

## **Identity Politics in Ayad's *Homeland Elegies*: A Diasporic Study**

**Madeeha Azeem**

Assistant Professor,  
Head of English Department,  
Government Graduate College for Women,  
Ghulam Muhammad Abad, Faisalabad.  
[madeehaikram99@gmail.com](mailto:madeehaikram99@gmail.com)

**Syeda Mariam Fatima Kazmi**

MPhil, Visiting Lecturer,  
Government Graduate College for Women,  
Ghulam Muhammad Abad, Faisalabad.

**Dr. Muhammad Akram Mankash**

Principal, Hazrat Shahjahanir Academy  
(Faculty of English Language & Literature),  
Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan.  
[a.mankash59@hotmail.com](mailto:a.mankash59@hotmail.com)

Received: 10-May-2024

Revised: 21-May-2024

Accepted: 23-May-2024

### **Abstract:**

**Introduction:** *"Homeland Elegies"* by Ayad Akhtar (2020) is a deeply personal exploration of identity and belonging in a fractured nation. Blending fact and fiction, this work narrates a story of longing and dispossession in the post-9/11 world. It intertwines family drama, social commentary, and picaresque elements, focusing on the relationship between a father, a son, and their shared homeland.

**Methodology:** Akhtar employs a new narrative voice to depict a country ravaged by financial ruin and compromised ideals. The narrative highlights the fear experienced by immigrants and critiques a society led by a TV personality as president. Postcolonial diaspora theory and hybridity serve as significant theoretical tools to construct the conceptual framework.

**Results/Findings:** The novel reveals how unhealed wounds from 9/11 continue to impact the world, portraying diverse settings

*from American heartland towns to European suites and Afghan guerilla hideouts.*

**Future Direction** *Future analyses could further explore the intersections of personal and national identity in the context of global political upheaval.*

**Key Words:** *Homeland Elegies, USA, Islam, Identity Politics, political discourse, Pakistan*

## **Introduction:**

*Homeland Elegies* is a bravura act of self-mythology; a gauntlet thrown at the flabby monolith of contemporary public discourse – the suicidally clamorous landscape in which, as the novel’s belligerent Everyman puts it, authenticity is “measured now in decibels” (Akhtar, 2020 p.88); a corrective; a fractured lovesong; and a romping treatise in which a macabre sort of hilarity is never long missing (the direct consequence of a life of neoliberal apologism is sometimes, as it turns out, syphilis). The book’s targets include: the sentimental, revisionist atavism of contemporary Islam, Christianity, capitalism, liberal democracy; the failure of Medicare; the reactionary disenchantment of immigrants; the homicidal excesses of nationalist mythmaking; the petty myth of a self-governing market; Akhtar excoriates intellectual laziness wherever he finds it, from Ivy League lecture halls where the fragile children of a dwindling middle class are saddled with a lifetime’s worth of irremediable debt, to the bacchanalian reception rooms in which the fine line between modern-day courtier and courtesan blurs into nonexistence (Rehan, & Zaidi, 2023). Here, we see described the lust for power, the mercenary intertwining of capitalistic and sexual greed, the unbridled onanism of the so-called American dream; this elegy is not for late capitalism itself, but for those who believed in the promise of its snakeoil, who had the temerity – or the naked, brazen hope – to imagine that the depredations of Flint were not prefigured in the homeland’s founding, foundational act of mass murder in the name of material gain. And all this is taken on with a fluency in the language of dreams and of bankers, of urban academics and smalltown cops, of Punjabi grandmothers, Wall Street sex trade workers, and Pennsylvanian imams (Akhtar, 2020 p.89).

## **Historical and political analysis**

Historical and political analysis written from the particular perspective of a Pakistani family immigrant experience in the USA. The narrator (sharing Akhtar's name) isn't particularly a practicing Muslim, he has grown up in USA and feels the USA is his home (Oad, 2023). But what

that home and sense of belonging means for him and his wider family is this work's central theme. Akhtar's life experience is “still entirely shaped by the Islam that had socially defined me since 9/11” and that he lives in the midst of a culture that “didn’t understand us, that didn’t want us”. It is through art (as a playwright) that Akhtar grapples with the complexities of all this, not just for himself but also for others that he encounters (Akhtar, 2020 p.67).

There are moving and subtle passages covering Akhtar's relationship with his parents: his mother, who very much struggles with leaving her culture and never really feels at home in the USA; his father, who very much aspires to the American dream and tries throughout his life to become the model American (even admiring and supporting Trump). The textures and contours of these relationships are so sensitively rendered without any sense of sentimentality. For me this is the strength of the book and what made me think deeply about contemporary USA, in ways that were far more interesting than the political analysis passages that are included throughout (Hashim, 2023).

There are passages that reflect on socio-political and economic forces shaping the USA, including the rise of neo-liberal agendas that have reduced so much to consumerism and business growth. The analysis of the costs of this for those who have been left out and left behind and their growing resentment as expressed in the rise of Trump is OK, but for me not especially revealing and doesn't add all that much to the novel. This analysis is at its best when considering how these agendas have undermined decency and values of truth, including at a personal level. This is almost horrifying, and Akhtar, powerfully and authentically, does not exempt himself from the corrosive influence of this greed. He isn't morally above it all (Akhtar, 2020 p.76). But some of this analysis felt a little too much opinion column material that you can read from almost any Centre-left commentator. Good as far as it goes, but I expect more from a novel than relatively trite (even if true) political analysis.

Akhtar, unabashed native son, has written a denunciation of American exceptionalism; and, in triumphant paradox, a paean to it. Tracing the line from the moral insouciance of the American ‘founding fathers’ to the unfettered predatory financial adventurism of the 1980s, from the cynical decades of Cold War gamesmanship to the consequent rise of Al-Qaeda, Akhtar evinces an apparent desire to fulminate conversationally, academically, in occasional declamatory ecstasy as

a sort of outsider national conscience; *Homeland Elegies* is sung to the rhythms of an unapologetically Midwestern heart, its lungs now pumping the perfumed air of yesteryear's Abbottabad, now howling themselves hoarse at a Badgers game. This book interrogates contemporary America in all its tangled nuance – the same America in which, not a decade ago, a smug campaigning Democrat could unironically proclaim, “Osama bin Laden is dead and General Motors is alive” (Akhtar, 2020 p.87) without falling prey to easily reductive declarative statements; a tall order, to be sure.

A kind of American Pastoral for a time that has perhaps outgrown both the American and the pastoral, replete with ingenuous enthusiasm, academic rigour and mystical peregrinations, cleverness and bawdy sex and reading lists, *cris de coeur* and confidence tricks; and with deep, sustained thought – a meditation on filial guilt, Islam, social contract theory, masculinity, the shaping and shapeshifting of collective identity, the roosting chickens of a nightmare deferred. It reverberates, it incites (Murad, 2023). It is muscular and irascible. It is untender. It is a 21st century love story between (what else?) a man and his context, a man and his conscience, an intelligence that fiercely refuses to suffer the fools of its own false gods. In his answer, of sorts, to the question posed after 9/11 by Toni Morrison: How can it be possible to properly mourn, with a mouth full of blood? (Akhtar, 2020 p.90).

Oscillating frequently between stimulating explorations of cultural identity and stultifying descriptions of one writer's personal and professional development. There is clearly much more fact than fiction on the page, calling into question Akhtar's insistence that he was written "a novel". His rationale for doing so is made clear in the epigraph from Alison Bechdel:

*“I can only make things up about things that have already happened...Be that as it may, Homeland Elegies is much closer to memoir as reflexive hagiography than imaginative storytelling”* (Akhtar, 2020 p.92).

Akhtar has a keen mind. He writes incredibly well and with confidence. His vocabulary is stupendous and will send most readers in search of a dictionary. He does have a tendency to cast himself in an optimal light, even when his own behaviors are reprehensible, by focusing on the sins and failures of those around him. He has no reservations over name-dropping. His penis also gets thrust (um...) into the spotlight routinely. Like I said: an odd hybrid of a book.

Those who follow my reviews know that I bristle when an author chooses to wax didactic and then provides bad information to trusting readers, especially when it involves medicine. Akhtar gets one pivotal point very wrong when he states that:

*"... 'long QT' refers to a longer-than-normal interval between two beats of the heart."* No it does not. It refers to a longer-than-normal interval between the start of ventricular depolarization and the end of ventricular repolarization within any individual beat, regardless of heart rate. Pedantic, I know, but a very important part of the book hinges upon this fact (Akhtar, 2020 p.95).

Individuals and the social institutions in any society amend and reschedule the meaning of their identity according to the communal determinations and enlightening ventures which are rooted in the societal configuration and in their time/space agenda (Homi, 1996). When all this happens in any society the identity of the social personages also practice transformation. 9/11 was such one catastrophe which transform the while social and political order, having its effects worldwide. This event persuades convulsion and uncertainty in the lives of diaspora people, people from colonized nation living in America predominantly in the lives of Pakistani immigrants. In such situations the identity of Pakistani Muslims which was already in a flux got more complexity and confusion. In order to point out the tenuousness of identity Akhtar state to events in his novel the first event at the time when Chuck met a young flamboyantly stunning lady "girl from Ipanema" (Akhtar, 2020 p.11). She even though being a opinionated émigré consider herself as an American still loves the country she admits at one point that:

"They take all papa's houses. We are leaving. We are leaving America" (Akhtar, 2020 p.103)

These lines draw attention to the perception of American ingenuousness for the immigrants as a multicultural society. Chuck wants to marry the girl from Ipanema because he thought that by marrying with her he would be able to get green card, "he too would become a bonafide American. In a sense, we were peas in a pod, she and I-, denizens of the Third World economic refugees turned by historical caprice. Paradoxically, the girl from Ipanema had think of him as an Italian, when she came to know that he was a Pakistani she courteously detached herself, while Chuck was left in a condition of immobile lack of sensation.

Past's unpredictable play would not be straightforward for the protagonist as for the girl he wants to marry to become a green card holder in America. This was the event in his life from where he wants to modernize his identity in an innovative way, as definite by the American dream. The redefinitions of his identity contradict directionally, not stands upon his own thoughts and idyllic but upon the biased and spiritual apparatus of post 9/11 America. Chuck's identity was in a constant flux, it become more complex his identity crisis take a turn when he and his friends DJ and AC were arrested by the police when they were looking for their missing friend Shaman a Pakistani Gatsby in his house. Another incident which intensified his sense of identity is when a crew of tavern brawlers beat him at Jake's bar. By means of expletives one of the men from the gang called Chuck and his acquaintances "A-rabs" (Akhtar, 2020p.23). But DJ protested against the men who called them Arab, they all are different not the same, the men replied "Moslems, Mohicans, whatever" (Akhtar, 2020p.24).

Jimbo tries to settle down the whole dispute when he said that "we're cool, we'll make thing right". But the bar owner Jake replied to Jimbo as "No room for you" (Akhtar, 2020 p, 104).

The attitude of the gang brawlers shows that how the American political discourse develop its people's behavior towards Pakistani Muslims as they were treated as others, threatened and abused at public places. "Immigrants effort tougher to adapt or socialize in the new countries, nations and cultures, they spend an implemented life style and treated with others" (Bhabha, 1994). These events insert bewilderment to his notation of self and identity and he realizes that "things were changing. Pondering upon his affront and approximately autonomously of his determination, he strikes back actually as implausible instinctive stimulates. He realized that this happened to them for the first time ever since they living in the country first time somebody call them like this, this thing was disturbing them, it was this type of identity crisis they were facing in the America, "I didn't know where or who I was" (Akhtar, 2020,p.26).

These happenings show the way, him to assemble a meticulous type of identity predominantly in the midst of the expat, diasporic Pakistani society in post-9/11 America. As a "country which continues to try to dictate its views about law and peace all over the world" America's "cultural imperialism" (Said, 1979, p.) was to turn out to be an innovative power that



would be a source of the rupture in the identity realization of citizens similar to Chuck and his friends.

### **Post 9/11 scenario:**

In the post 9/11 scenario Pakistani Muslims were treated as other. As after the attacks Islam has come into view as an intangible category to renovate Pakistani identity in American society. American political and media discourses assembles Pakistani Muslims as uncultured, barbaric and unsophisticated, practicing a religious identity which is not related to any culture or society consequently vigorous with each society (Safran, 1991). Post 9/11 American political dissertation constructed all Muslims irrespective of the socio-political, cultural and historical background as terrorists. The Pakistani Muslims like Akhtar's characters bear a dual impact on one side they were mistreated on the basis of their religious alliance with Islam and on the other side as Pakistanis who supports Taliban that were supposed to docking Al-Qaeda. Valentina Bartalucci states that "Terrorism is uniquely seen as Islamic terrorism and all Muslims came to be casually linked to terrorism".

After the incident of 9/11, America's discernment of Islamophobia described every Muslim as an allegory intended for barbarism and brutality. Their religious association with Islam became a tantamount with fear and cruelty in which every Pakistani Muslim had been tagged as fanatics. In post 9/11 milieu, it was not only Muslims but as well Islam was beleaguered for the reason of the conception of Jihad advocated in Holy Quran. These were the circumstances, in which many or the Pakistani living in America forced to modify and reconstruct their identity both on the undeviating and transitory basis in an entirely tainted American society (Awan, Mujahid, & Hashim, 2023). The Pakistani individual after the 9/11 attacks is 'reduced to a colonial subject and a conscious colonial discourse which informs the discursive and political practices of racial and cultural hirarchization are perpetrated' (Bhabha, 1994, p.169).

### **Stereotyping of Muslims**

America started War on Terror against the Muslims labeling them and their religion with terrorism and this stereotyping of Muslims and Islam become American political discourse soon after 9/11. These happenings make it compulsory for the Muslims living in America and other

Western countries to re-negotiate their notion of self and national identity in order to cope with the multicultural society which has been converted into ever more xenophobic. The identities of characters in Homeland Elegies, particularly Chuck's identity had to go through a renovation. AC's speech in the beginning of the novel where he talks about how the mujahedeen's turned from the "Holy warriors" into "the Taliban, the bastards of the war" (Akhtar, 2020 p.10).

These mujahedeen were freedom fighters then America used these warriors against the Soviets. They were trained by the Pakistan Army and funded by America to train these warriors to fight against the Soviet. But after defeating the Soviet America stopped funding these warriors and "they turned their guns on each other". Then these warriors scattered and divided in smaller groups and they started work for them who gave them money in return of any work.

"They [swept] through the Afghanistan... Garlanded, hailed as heroes. Now they've ah, transmogrified into the villains of modern civilization, but you know they're not much different from their fathers—brutes with guns – except this time they're on the wrong side of history" (Akhtar, 2020, p.111).

The trounces of Soviet by Muslim armed forces encouraged the majority of the Muslim refugees in America to pursue their spiritual set of guidelines genuinely. But subsequently, at the same time the figure of "the Muslim as enemy" was too strappingly stereotyped by the American overseas strategy manufacturers (Curtis, 2012, p.7). With the antagonism with the intention of an ordinary Muslim get mutually on the boulevard of any American city, in order to fit in the American social order. In not doing so they had to face complicated circumstances i.e. they were forced to go back to their mother countries to withdraw their adherence to their cultural ancestry or they were incarcerated (Paul,1993). The condition deteriorated with the fall of twin towers, all Pakistani Muslims were fetched beneath the terrorist scanner. In reality correspondents akin to Ann Coulter stated that, "We should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity" (Rubin Derek, 2009, p.13) that entails all Muslims are violent and sanctuary fundamentalists.

Before the catastrophe of 9/11 Chuck was doing a job in a bank, he was happy while working the bank and was playing his role honestly, this shows his pro-American inclinations. But



just after the attack he was fired from the job without any significant reason while offering an explanation apart from “the Invisible Hand” (Akhtar, 2020, p.103). This indicates how the American system and society pushed him away, shows how American political discourse against the migrant Pakistani Muslims works and the way societal institutions manipulates. Then he became a cab driver a “bonafide New York cabbie” (Akhtar, 2020, p.105).

For America all the cabbies were marginalized other as all they were lower class émigré from Asia or Middle East. In America these marginalized group of people are indomitable to linger peripherally seized to the structure that may perhaps pour out them whenever they want to do so. In the times of crisis these cab drivers become united as one whole, “concern one Muslim has for another” (Akhtar, 2020, p.112). Subsequent lines have brought ahead shifting position of American Muslims following 9/11: Repeating the word in my head, I realized it was the first time I’d heard it spoken that way, like a dagger thrust and turned, the first time anything like this had happened to us at all... This was different. ‘We’re not the same,’ Jimbo protested. ‘Moslems, Mohi-cans, whatever,’ Brawler No.2 snapped.... (Akhtar, 2020, p.114)

The questions of identity predicament are appropriately anticipated all the way through Chuck while he was punch by one of brawler at the same time as he was annoying to placate battle. “I didn’t know where or who I was” (Akhtar, 2020 p.115). Subsequent to 9/11 Chuck and his friends were enforced to leave America and go back to their motherlands otherwise they were to be incarcerated underneath Terrorism Criminal Law.

Consequently, they have to re-examine their distinctiveness in the showground of transnationalism. These transnational persons have to go away in the course of a scuffle flanked by their sacred identity and American identity as they were sufferers of civilization that curved interested in an ethnic divergence depends on their faith after 9/11. “... On 9/11 we frantically dug up each other’s numbers, scrawled on the backs of receipts and folded scraps of notebook paper, and called to exchange disyllable assurances and expressions of disbelief...” (Akhtar, 2020 p.114). Here is a range of happenings in the narrative wherever the twofold of other/Other is corresponded to by Akhtar. One such event come about while Chuck had to experience a disbelieving gawk of ashen Americans on avenue “... people didn’t avert their eyes or nod when walked past but often

stared, either tacitly claiming you as their own or dismissing you as the Other” (Akhtar, 2020 p.114).

The contravene in chuck's identity promote opens up by means of why he hits the brawlers when they punches him in Jake's club “when somebody hits you, you hit back” Akhtar, 2020 p.140) this shows his reluctant attitude towards the Americans as he was deconstructing America's hegemonic discourse, he re-articulates his identity but not as a penalizing fanatic. Bhabha views that the trauma following the terrorist attacks has left the Muslim youth in America “both culturally grounded and nationally uprooted, transnational and homeless, and swirling psychologically in a contentious Diaspora” (Bhabha, 1994, p,175). In the post 9/11 situation, the perception of religious identity of the three characters goes through refraction as it was their religious identity that has become an identifying signifier for the marginalized other in coordination with their national identity (Imran & Akhtar, 2023).

This sense of otherness Chuck practiced: “you could feel it walking down some streets: people didn't avert their eyes or nod when you walked past but often stared, either tacitly claiming you as their own or dismissing you as the Other” (Akhtar, 2020 p.114). Just after the attack every Muslim living in America was seen as suspect, on their work places, in the streets, in shopping malls and everywhere they go they had to face this kind of attitude. This was because American media and government stereotyped all the Muslims as terrorists; American media played its critical role in constructing Pakistani Muslims as terrorist and in the process of Othering. The news broadcast on television about Ansar Mehmood Chuck observes at Shaman's house while they were staying there, who was arrested by the FBI only on the basis of suspicion:

“The FBI found that Mehmood has no terrorist objectives, an investigation revealed he had assisted some friends who had over stayed their visas, making him guilty of harboring illegal immigrants....” (Akhtar, 2020 p.91). Chuck's own visa was near to b expiry date he was also helping his friends. American society and media was going to treat him in the same way as they treat Mehmood, due to its amalgamation of the anticipated “dehumanize stereotypes” (Said, 1973, p.213). Pakistani Muslims living in USA had to face the attitude and policies against them on an extra delicate echelon yet their acquaintances and other people from Pakistani Muslim community crooked their backs on them.

When they were arrested by the FBI from Shaman's resident they had to face such attitude of their peers and family, the old lady whom Chuck saw when he was passing with police from the street she was seeing them with such a suspicion that even the reporters asked from her about chuck and his friends her answer would be like "I saw them going in ..... Not from around here-- -but okay but who knows anything about anybody else, especially these days" (Akhtar 103). Not only the members of their community but also their American friends draw their backs towards them even DJ's American girl friend Duck's attitude was change just after the fall of twin tower:

"I didn't get you guys" ....., (Akhtar, 2020 p.72).

Though Chuck, AC and Jimbo think of her like them but she didn't like them. For her all the three men were same, she spoke these words when they were talking about Duck and Jimbo's love affair as his father never knows that his son had a girlfriend and drinks while commenting upon this she yells at Jimbo:

"That's crazy to me, just crazy. [I] mean you guys are like one way here, hardcore, Homeland Elegiess, whatever, but when you guys go home, you become different..... you have to decide what you are about (Akhtar, 2020 p.114).

The more bending brunt of this apparent divergence stuck between "them" and "us" leads them to redefine their identity in better and clear manner. American society and its media were constructing Muslims as terrorists and Islam as brutal religion.

Her phrase was bothering him as he never thinks like this before she was with them for years but her phrase suggesting him that for her they all are not same. For her Chuck and his friends were others not equal to her and other people of her country: "I had this feeling that the Duck wasn't the same" (Akhtar, 2020 p.72) her attitude was changed toward them after the attacks, she like her other country men's suspects them as terrorists and violent. The way they were arrested and investigated by the police, at that instance Chuck realized about his friends DJ and AC that "I had lost track of them in all the hoopla.

In post 9/11 America, the concept of intimidation was re-devising to vigorous in all Muslims or those resembling Muslims i.e. men with beard and women in hijab, as persons inspired

fear. Terrorism was treacherously perceived to have turned into one and the same with Islam and Muslims. In fact cataloging a personage or a society as fanatic delegitimizes its position while intimidation is definite as dishonest aggression. This societal denunciation of Pakistani Muslims in America who were not tangible terrorists although have been termed as terrorist and indulged in such a way, that escorts them to re-articulate and redefine their identity through which these marginalized Other people can define themselves (Buruma & Margalit, 2004).

The conception of binaries after 9/11 undergo a monumental reallocate and at the same time as every person was fit into place in “creating new mythologies of resistance”( Cohen, 1997)..). The characters in *Homeland Elegies* like Chuck had to practice an internal rupture to bargain a new identity for him, within the structure of their religious conviction. George Bush’s ironic speech on television when they were arrested from Muhammad Shaman’s home:

“I also want to speak directly tonight to Muslims throughout the world, with respect your faith..... [Its] teachings are good and peaceful, and those who commit evil... the terrorist are traitors to their own faith trying, in effect, to hijack Islam itself” (Akhtar, 2020 p.97).

Thus in one way or the other American political leaders and media directly or indirectly relating terrorism to Islam and Muslims. Whereas FBI arrested them, this would turn out to be the most important refreshment, persuading chuck and his friends to renovate their identity in relation to “the notions of collective identity” (Akhtar, 2020 p.103). They knows that they were not only Pakistani Muslims treated is such a way and subjected to such opinionated aggravation, not only political leaders, police but the media also reporting such proceedings with enormous regularity. He realizes that just only belonging to Pakistan and Islam “no matter what he did, he couldn’t change the way, he was perceived” (Akhtar, 2020 p.103). Chuck’s comprehension develops into the turning point that inclines the lever of his identity.

The disengage double standards of the American pledge of spiritual self-determination and the utilization of emigrant in the name of the “material witness statues” (Akhtar, 2020 p.103). This formulates the indicator of Chuck’s identity slither promote towards a new religion associated identity. The dream of these three pro-American mans who considered themselves bonafide American, part of that society they had never think the way they were treated, it scattered all their dreams.

All the things that was happening unbelievable for them after 9/11, when they were arrested while going to the Metropolitan Detention Centre Chuck closed his eyes and just imagining, something in his head saying him “just relax, stay calm, this isn’t happening” (Akhtar, 2020 p.104), in fact all this was happening and a bitter reality which was hard for them to digest. The most important quandary Pakistani Muslims confronted while living in America was to bring together their identity, compassions and religious adherences through way of their loyalty and dedication to their mother country. In these situations Pakistani Muslims were facing in America had to re-enact and rearticulate their collective identity in a number of observable non-belligerent but choral structure.

They didn’t know where the police had taken them but there they experienced worst time of their life. Chuck AC and Jimbo would discover afterward “worst abuses in the American prison system after 9/11 took place” (Akhtar 105). Chuck after 9/11 in the jail, news caption on television probably hyperbolic headlines that he considered MDC; the Metropolitan Detention Center was America’s own Abu Ghraib. In the jail he was consoling himself everything will be all right as they know they have done nothing wrong; it’s only a mistake so they shouldn’t need to be bothered concerning anything and everybody in the jail get a chance of phone call Chuck thought that he as a member of American society also have this right being resident of New York city as he think of himself “you’ll get your phone call” (Akhtar, 2020 p.106).

When the police officer starts the investigation they behave with them as others, terrorists, the police officer tells him that they are in a big trouble there in the jail. While investigating the police officer tells him that the FBI arrested them in the “Material Witness Statues” means that they were the material bystander of the felony, this is just because they enter in the home of Shaman illegally. Even in the jail when he asked for a phone call of which he had a right the police officer replied “you aren’t American ‘you hot no fucking rights” (Akhtar, 2020 p.107). After the incident of 9/11 Pakistani Muslims in America were abridged to colonial subject and a cognizant regal hegemonic dissertation that “informs the discursive practices of racial and cultural hirarchization (Bhabha, 1994, p.98).

As soon as Chuck, Jimbo and AC got detained resting on alleged incriminates of ‘terrorism’ intact standards of gratis American nationality traumatized specifically for Pakistani Muslims. “You aren’t American! He fired back...” (Akhtar, 2020 p.107). The opinionated dogma is at

exertion within Akhtar's narrative in order to maneuver the Islamic beliefs and for this reason to typecast Muslims as terrorists. The state of affairs following 9/11 prepared Chuck unconvinced of his identity for he was liberated resident of America aforementioned 9/11. He and his acquaintances are illustrated by Akhtar as fatalities of identity catastrophe as soon as they were tagged as "A-rabs" (Akhtar, 2020 p.23) almost immediately subsequent to the collide of Twin Towers. Thus, the circumstances of complimentary American populace budged towards 'terrorist.

At that time in the jail he realized that they aren't Americans, they belongs to "Bumfuckistan" (Akhtar, 2020 p.107). While investigating the police officer was forcing him to admit that his friend were involved in terrorist activities, as they while searching AC's apartment they had found Arabic books and bomb making material. The way the police arrested and investigated them as marginalized other and they got no rights in the city whom they gave several years of their lives. They had to face all these things as they belong to a marginalized colonized nation with no significant identity of theirs in the world. Since its creation Pakistan is in a continuous perplexity in defining its identity.

Now they really realized that they are brown and from where they came and their place in the multicultural American society for whom they were on the periphery/inferior not equal to them in any sense. In the jail the abusive behaviors of the police was unpredictable as with Chuck in the jail "you pissed yourself, pencil-dick, I'm gonna make you pay for my kickers" (Akhtar, 2020 p.112). Chuck's conception of his identity and self will take a turn at this point as he deconstruct the hegemonic political discourse of America by dumping it. The way he was investigated in the cell as subjected other modify his attitude towards America and so called American dream and leads him to renovate his identity perfectly diverse from the identity of a terrorist. His identity as well unambiguously antithetical to the pigeonholed identity erect forced on him by the FBI during inquiry. The inquiry in the jail itself echoes the double relation superior/inferior, calm/ barbaric as the question they asked him:

"Grizzly: you are terrorist? Chuck: No, sir. Grizzly: you a Moslem? Chuck: yes sir [...] Grizzly: I want to know does the Koran sanction terrorism? Chuck: I've read it. I'm no terrorist. Grizzly: then why Moslems use to justify terrorism? Chuck: well it's all a matter of interpretation....." Grizzly: look.... Why the hell did they have to blow up the Twin Towers? Chuck: your guess, sir..... Grizzly Can't you put yourself in their shoe? Chuck: no can you? (Akhtar, 2020 p.113-117)



The questions asked by the investigator and the way Chuck answered the question divulges that the Islamophobic services at work which makes Chuck to quash on the way to his religion he gave no importance and whom he keeps at fringe momentous. The way America's hegemonic discourse defines the word terror and terrorism is fetched to the forefront all the way through this dialogue between Chuck and officer Grizzly. A person who offers five prayers in a day, recites Quran and have beard a terrorist according to the American discourse and living being a Muslim construct a privy to devices of all supplementary Muslims.

Officer Grizzly after having conversation with Chuck concludes the whole dialogue as "boys excitable... defend Islamic religion, terrorism" (Akhtar, 2020 p.117). His ensuing contemplation be converted into an apparent illumination of his identity, which expands not only a tough scab, but a harder nucleus as well: I didn't really mean to but didn't mean to apologize for myself either" (Akhtar, 2020 p.117). In the Metropolitan Detention centre Chuck was treated as inferior other, as a Pakistani Muslim he was suspected as terrorist just because of Pakistan favor for Taliban America constructed a terrorist discourse against the Muslims living in America. The Muslims living in America failed to attain a "true Islamic identity" (Gall, 2020). The situation becomes more critical with the fall of Twin towers USA which had constantly well thought-out itself as a melting pot ready to accept each and every culture in its society was trapped in a mystery concerning its liaison with Muslims. America change its attitude toward the Islamic countries, especially Pakistan come up to underneath the focus. Because Pakistan was the state which had unmitigated appreciation to Taliban "The Taliban's Godfather (Elias).

The supremacy of opposition that has to be retired you; it is this preeminence that obliged to be self-effaced. Not merely eradicated individual, have got to construct mislay visage. This can't be acquired by means of wholesome power or by containment of other, second ought to be intended by and impair as an individual rival. As Chuck in Homeland Elegies have taken as opponent other, so he has to be modest, arrested by FBI locked up in a cubicle whose toilet was strangled. He have to mislay his self-respect and, consequently, he was affronted not only cooperatively but individually also.

Hitherto Chuck after investigation was not indicted of spinelessness, but this scared young Muslim boy was indicted of somewhat supplementary attuned for example defending Islam. In

one way or the other Islam and Muslims in America after 9 /11 had been taken as synonymous for terrorism. A secure study of this divulges that it was not only Chuck who has made other of America, it was Islam excessively. Chuck was directly or indirectly accused as terrorist and a man who defend Islam though he keeps his religion on the periphery, it was this consciousness that grounds his identity to slither down identity gamut in direction of a more comprehensive and evident type of his identity. This is knowledgeable by the sensation of “otherness” impressively engendered by western racial discrimination and orientalism.

In this milieu it is probable that descriptions of Muslim citizens witness to be disappearing and tormented in a variety of hotspots approximately in whole world ... will impact upon the emotive ties inherent within identity construction’ (Foucault,2007). The equivalent sensitivity of otherness utters Chuck’s deterioration towards Islam, however brings to a halt in attendance and maintains to function and expand. Consequent proceedings designate the reconstruction of his Muslim self-determination exhibit a divergence from identity of a terrorist who make use of his religion as governing signifier.

Chuck endeavors to disguise his Pakistani identity beneath the facade of his American identity, wearisome absolute integration into American civilization. Pre 9/11 circumstances and the situation he and his friends enjoyed while living in New York made them feel at home in America. He and his friend feel disenchanted following 9/11. The hospitable environment of New York gives the impression to be a misapprehension and not veracity to any further extent. Post 9/11 circumstances stipulated harmony, peace and closing stages of fanaticism, however the stratagem to protect tranquility by America was similarly fanatic i.e. war on terror, infuriating the apprehension and aggression.

## Conclusion

The research examines the impacts of 9/11 and home and identity crisis that Muslims are facing while living in America as depicted in Ayad Akhtar's autobiographical work *Homeland Elegies* (2020). This research explores identity politics, identity crisis, hybridity, otherness and cultural hybridity. Bhabha's theory of hybridity and Stuart Hall’s diaspora theory were used as theoretical framework. Keeping 9/11 in view as major catalyst, the research highlights the aspects longing, dispossession and reasons that contributed to the ways in which Akhtar’s characters face

identity crisis. It reveals conceptual formation, persuades to fore the stereotyping of Pakistan as terrorist state and labeling Muslims and Islam as terrorist. This study highlights that Pakistani Muslims face disillusionment and homelessness because of the violence committed against them by West. This is reflected in Akhtar's protagonist Chuck and his family faces worst type of circumstances after the fall of twin towers. This negative construction of Muslims by the west changes the image of Muslims into terrorist which results in the verbal and physical abuse of Pakistanis who are living in America.

Akhter's novel *Homeland Elegies* (2020) gives detail of profound convolution of post 9/11 problems. The novel centers on the lives of three Pakistani Muslims and on their vacillation among American Pakistani Muslims in western countries have endured the impact of war on terror. West starts this war against humanity in the name of Islam on individual and communal echelons.

### References:

- Awan, M. S., Mujahid, M. U. H., & Hashim, M., (2023). Exploring the World of English Language Students; A Journey Through Learning and Growth. *Spry Contemporary Educational Practices (SJLL)*, 1(1), 59-71. <https://doi.org/10.62681/sprypublishers.sjll/1/1/5>
- Akhtar, HM. (2020). Remediation of heavy metals (Cr, Zn) using physical, chemical and biological methods: a novel approach. *SN Applied Sciences*, 2(2), 1-14.
- Bhabha, Homi K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Buruma, I., & Margalit, A. (2004). *Occidentalism: A short history of anti-westernism* (p. 208). London: Atlantic Books.
- Cohen, Robin. (1997). *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*. London and New York: Routledge
- Foucault, M. (2007). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (pp. 445-471). Duke University Press.
- Gall, A. (2020). Truth: In *Homeland Elegies*, Pulitzer Prize-Winning Playwright and Novelist Ayad Akhtar Blurs The Line Between Fact And Fiction In An Attempt To Reclaim The Novel: "I Think That Reality Has Outpaced The Capacity For Fiction To Speak To Us About What We Have Become.". *Poets & Writers Magazine*, 48(5), 50-56.

- Homi K.B, (1996). 'Culture's In-Between', in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. by Stuart Hall and Paul duGay (London: Sage, 1996), pp. 53-60 (p. 54).
- Hashim, M., (2023). Grace and Redemption: Exploring Death in Flannery O'Connor's 'A Good Man is Hard to Find'. *Spry Contemporary Educational Practices (SJLL)*,1(1), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.62681/sprypublishers.sjll/1/1/1>
- Imran, M., & Akhtar, N. (2023). Impact of Ethical Leadership Practices on Teachers' Psychological Safety and Performance: A Case of Primary School Heads in Karachi-Pakistan. *Academy of Education and Social Sciences Review*, 3(2), 172-181. <https://doi.org/10.48112/aessr.v3i2.505>
- Murad, W., (2023). Exploring the Linguistic Playground: Investigating Facebook as an Informal Language Learning Hub for ESL Learners. *Spry Contemporary Educational Practices (SJLL)*,1(1), 13-26. <https://doi.org/10.62681/sprypublishers.sjll/1/1/2>
- Oad, L., (2023). Journey of Inclusive Education: Exploring its Evolution and Future Perspectives. *Spry Contemporary Educational Practices (SJLL)*,1(1), 42-58. <https://doi.org/10.62681/sprypublishers.sjll/1/1/4>
- Paul G, (1993). *Small Acts. - Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1993), p.193.
- Rehan, F., & Zaidi, S.S., (2023). Exploring How Teachers Help Kids Talk Understanding Early Childhood Language Development. *Spry Contemporary Educational Practices (SJLL)*,1(1), 27-41. <https://doi.org/10.62681/sprypublishers.sjll/1/1/3>
- Safran, W. (1991). Diasporas in modern societies: Myths of homeland and return. *Diaspora: A journal of transnational studies*, 1(1), 83-99.