached that age.... When one visits the heart merely as a courtesy" (124). He then becomes conscious that his all-American dream was not something he could cope with as he states, "At the end of the day, it was a vision I found I could not quite commit to" (212). And finally he decides that he had enough of the fantasy and he wants to return to his reality as he calls he mother and when he narrates, "I heard myself say, I want to come home" (207).

The novel starts and ends with the continuous embattled situation between Chuck's real home and his projected home far away from home. This is the state which Jameson regards as 'private' and 'public'. One of main theme of the novel is it can be taken as a response to 9/11 events aftermath, the purpose was to project the neglected dimension of existence of Islamic immigrants. The novel is a proof that it's not only the natives who suffered the 9/11, the novel displays the mutual suffering between the two parties; natives and immigrants. The narration of the novel seems a private individual destiny but it projects a political dimension of existence which is employed through the agency of the protagonist as a national allegory.

Here in the novel Naqvi projects the protagonist as an allegory chronologically along with the present of the text. At the beginning as the protagonist narrates the introduction of the main characters it is shown that all the immigrants are one way or another in relation with the protagonist mother. Naqvi is intentionally relating

immigrants to the protagonist mother to represent her as a collective entity of identity the characters possessed. Later, in the novel, his agency is more politicized as after 9/11 strike and the protagonist was narrating how US claimed Muslims and Pakistanis as terrorists, simultaneously he also narrates that his mother was sick and it is his mother who informs that Pakistan was facing border disputes and threats from Afghanistan campaign. This is to signify that it was not only USA facing the terrorism but even Pakistan's situation was sickening and fighting against terrorism.

Furthermore, after the protagonist is detained along with friends with brutal physical and mental abuse and deprivation of approaching lawyer or any authorities, he narrates that he needed reassurance, to talk to somebody, to talk to his mother. He had enough and was willing to go back to his country; to his mother. It suggests that the US policy of response against terrorism was inhumane and pathetic. Likewise, here in the novel the protagonist's mother 'Ma' is the whole nation itself which is mourning for its innocent citizens who are banged up abroad.

Hence, this research observes that Naqvi strategically projects a political dimension on the narrative which is employed through the agency of his protagonist as a national allegory that helps in development of theme to the text. Thus, Naqvi succeeds in representing the post-9/11 discourse of Pakistani Muslim immigrants living in the US and this novel provides the fact of American policy of fighting back against terrorism and its effect on common and innocent immigrants.

Works Cited

- Adely, Hannan. "He lost everything. Muslims Whose lives were upended by 9/11
detainment want justice".
NorthJersey. www.northjersey.com/story/news/2021/10/28/9-11-muslims-detained-ny-nj-lawsuits/8447630002.
- Ahmed, Nawaz. "Book Review: Home Boy By H.M Naqvi". *Hypen-Asia America*
Unabridged, 1 September, 2010. hypenmagazine.com/magazine/issue-21-new-legacy-fall-2010/book-review-home-boy-h-m-naqvi.
- Alfonseca, Kiara. "20 years after 9/11, Islamophobia continues to haunt Muslims".
ABCNews. September 11, 2021. abcnews.go.com/US/20-years-911-islamophobia-continues-haunt-muslims/story?id=79732049.
- Areheart, Shaye. "A Review of HM Naqvi's Home Boy". *Live Journal*.
asianamlitfans.livejournal.com/69639.
- Hai, Ambreen. "H. M. Naqvi's Home Boy as a Response to Post-9/11 Islamophobia
and as Implicit Critique of Mohsin Hamid's The Reluctant Fundamentalist".
Ariel. Vol. 53, No. 3 (July, 2022).
journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/ariel/article/view/70815.
- Hongshon, Stephen. "A review of H.M Naqvi's Home Boy". *Asianamlitfans*. Nov 25,
2011. www.librarything.com/work/8569942/reviews.
- Jameson, Fredric. *Allegory and Ideology*. Verso, 2020.
- Jameson, Fredric. "Third World Literature In The Era Of Multinational Capitalism".
Allegory and Ideology. Verso, 2020. pp. 65-88.
- Lisignoli, Maria. "Anti Muslim hate crime increase after 9/11". *WMTVnbc15*.
September 11, 2021. www.nbc15.com/2021/09/10/anti-muslim-hate-crimes-increase-after-911-madison-muslim-community-unites-against-hate/.

- Mansoor, Asma. "Post 9/11 Crisis in HM Naqvi's Home Boy". *Research Gate*.
www.researchgate.net/publication/235800257_Post_911_Identity_Crisis_in_H_M_Naqvi's_Home_Boy.
- Masters, Jonathan. "Guantanamo Bay: Twenty Years of Counterterrorism and Controversy". *Council on Foreign Relations*. September 9, 2022.
cfr.org/article/guantanamo-bay-twenty-years-counterterrorism-and-controversy.
- Mirahashmi. "Home Boy by H.M Naqvi—A review".
mirahashmi.wordpress.com/home-boy-by-h-m-naqvi-a-review/.
- Naqvi, H.M. *Home Boy*. HarperCollins Publishers, 2010.
- Salvatore, Joseph. "Fiction Chronicle". *The New York Times*, 5 Nov, 2009.
2009.nytimes.com/2009/11/08/books/review/Salvatore-t.
- Sanai, Leyla. "Home Boy By H.M Naqvi". *Independent*, 21 November, 2011.
www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/home-boy-by-hm-naqvi-6265197.
- Sawhney, Hirsh. "Home Boy By H.M Naqvi- Review". *The Guardian*, 17 Nov 2011.
www.theguardian.com/books/2011/nov/17/home-boy-h-m-naqvi-review.
- Threlkeld, Elizabeth. "PEACEWORKS". *United States Institute of Peace*. No.175 (August 2021) usip.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/pw_175_afghanistan_pakistan_ties_and_future_stability_in_afghanistan.pdf.