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HYBRID IDENTITIES IN AKHTAR’S “*HOMELAND ELEGIES*”: AS A PERSPECTIVE OF STUART HALL

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the concept of Hybrid Identities at the crossroads of cultural affinities as depicted in the works of Ayad Akhtar’s *Homeland Elegies*. The research focuses on the complexities of identity through a hybrid conceptual lens. Akhtar has highlighted to determine the identity of characters through political, racial, cultural and national factors. The trauma of cultural loss and identity, imitation, hybridity, diasporic culture, religious affiliations, problems in post-9/11 America, and pains of homelessness are all explored in Akhtar’s *Homeland Elegies*. The political, ethnic, racial, national, cultural, and religious elements that contribute to the characters’ identities in *Homeland Elegies* are examined in this study. The study focuses on how identities are formed and how characters fluctuate between letting go of old identities and assuming new ones. The aim of the current study is to examine how numerous identities develop across a variety of cultural contexts. The literary pieces have been examined within the parameters of postcolonial theory. The settings and personalities discussed in this study are elaborated using Stuart Hall’s idea of identity. The settings and characters of the novels under consideration are elaborated in the current study using Stuart Hall’s idea of identity. In Hall’s view of identity, the ambiguity and troubling ramifications of the modern day exist. The second method links the idea of diversity with identity, showing how identity changes over time. Such an approach, as Hall notes, is dynamic and ever-evolving. The study focuses on how people construct their identities and how migration creates situations where cultural disputes occur and resurface under different circumstances.

Keywords: Hybrid identity, Stuart Hall, Homeland Elegies, Cultural loss, Hostland and 9/11

Introduction

This research explores identity through the characters in the novel *Homeland Elegies* by Ayad Akhtar. The protagonists Ayad in *Homeland Elegies*, are trapped between their origin, cultural rootedness, and newly adopted identity. The research focuses on identity formation and how characters vacillate between giving up old and new identities. The present research explores multiple identity formation under multifarious culture modalities. The focus will also be on diasporic migration carried out under various factors and how migration produces conditions where cultural clashes come into play and the identity of people continues to reshape and renew itself under new conditions. The present study endeavors to establish Stuart Hall's theory of identity as being per formative act, a social construct and traces the identity issues depicted in the novel *Homeland Elegies*.

Identity, which includes ideas about self-concept and behavioural expectations, profoundly influences a person's psychology. If one takes this idea to its logical conclusion, one may contend that identity controls almost every aspect of our lives because it frequently influences our decisions. According to Hall (1996), identity is not a static state but a journey people take to consider their place in the world. This journey is influenced by significant language and cultural issues that have shaped how people are perceived and may one day shape how people see themselves.

According to Stuart Hall (1996), Identity is a work in progress. It is constantly being created. According to him, identity is not created by external representations. According to Stuart Hall, "cultural identity" is a question of being and becoming, belonging equally to the past and the present. According to Hall, identities change often throughout location and time. Hall avoided adopting a dominant position by straddling the line between ahistorical optimism and intellectual pessimism.

Haroon and Arslan (2024) conducted the study which analyzed the use of taboo language and euphemisms in the movie "Fight Club" (1999) to understand their reflection of late 1990s American cultural norms and societal disillusionment. The study found that the film uses profanity frequently (46 instances) and euphemisms strategically, particularly when referring to death and killing (20 instances) and sexual activity (13 instances). These linguistic choices

emphasize countercultural themes and characters' resistance to societal norms. The study highlights the complex relationship between language, culture, and social dynamics, suggesting that linguistic choices in media narratives can reveal broader cultural phenomena and aid in understanding authenticity and rebellion in contemporary society.

Particularly in first-world countries like the United States, immigration has historically played a vital role in these countries. Currently, a sizeable proportion of immigrants still call America home. In search of a better life, many people have immigrated to the United States from many different parts of the world. These goals must still be achieved on a personal level. Asia, Africa, and the Middle East are just a few of the continents from which these immigrants were initially, beginning between 1893 and 1917; while the British still ruled Pakistan, the first wave of Pakistani immigrants arrived (Moore, 2011). One interesting finding made by Pavri (2016) is that Muslims from the subcontinent not only experienced racism but also animosity because of their association with Islam. During that time, a common misperception about Islam in America falsely depicted Muslims as polygamists, disqualifying them from entering the country. Even calls for the expulsion of Muslims who were already citizens of the country resulted from this mistake. Additionally, Euro-American labourers sought to evict Indians from their places of residence and employment. The Asiatic Exclusion League (AEL), created in 1907 mainly to advocate for the expulsion of Asian workers, notably Muslims from Pakistan, was born out of this environment.

People frequently begin to doubt their sense of identity when there are differences between them and their surroundings. An individual's identity, a key psyche component, includes self-perception and guiding values. To a great extent, a person's identity can significantly impact every aspect of their life because this internal knowledge regularly influences decisions. Identity is a dynamic process rather than a static condition, according to Hall (1996). It requires thinking about how cultural, linguistic, and historical influences have affected how people are represented and how they want to be represented. However, identity must be examined concerning one's background, beliefs, age, and other characteristics because identity is complex.

Ayad Akhtar is an accomplished playwright and writer. More than two dozen languages have published and performed his work. He has won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, the Edith Wharton Citation of Merit for Fiction, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters Award for Literature (Akhtar, About, 2022).

The *Homeland Elegies* is set in America and features people with conflicting impulses who are of Pakistani descent. Ayad is an American citizen raised by Pakistani immigrants who have divided allegiances between their old nation and their adopted one. Little of Ayad's early life is discussed in the book. However, it was evident that his early experiences travelling to Pakistan brought him enormous delight and a strong affection for his extended family, many of whom have remained there. During the book, Ayad describes incidents highlighting the contrast between the American dream's promises and the reality of living as a Muslim in America. This gap became even more pronounced after the 9/11 attacks. Akhtar's investigation of the hybrid identity goes beyond simple depiction and dives into the psychological and emotional aspects of the experience. Readers gain a profound understanding of the complex web of identity negotiation through the character's internal conflicts, self-doubts, and epiphanies. The plot develops as the protagonist negotiates his relationship with his family, notably his immigrant father. The protagonist's upbringing in America and the father's longing for the "homeland" symbolised the generational and cultural gap that frequently accompanies hybrid identity. Moments of tension and introspection result from his father's conflict with his sense of being an American-Pakistani and his father's devotion to Pakistan out of nostalgia.

Another aspect of the protagonist's complex identity is added by his accomplishments as a playwright. He struggles with the knowledge that his art frequently falls into stereotypes or is restricted to his ethnic origin, echoing the difficulties many people with mixed identities encounter when attempting to express themselves honestly in a society that frequently simplifies and categorizes. The protagonist encounters various personalities who each stand in for a different component of his hybrid identity throughout the book. These contacts can form friendships with other artists or run-ins with people motivated by prejudice because of their heritage. These situations highlight the complex web of identity negotiation in a heterogeneous society. The aftermath of the 9/11 attacks is one crucial occasion. As he struggles with being viewed as both "American" and "Other," the protagonist's feeling of belonging is broken. This

story shows how external factors, especially for those with hybrid identities caught between many cultural realms, can significantly impact how they feel about themselves and where they belong.

Characters in *Homeland Elegies* portray Muslim immigrants who feel threatened in their nation or have successfully assimilated into their host society. They also discuss the elements that led to the negative perception of Muslims in post-9/11 America. There is a continual yearning for “home” and a subdued melancholy for the story’s loss of culture and identity. Being a second-generation immigrant, Akhtar combines the cultural traditions of his parents’ homeland with those of his childhood. This fusion affects how he views Pakistan and America from several angles. His parents, who are first-generation immigrants, must strike a delicate balance between assimilating and maintaining their heritage. Their hybrid identity is shaped by a longing for their native nation and a requirement to fit in with their new surroundings. The difficulties, conflicts, and complexities that develop when people struggle with dual or multiple cultural allegiances are skillfully shown by both authors. The complex process of negotiating hybridity is revealed through Akhtar’s examination of the protagonist’s identity in “*Homeland Elegies*,” who is torn between his Pakistani origin and his American upbringing. The investigation of hybrid identities is a prominent issue in the book “*Homeland Elegies*” by Ayad Akhtar. This work captures the complex interplay of cultural, historical, and personal factors. We are asked to travel the intricate web of characters whose identities are created by the confluence of various influences through the lens of these narratives.

Literature Review

This chapter is centered on the review of literature that is pertinent to the area of current research because it is a thorough analysis of the background writing related to the study and its conceptual domain. This chapter provides a critical examination of the material that is currently accessible in Akhtar’s novel “*Homeland Elegies*”. The devastating effects of 9/11 on Muslims’ daily lives. This paragraph also explores the ideas of home, identity, and diaspora in conjunction with describing the tactics. It means these ideas are undermined in both a hostile and foreign land. The different types of analysis on novel have been presented with accounting for the various types of periodicals, books, articles, reviews, unpublished theses, and interviews.

Existing Literature on Akhtar’s “*Homeland Elegies*”

This article addresses the difficulties that immigrants, mainly first- and second-generation Muslims from Pakistan living in the United States, endure as well as their experiences of diaspora as they are represented in the book “*Homeland Elegies*” by Ayad Akhtar. It emphasises how prejudice towards immigrants is expected because of differences in appearance, culture, or beliefs. In his article Pakistani-American Muslims Diaspora in Ayad Akhtar’s *Homeland Elegies*, Busyeiri, Ruslianti (2022) In Ayad Akhtar’s *Homeland Elegies*, the idea of diaspora—which is defined as a group’s dispersion outside of its native land—is presented as a fight for building identity and community on both the part of those who have been uprooted and the locals in the new diasporic context. This paper's analysis is based on Bhabha's postcolonial theories, emphasising ideas like mimicry, ambivalence, and hybridity. The book shows how immigrants struggle with many cultures and beliefs, resulting in various perspectives regarding their culture and the culture of their new country. Notably, second-generation immigrants are more likely than first-generation immigrants to be critical of both cultures.

This study dives into “*Homeland Elegies*” by Ayad Akhtar and provides a nuanced examination of identity within the context of the American diaspora. It emphasises the enormous importance of culture and the damaging repercussions of feeling alienated from immigrants' identities. In their essay Unraveling identity in the American Diaspora: A Study of Ayad Akhtar’s *Homeland Elegies*, Solangi, Soomro, and Awan (2023) highlight the difficulties the characters experience as they struggle with identity issues in the diasporic context of American society. This study uses textual analysis to thoroughly investigate how the novel's characters deal with identity issues. By referencing postcolonial themes, especially Homi K. Bhabha's theories of the “Third Space,” it accomplishes this. In the wake of the horrific events 9/11, a significant loss of culture and a sense of belonging was experienced, and “*Homeland Elegies*” bravely explores this grief. Akhtar expertly incorporates his and his family’s traumatic experiences into the story, producing a profoundly personal and introspective piece. The author fervently promotes Muslim rights and acceptance in America through this work. It illuminates how trauma, cultural pressures, and the desire for belonging affect how people define themselves in a strange country.

This study's primary goal is to investigate the situation of immigrants in the wake of 9/11 when diaspora populations faced increased scrutiny and difficulties. People from these diasporas go through exploitation and the terrible impacts of being uprooted—not merely from their actual homes but also from their fundamental sense of identity—during this time. Fatima, Warda, and Zia (2021) elaborate on their cultural roots and struggle with a profound sense of “Unhomeliness” in their article *Loss of Culture, Nation, and Identity: A Post 9/11 study on the exploitative state of Immigrants in Home Elegies* by Ayad Akhtar. As a result, they are constantly searching for a place where they can truly “belong.” In “*Homeland Elegies*” by Ayad Akhtar, this sense of identity and belonging crises is conveyed in great detail. Through his artistic creations, he expresses the enormous trauma brought on by cultural loss and identity issues in post-9/11 America. The story illustrates how these people are alienated from the society in which they live and the nation where they were born, partly because they identify as Muslims.

The highly acclaimed novel “*Homeland Elegies*” (2020), a fictitious memoir attempting to analyze the socially fractured terrain of the United States during the Trump presidency, is the subject of a thorough investigation in this paper. This research is set against Jessica Bruder's nonfiction book “*Nomadland: Surviving America in the Twenty-First Century*” (2017), which examines a rising portion of the American working class battling persistent poverty and instability, leading to a state of homelessness. In his book, Akhtar explores the resonance of Trump's “antisystem” language, which has supporters among his African-American friends and Pakistani family. Reflecting on how economic neoliberalism, heightened by post-9/11 worries, contributed to the nationalist configuration Michael Moore famously dubbed “Trumpland,” it offers a kaleidoscopic image of the United States. In contrast, Bruder's “*Nomadland*” exposes the creation of a nomad subculture primarily comprised of older adults affected by socioeconomic hardships like unemployment, mortgage fraud, job loss, medical debt, and other issues.

These people are impelled to lead a mobile but incredibly precarious lifestyle while travelling and living in campers and other motor homes. In order to dispel the notion of the traditional American “Home” symbolised by the white picket fence, Bruder's artwork uses iconography from the Western genre. This supports Akhtar's study of immigrant groups in the US, highlighting how modern ideas of “Homeland” are losing their relevance regarding stability

and social security. Araújo (2022) “Homelands” in Comparison: Global (In)securities and New Marginalities Ayad Akhtar’s *Homeland Elegies* (2020) and Jessica Bruder’s *Nomadland* (2017) within a larger body of literary works show how these images of home(lessness) transcend beyond of the United States. Secretariat policies and “Home/land” designs that were strengthened in the wake of 9/11 have aided in the development of increasingly prejudiced and discriminating concepts of “Home” and “Security.” These hostile images of “Home/land” are seen throughout many parts of the world.

Arslan, Mehmood and Haroon (2022) conducted a gender based study about the use of adjectives in the novels written by male and female authors. The study opted the methodology of corpus. Results of the study indicated that female authors use more adjectives than male authors.

Research Gap

Stuart Hall’s examination of the hybrid identities in Ayad Akhtar’s “*Homeland Elegies*” provides an intriguing lens for examining the complex nature of identity in the context of diaspora. There is still an apparent study deficit in how Stuart Hall’s theories of hybridity and cultural identity relate to these specific literary works, even if prior research has significantly advanced our knowledge of hybrid identities in literature. Studies have mainly concentrated on exploring hybrid identities in the larger framework of postcolonial literature or the particular work of Akhtar. By undertaking a thorough comparative examination of author’s book within the context of Stuart Hall’s theories, this study aims to close this gap. It hopes to accomplish this by highlighting the distinctive ways these two literary storylines deal with the difficulties of identity, belonging, and cultural hybridity in the face of diaspora and colonial legacies. This study aims to advance the conversation on hybrid identities in contemporary literature by attempting to provide a more nuanced understanding of how the characters in these books negotiate their identities in various cultural, social, and historical circumstances.

Theoretical Framework

According to the theory of hybrid identity, people can simultaneously embody numerous cultural, ethnic, or social identities, creating a complex and diverse sense of who they are. Because hybridity recognizes the dynamic interaction between diverse factors, it undermines essentialist views of identity. As Homi K. Bhabha suggest, “Hybridity is the indicator of the

productivity of colonial power, its fluctuating forces and fixities” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 126). The concept of hybrid identity draws attention to the roles that cultural interactions, migration, globalisation, and historical circumstances play in creating identities that are neither rigid nor homogeneous. A complicated and developing idea, hybrid identity examines the interaction of various cultural, societal, and personal influences on how one develops a sense of self. Stuart Hall, a pioneer in studying hybrid culture and identity, has tremendously impacted how we think about identity through his revolutionary idea of hybridity. This theoretical framework explores Hall’s viewpoint on hybrid identity and clarifies its main principles, theoretical influences, and broader applications.

In contemporary theory, hybrid identity refers to discussing the intricacies of links between communities and identity construction in communities that do not renounce the image of their nation, ethnicity, religion, or history. However, they still have much to do with anything that might not survive. The difficulties of living in a time of colonialism are distinct from the difficulties of the mid-20th century decolonization process, despite the necessity of separating the tenacity of colonialism’s intersections with inquiries about relocations and residence. Hybrid identity responds to this urgent situation. Hybridity describes the establishment of fresh social structures within the colonial-created contact zone. In horticulture, the term describes the attachment or cross-pollination of two species to create a third, “hybrid” species. The union can be racial, political, cultural, linguistic, or any other combination. Language examples include artificial language, creole languages, and similar dialects. Mikhail Bakhtin, a linguist and cultural theorist, coined the word to emphasise multivocal language objects' problematic and transformative nature and multivocal narratives. Hybrid Identity proposed one significant strategy: to assume the colonial displacements from start to finish. It allows for abdicating the duty of deracinating enormous populations to restore the empire as a social structure. Beginning with the history of colonialism and imperialism, identity is not disassociated. Neither is it immune to racialisation and pursuit, as these histories played a significant role in the development of the diaspora.

Hall's Concept of Identity and Hybridity

The concept of hybrid identity is explained by Hall (1996) as a type of identification based on disparity and hybridity, destroying imperial and hegemonic notions of ethnicity. This hybrid identity is defined by accepting necessary heterogeneity and miscellany rather than quintessence or limpidness. Therefore, rather than being fascinated by the native soil of a diasporic civilization. The Diasporic Identity might give voice to the experience of migration and the costs associated with establishing a new life away from one's land. Stuart Hall argues that cultural identities are neither fixed nor all-encompassing.

They cannot use the predicted or correlated entities due to the shift in cultural norms. He quarrels that all identities are socially constructed in enlightening ways and are, hence, subject to the passage of time and space. These subject positions are what he refers to as “the positions of enunciation” (Hall, 1990, p. 169). Despite being surrounded by a careful social environment and restrictions, identity is not just forced but actively worn. In addition to the dominant displays of “others,” there is conflict. The colonization plantation phenomenon, which continues to have an impact long after decolonization, gives the Caribbean a negative image of the diverse society that colonial forces brought together for labour. We might say that the fear of the newly independent states flailing about to get their edifying, psychosomatic, and opinionated recognition exposes their seclusion was added to the decolonization process and acknowledged by their independence instead of being forced to imitate them for a long time by the colonizer west.

The Concept of Diaspora by Stuart Hall and Homi K. Bhabha

To be in the unhomey world is to find its ambivalences and ambiguity, validated in the literature and cracked in the sculptural installation, as Homi K. Bhabha discusses in the preface to *The Location of Culture* (1994). His writings draw readers' and critics' attention to the psychic aspect of diaspora, which is typically ignored in socio-historical examinations. With the help of Bhabha's concept of homelessness, we may better understand how scarcity and disarticulation affect one another. Diaspora life meant being utterly indifferent to the past, which was awkwardly seated together, with ambivalence for the spotlight of their event and previously following it as well. A reciprocal appointment on the periphery perpendicularly along extensive

histories of displacement and transversely across composite diasporic communities and identities is necessary for diasporic partisanship. In tangential requirements, diasporas are defined by difference rather than by loneliness. Diasporas tend to be discussed in their unique ways in contemporary debates.

Emancipation in the diaspora refers to the attainment of freedom and stipulation, both of which are perpetually made more difficult by the diaspora's shift in chronology. Bhabha (1992) investigates it as the overlap and displacement of several domains of different communal experiences of nationhood, community interest, and cultural values are negotiated. Due to partial space for the diasporas that permits enriching transformations and severances of the diasporic concerns, consultations of the identity that communicate edifying differentiations in diasporic legroom are conducted. However, according to Bhabha, representations of difference must not be prematurely interpreted as reflecting predetermined racial or cultural characteristics written in stone as part of the past. When viewed from the standpoint of a minority group, the social articulation of difference is a complicated and ongoing negotiation that strives for legalese cultural hybridity that occurs throughout the historical transition. Muslims living in the diaspora are, in point of fact, subject to a double marginalization. They practice the marginalization that stems from their hyphenated racial identities. On the other side, they are othered by the West because of the contemporary aggression in route for Muslims and Islam owed to jihadist principles proliferated by al-Qaeda. On one side, they practice the marginalization that stems from their hyphenated racial identities; on the other, they are othered by the West. Because Muslim Identity is "geographically Nexible" and vacillates between diaspora and origin, Muslims can think transnationally while retaining deep connections with a specific place, whether of birth, of choice, or compulsion, as stated by Miriam Cooke. This is because Muslims' Identity is "geographically Nexible."

According to Stuart Hall (1990), diasporic identities become visible during segregation, though not in the same startling or apparent ways that one might expect. Diasporas are movements from one's ancestral home to two or more distant constituencies. People who have left their home nation share memories of their motherland, are sure they will always be hateful in their new environment, romanticize their acknowledged inherited home, and think that all of their civilization should be subject to the same destiny. According to Bhabha, only through these

meetings does “chronological actuality of extraordinary magnitude materialize,” as opposed to the dispersion or “scattering” of crowds in emigrant areas referred to as congregations. A comprehensive and dynamic framework for comprehending how identities is created and negotiated is offered by Stuart Hall’s perspective on hybrid identity. His renunciation of essentialism, focus on cultural processes, and engagement with postcolonial ideas all help to hone in on the idea that identity is a complex interaction of cultural forces. With a worldview that welcomes the transformative possibilities of hybridity in a globalized world, Hall’s ideas push us to reexamine the construction, negotiation, and manifestation of identities.

Critical Analysis of *Homeland Elegies*

The main characters in *Homeland Elegies*, first- and second-generation Pakistani-American Muslims, show how they experience hybrid identities and constantly negotiate their identities by fusing their respective American and Pakistani-Muslim cultures. This is done to be accepted as equals by the majority population in their surroundings. Identity negotiation is the skill of compromising between two or more different cultures to blend in with most people in a particular cultural situation.

Ayad Akhtar, a second-generation Pakistani-Muslim, and his parents, Sikander and Fatima Akhtar, a Pakistani-Muslim couple, occasionally felt uncomfortable while imitating American customs against their Pakistani-Muslim beliefs throughout the novel.

Akhtar and his family had to deal with hybrid identities and identity questions because they were the only Pakistani-Muslim family in their neighbourhood and were considered a minority. Each member of the family dealt with these issues differently. The Akhtar family faced frequent inquiries about their American identity and what it meant to be an American while living as Muslims in the country. They had to figure out how to cope with being Asians in a strange land. The family's father, Sikander Akhtar, made a conscious decision to fully embrace their new nation by assimilating different components of American culture, even though it occasionally required holding onto views that would be dangerous for him and his family. The mother, Fatima Akhtar, had a different viewpoint, however. Even though she enjoyed some aspects of American society, such as its food and entertainment, she never truly felt at home and yearned to return to Pakistan. This desire persisted right up until her passing. Their kid, Ayad

Akhtar, was caught between his parents' opposing ideologies and did not firmly favour one culture over the other until the story's climax. Ayad eventually decided to adopt aspects of both cultures that he thought were helpful and valuable, although he did not fully agree with either side's ideas. When deciding on his own identity, he adopted a more critical perspective.

The protagonist, Ayad Akhtar, is given the most in-depth examination because his professional experiences significantly influenced his identity, even though many Muslim personalities in the book are introduced to the readers in some form. The Akhtar family is the main subject, and Ayad is the main character who travels through important American historical moments, including the time of Donald Trump's presidency. The horrific 9/11 event was one crucial event that significantly impacted the family and Muslims. The story goes into great detail about how this calamity affected the protagonists' lives, either directly or indirectly. Following 9/11, the locals started to view the Muslim characters differently because of their religion. Each character encountered particular difficulties and answered them in their particular ways. For instance, to be accepted by those around him, Akhtar decided to wear a cross and hide that he was a Muslim.

Mimicry

Mimicry is the term used to describe the desire of people from Eastern cultures to be treated equally to those from Western cultures. Ayad and his parents, Sikander and Fatima, used mimicry as a coping mechanism to negotiate their numerous identities and seek acceptance within the local majority as minorities residing in the United States. This imitation aims to get the same privileges and advantages as the majority population. Mimicry included copying the language, mannerisms, cuisine, social interactions, behaviour, and even the political ideologies of the majority—something that immigrants frequently do. The main characters' attempts to emulate their friends and assimilate into American culture to blend in and be accepted are apparent throughout the book. “The eruption of bigoted views...That whites were lazy.... that blacks did not like to pay their medical bills because they still had a slave’s mentality” (Akhtar, 2020, p.16). Sikander's obsession with America and his laser-like concentration on Donald Trump caused him to use his imitation far beyond topics that affected him personally. With time, Sikander's interest in Trump led him to develop similar racial and prejudiced opinions. Even

though it is common for people to have private ideas against particular racial or ethnic groups, Trump's position as a demagogue seemed to encourage his fans to adopt racist sentiments and disregard reason. Sikander's growing support for Trump seems to reduce such inhibitions. In contrast, many regular citizens may typically feel restrained by society's standards and civility, stopping them from freely expressing their most xenophobic and racist thoughts.

Sikander's attempt to ally himself more closely with the previous President led to his acceptance of Trump's racist ideologies. Sikander, a member of a minority, had deeply misogynistic beliefs about a variety of other people, including the notion that black people had a "slave mentality," that women were forced to undergo painful childbirth, and even that white people were lazy. He acknowledged his problematic behaviour with women and the racially charged nature of his arousal for females. Ayad noticed that people frequently ignored social standards and engaged in hedonistic, pleasure-seeking lifestyles as he sought to integrate into American culture. This feature of American culture, marked by a fondness for pricey alcohol and sexual activities, was something he tried to imitate. After being introduced to expensive cocktails, Ayad began a series of sexual encounters with various women, many of whom were colored by racial dynamics. His racialized sexual impulses, which had previously tended to favour partners with fair complexion, found an outlet through his imitation of American sexual culture, which also served as a tool for social assimilation. Given that pre-marital sex is against Islamic law, his actions betrayed a break from his Islamic identity.

Ambivalence

Every culture has its traditions and practices, and people are frequently more accepting of cultures that are similar to their own. Immigrants frequently experience feelings of bewilderment or ambivalence when living in a country that is different from their home country. Sikander and Fatima, Ayad's parents, occasionally emulated American practices that clashed with their Pakistani Muslim values, which left Ayad and his parents perplexed. Perplexity or ambivalence is the term used to describe the colonists' conflicting feelings toward the cultural traits, beliefs, and way of life of the colonised. Ambivalence may put immigrants in a precarious position as they deal with cultural difficulties. Everybody has experienced all kinds of cultural misunderstandings. Due to their difficulties adjusting to the unfamiliar culture of their new

environment, first-generation immigrants sometimes struggle with cultural conflicts. On the other hand, second-generation immigrants might be affected by changes in their upbringing and the influence of peer pressure. As immigrants struggle with their quick absorption into the various cultures of their new home, these dynamics frequently show up.

Ayad and his parents portray the diverse cultural struggles that first and second-generation Pakistani-American Muslims confront in *Homeland Elegies*, “America, he found it hard to believe he had spent so much of his life there.... There was no harm in it; he had just gotten tired of playing the part.” (Akhtar,2020, p.333). As his time in America came to a close, Sikander experienced Ambivalence because he was unclear of his identity and where he belonged. Sikander experienced America's positive and negative aspects as he accumulated wealth but also lost it all due to his fascination with capitalism and gambling. He understood that he had been trying to embody an American identity after returning to Pakistan, a role he could never fill because of his origins. His sense of ambiguity was erased with this trip back to Pakistan.

Sikander knew how many people had achieved tremendous fortune and global renown due to American culture and habits. To fit in with society, he imitated and became fixated on America and its people to achieve a similar level of wealth and celebrity. He adopted the investing, gambling, and capitalist lifestyle many Americans pursued for years but never attained the same level of prosperity. Over time, he realized that he was only trying to be an American and would never become one since he could not live up to his high standards. Such initiatives frequently fail, mainly when the colonized country is a member of a marginalized group that is ostracized and treated as "other" by the dominating group. The conquerors' superiority often causes them to ignore, repress, or denigrate this oppressed society.

Hybridity

Acclimating to foreign cultures takes different amounts of time and effort between the first and second generations of immigrants. Since they are more likely to have a stronger connection to their own cultures, first-generation immigrants frequently make significant efforts to assimilate and become familiar with the cultural norms and traits of the majority population in their adoptive nation. On the other hand, second-generation immigrants, who often engage with

their peers, have an edge when learning about their host country's regional customs. The second generation is, therefore, better able to meld their various cultural backgrounds. The hybridization of immigrants' diverse cultural identities is one of the most often used integration tactics. When used in a postcolonial context, the term "hybridity" describes the process of invaders blending into the new cultural setting. Once they achieve a balance between their cultures, immigrants frequently start blending them. Through this initiative, they are trying to navigate their identity as immigrants who want to meld their cultural history with that of the larger society.

Sikander enthusiastically embraced American society, while Fatima vehemently rejected it, immersing herself in the customs and values of her home nation and religion. As a result, the Akhtar family did not frequently engage in cultural fusion. As previously indicated, the Akhtar family mainly sought chances for cultural blending in food, drink, and entertainment. "To celebrate, he had mixed a pitcher of Rooh Afza lassi—the rose-flavored squash beverage was my mother's favorite....She was in no mood for lassi" (Akhtar, 2020, p. 4). Because of its perceived prestige and expensive cost, alcohol continues to be a symbol of celebration in Western culture. It is frequently used to mark important occasions. It is typically present at gatherings and festivities, whether involving a single person or a group, such as a family, to remember memorable occasions.

The Akhtar family tried to include traditional practices in their festivities while bringing their distinct Pakistani-Muslim viewpoint. Bhabha (1994) defined hybridity as merging different cultural origins during the in-between stage when two or more civilizations coexist. As a result, a new sense of identity and self emerges due to the interaction of many cultural influences. For instance, the Akhtar family created a new identity by fusing the custom of making a toast with champagne and sipping lassi, a non-alcoholic beverage. They enjoyed the habit of opening a pricey drink to celebrate important occasions. However, they were forbidden from drinking alcohol by their Muslim beliefs, notably by Fatima, who held this custom in high regard. Cultural hybridity is a type of hybridity that includes the merging of numerous facets, including art, music, fashion, cuisine, and ways of life. Immigrants from the East, such as Asians or Africans, frequently experience pressure to acculturate and adapt to the habits and values of the mainstream culture in their adoptive homeland in their efforts to blend with the majority population without deleting their cultural history. While keeping their cultural identity from their

heritages, they work to assimilate and align themselves with their new environment's cultural traits and values.

Diasporic Culture and Identity

Given that it is populated by individuals from various countries, Ayad Akhtar depicts America as a country with multiple hybrid identities. The primary character, who bears the author's name, Ayad Akhtar, appears patriotic and comfortable with the American dream right from the start. He praises America for it because he loves everything about living here. He gambles, drinks, and spends time with prostitutes. He avoids religion at all times and considers himself to be a true American. He was unrelated to any civilization. He was born into a Muslim family who immigrated from Pakistan to the United States. That was the one thing that had ever remained with him. Akhtar was in a limited position since one hemisphere of his brain was dedicated to his family of Pakistani descent, and the other was to his American pride.

Like Ayad, his father Akhtar continues to live in exile despite being shown a renowned physician who previously treated Donald Trump, the former president of the United States, for a cardiac condition. Like before, Dr Akhtar, Ayad's father, realizes the American dream and makes the most of all the distinguished honours that America has shown him. Additionally, he indulges in some peculiar vices like drinking, gambling, and prostitution. Because of his deep attachment to America, he started to see himself as an American and embraced an American cultural identity. Conflicts with his wife and other family members who might have had different opinions or commitments to their cultural background resulted from this on occasion.

Trump was quite popular with Dr. Akhtar. Despite his support for Trump's anti-Muslim policies, he endorsed Trump and his ideas. Dr Akhtar began to believe that America would not be an excellent place for him and his kid to reside when Trump declared severe measures on Muslims in 2016 upon losing a license in court. When he lost everything and returned to Pakistan, he came to terms with it and opened his eyes. From Pakistan, he called his son and said, "I had a good life there—so many good years. I am grateful to America.... I am glad to be home". (Akhtar, 2021,p.333). In addition to Ayad's mother, Fatima, his father, Akhtar, who never truly embraced life in America, was also in this predicament. While living in the United States, Fatima retained an affinity for Pakistani food, culture, and traditions. Her persona was a

sharp contrast to American culture. Fatima saw right once that it was not her cultural heritage, unlike her husband, Dr. Akhtar, who was greatly affected and inspired by American society. “It’s not our home. No matter how many years we spend here, it won’t ever be our home.” (Akhtar,2020, p. 40). This passage from the book *Homeland Elegies* illustrates how Americans who have immigrated from other countries live. The protagonist's mother, Fatima, voiced these feelings to convince their friends that America was not their genuine nation. However, because he was succeeding and successfully integrating into American society at the time, her husband, Dr. Akhtar, passionately identified as an American.

Religious Affiliations and Loss of Identity

In the novel, a different character named Fatima and Dr. Latif, Akhtar's classmate, were firmly persuaded by Fatima's assertion that they did not call America their home. Dr. Latif was a humanitarian who ran a free clinic for low-income Americans, yet he was still open to returning to Pakistan. Even so, he firmly believed that being Pakistani rather than American would always be the source of his identity. "The longer we" 're here, the more I wonder...who I'm Becoming" (Akhtar, 2020, p. 40). In addition to being aware of his own identity, Latif was also aware of the identities of his children. He was shown as a devout Muslim concerned about retaining his cultural identity in American society. For instance, he insisted that his 9-year-old eldest daughter wear the headscarf, as is the norm in their society. When his 9-year-old daughter revealed her distaste for Pakistani culture, he realized his concerns about losing his ethnic identity were well-founded. She admitted outright that she did not like it. “She didn’t like it, and she told me so... I’d always thought her the most "American" of her siblings, more American, certainly, than I was...” (Akhtar, 2020, p.37). Ramla, his daughter, was relatively minor but also embraced American culture.

On the other hand, Ramla favored listening to popular music over Pakistani tunes despite Latif's attempts to convince her to wear a hijab. Her friendships brought her joy, and she was fascinated by American culture. Her father, Latif, became more and more severe every day, which contributed to her diasporic state, where she lamented the loss of her identity. Ramla was in a state where she was having trouble telling fantasy from reality due to this circumstance. Children frequently struggle to distinguish between good and wrong in situations like these.

"Latif getting stricter, not only with his kids but also with himself" (Akhtar,2020, p. 37). Latif's persona is portrayed as someone who is thinking about going back to his nation. He is also depicted as someone who has begun donning a white Jalabiya, an ordinary Arab outfit different from conventional Pakistani attire. Later, he fought alongside the Afghan Taliban against the USSR. Latif intended to become a well-known physician when he immigrated to America. He becomes a successful physician and philanthropist in order to live the American dream, and it is made clear that he is concerned about his identity. Later, he dons Arab garb and returns to Pakistan to ally with the Afghan Taliban. Latif appears to seek his identity and a true home throughout each stage. He struggled with choosing between his Pakistani and American identities before joining the Afghan army, reasoning that his choice was for the advancement of Islam.

Fatima had intense pain when Latif was killed. She died for various reasons, one of which was the ongoing suffering she endured, but after the 9/11 attacks, she begins to smile. "They deserve what they got. And what they're going to get." (Akhtar,2020, p.50). When Latif, her son's teenage crush, was killed, Fatima tried to return to her earlier conviction that America would never truly be her home. She held that there was an unbridgeable gap between "us" and "them" and that coexisting in the same space was not conceivable. She had previously tried to adopt American culture because she loved her husband and son. At one point, Fatima noted in her diary that she did not consider America her home country. She has never loved that location and has never agreed to acknowledge it. She once flatly rejected America as a desirable place to live during a discussion with her son Ayad, to which she angrily retorted that she had no idea she may be angry.

Homeland, Hostland and 9/11

All of the main characters in the book were depicted as being at grave risk of losing their identities. The protagonist, Ayad, was born in America and, until the 9/11 tragedy, felt secure in her status as a respectable American. However, because they were immigrants and not American citizens, they were dispersed throughout the country. Although Ayad's upbringing appeared utopian, his view of America shifted considerably due to the 9/11 attacks. He saw the fall of the Twin Towers as a change in the balance of power between the East and the West, yet he was

nonetheless profoundly disturbed by the awful occurrence. He admitted that America's participation in the Middle East impacted how events developed.

Ayad had first relished having the ability to practice his liberties as an American and to communicate his opinions. However, after the 9/11 attacks, his notion of freedom was destroyed. He started getting strange looks as if people thought he might be a terrorist or involved in evil things. Ayad considers the difficulties of living as a Muslim in America. He started wearing a cross necklace due to the challenging circumstances to fend off unwanted queries from law enforcement. Before making this choice, he was concerned about how his skin colour would be perceived, in addition to his faith. Ayad experienced a condition of ambiguity, a sensation of being a foreigner in his nation, identity confusion, and unwelcomeness. He was in a situation where he was unable to identify as either an American or a Pakistani fully.

The protagonist in Scranton experienced yet another terrible incident when his automobile broke down, and he was treated unfairly and rudely. In the presence of the police officer, he had further money taken from him, but the exchange was remarkably cordial and polite. However, when the officer discovered that the man was a Muslim from Pakistan and that his name was of Arab origin, the officer's demeanor abruptly changed. The narrator claims he does not practice Islam but is known as a follower of it. After 9/11, it was Islam that gave him a new definition. Yes, he has a valid reason for not being a Muslim; the tragic events 9/11 profoundly impacted the course of history.

As a result of his upbringing in a secular American society, Ayad describes himself as a secular Muslim. Due to his secular convictions, he does not follow several Islamic doctrines that he deems objectionable. Additionally, he thinks that because Muslims do not fully understand their culture, they are in a state of confusion. The narrator also mentions what the West built long ago, but since the 9/11 events, a new tone has been established. He receives a call from his father in Pakistan near the book's conclusion. Ayad responds that he has taken on an American identity because he was born and nurtured in the United States. Even though his faith and skin tone are not typical of Americans, he calls America his home. Since he has everything here, he does not feel alone. "I am here because I was born and raised here. This is where I've lived my whole life...I've never even thought about it. America is my home." (Akhtar,2020, p.343).

The narrator occasionally makes an effort to investigate Islam in greater depth. However, his knowledge is mainly derived from Western historians or perceptions gained from Muslims living abroad who, in their mimicry of their oppressors, have forgotten who they are.

Conclusion

Exploring, analyzing, and clarifying the field of hybrid identity studies while considering contemporary world changes like the idea of immigration and migration was crucial. Therefore, in my research, I chose the theoretical framework and the chosen fictional works by considering current events in the modern world as they relate to the conceptual paradigms of migration and the experiences of immigrants in Western societies, such as America. Stuart Hall's analysis of hybrid identities in Ayad Akhtar's "*Homeland Elegies*" has shed light on the complex web of identity construction within the contexts of diaspora and colonialism. Throughout this study, we have seen how these two literary works explore the subtleties of cultural overlap, displacement, and the negotiation of identities in the face of external influences. Stuart Hall's perspective has helped us better comprehend the intricate interplay between culture, history, and personal agency by examining hybrid identities in "*Homeland Elegies*". Stuart Hall's theories on hybridity and cultural identity have given readers of these novels a valuable foundation for comprehending the characters' journeys. We have seen the characters move through the cultural liminal regions, representing contemporary identity's ongoing change and evolution. Understanding how these people carve out distinct places for themselves, neither totally bound by their ancestral cultures nor fully assimilated into their host civilizations, has been made possible by Hall's concept of the "third space." We have discovered via examining "*Homeland Elegies*" that hybrid identities are dynamic and developing, influenced by historical, social, and individual settings. However, in *Homeland Elegies*, Ayad and his parents deal with hybridity and negotiate their identities differently. Ayad's first generation is depicted as more accepting and critical of Islamic, Pakistani, and American traditions. As a result, first- and second-generation immigrants are constantly negotiating their identities to fit into an evolving society. Fundamentally, identity negotiation helps immigrants successfully navigate and strike a balance in a new cultural setting that may differ from their home cultures due to their varied experiences and viewpoints.

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