



Exploring the Theme of National Identity and Unity in Home Boy and In Other Rooms, Other Wonders

Muhammad Ajmal ¹, Mariyam Rehan ², Atiqa Kanwal ³

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Comparative Characterization, Pakistani Culture, National Identity, Unity.

Analysis

Abstract

The present research aims at conducting a comparative analysis to determine the role of Pakistani English fiction writers in promoting national identity and unity. With an insight into the collection of short stories In Other Rooms, Other Wonders by Daniyal Mueenuddin and the novel Home Boy by H.M. Naqvi, the research explores the underlying themes and narratives of the two aforementioned works to evaluate their contributions in the formation and representation of a Pakistani national identity. The study adopts a qualitative approach whereby the researchers have employed a method of textual analysis to explore the literary techniques used in each work and how it reflects the Pakistani cultural and political contexts by utilizing theoretical framework of Anderson (1991). The analysis has focused on the use of language, characterization, and imagery to show how Pakistani English literature reinforces or challenges stereotypes and prejudices related to Pakistan and Pakistani people. This research concludes that the role of Pakistani English literature in promoting national identity and unity is crucial.

¹Assistant Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, Shaikh Ayaz University Shikarpur, Pakistan
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1085-7046> Email: muhammad.ajmal@saus.edu.pk

²Senior Lecturer, Department of Communication and Languages, Institute of Business Management (IoBM), Karachi, Pakistan. Email: mariyam.rehan16@outlook.com

³Visiting Lecturer, University of Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: atiqakanwal27@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Home Boy, a novel by H.M. Naqvi, is a story that follows three young Pakistani men through the city of New York in the harrowing weeks after 9/11. The book's protagonist, Chuck — a Pakistani-American as comfortable with Nietzsche as he is with the verses of Jalaluddin Rumi — grapples to make sense of a world that is not of his making. Chuck, and his friends AC and Jimbo, venture out over the course of one night which inspire a whirlwind of love, death, the valor in nonviolence, and finally, redemption. As a Bloomberg Media executive, Naqvi was previously the Founder and Director of Web and Multimedia Development for a film and entertainment marketing company with clients such as Warner Brothers, Disney, and the Cartoon Network. His prose, poetry, and essays have appeared in Granta, Financial Times, The New York Times, The Daily Star, The Guardian, and Caravan. Raised in Karachi and Miami, H.M. Naqvi now lives in London. His debut novel, Home Boy, was published in the US (W.W. Norton) and the UK (Telegram Books).

In Other Rooms, Other Wonders by Daniyal Mueenuddin is a collection of linked short stories set in contemporary Pakistan. The stories revolves around a diverse array of characters including rich landlords, impoverished labourers, and their servants. Every character within the story offers readers a glimpse into the complicated social and economic structures of rural and urban Pakistan also spotlighting the themes of power, class, and gender. Each story also explores the disparity that arises between traditional Pakistani culture and an increasingly westernised, modernity. The result of which is a multi-faceted and poignant outlook at Pakistani society, challenging stereotypes and offering an alternative insight into the culture and history of the country.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Over the past few years, Pakistani English literature has gained international acclaim and many Pakistani writers have been cherished and appreciated for their works. The role of Pakistani English fiction writers in the context of creation and representation of Pakistani national identity and nationhood has been neglected in literary studies, as well as by scholars, theorists, and policymakers. The research is an effort to analyze the literary works of Pakistani English fiction writers and to evaluate their contribution to the creation and representation of the Pakistani identity.

Pakistan is a country of diverse ethnicities, languages, and religions with a history presenting political instability, military coups, and social injustice, contributing to the fragmentation of a common national identity. A lot has been written about literature having a role in creating and representing national identity and unity; it has been argued that literature can create a sense of belonging and develop a shared cultural heritage (Anderson, 1991).

Kanwal (2015) critically analyzes Pakistani English fiction writers and categorizes them into two groups: “first-generation writers” and “second-generation writers”. The first-generation writers explore post-independence issues, partition trauma and identity crises of diaspora, while the second-generation writers focus more on immediate pre and post 9/11 socio-political backdrop, especially related to national and religious identity crises (p.18-23).

Scholars have also studied the effects of partition on women, uncovering the gendered dimensions of identity and belonging. They have particularly highlighted the trauma of violence and sexual abuse with which they struggle to create their identities within new social and cultural contexts. Women have shaped their roles, agency and sense of belonging, demonstrating partition to be a reforming movement of history. (Macho, 2000)

Pakistani English Literature was born in the 20th century, with writers like Bapsi Sidhwa, Sara Suleri and Salman Rushdie winning global recognition (Joshi, 2006). Since then, many Pakistani English writers have been critically acclaimed for their works, including, among others, Mohsin Hamid, Kamila Shamsie, and Nadeem Aslam who have written on issues related to cultural identity, political violence and social injustices and have thus contributed to the representation of Pakistan in global literature (Munir, 2017).

Despite the recognition Pakistani English literature has gained, there remains a gap in studies that analyzes the role Pakistani English novelists have had in the creation and representation of national identity and unity. The present research seeks to embark on this gap by analysing the contributions of Pakistani English fiction writers in creating and representing Pakistani national identity

Statement of the Problem

In endeavoring a comparative analysis of *Home Boy* and *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders*, the research aims to examine the literary techniques, themes, and narratives Pakistani English fiction writers employ to promote national identity and unity, as well as the ways in which they challenge or reinforce stereotypes and prejudices associated with Pakistan and Pakistani people. It underlines the importance of the cultural and political context in which Pakistani English literature is placed, particularly in terms of its contribution to national identity and inclusivity in Pakistan.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) How do *Home Boy* and *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* contribute to the representation of a Pakistani national identity?
- 2) How do the themes of cultural identity, belonging, and the immigrant experience in *Home Boy* and the themes of power, class, and gender in *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* contribute to the representation of a Pakistani national identity?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of the study lies in its contribution towards the relatively unexplored area of Pakistani literature in English and its role in the formation of a national identity and unity of a fragmented nation. The findings would provide valuable insights into how Pakistani English writers contribute to the construction of a national identity; how they employ literary techniques including stereotypes and prejudices to either challenge or reinforce the dominant narratives or themes in Pakistani English literature that construct another Pakistani nationalism. It further sheds light on how the Pakistani English texts are shaped by the cultural and political contexts of Pakistan and how Pakistani literature in English further contributes to the construction of a national identity and unity. It is also of use to the scholars and policymakers who are interested in the creation of a more inclusive and representative national identity in Pakistan. Additionally, it will contribute to the corpus of Pakistani English literature, as a new addition to the existing body of knowledge.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pakistani literature in English has established a firm footing on the global literary map in the past few decades, and Pakistani novelists and short story writers in English have been producing workpieces that explore a wide range of themes including the description of socio-cultural realities on the ground in Pakistan. Some of the most prominent themes in Pakistani novels and short stories in English include gender, class, identity, politics, and religion, among others. “Over the years, gender and patriarchy have been recurring themes in Pakistani novels in English. Pakistani women writers, for the most part, have focused on the complexities of gender and the patriarchal structures that continue to pervade Pakistani society. Bapsi Sidhwa, Uzma Aslam Khan, Kamila Shamsie and many others have depicted women’s struggles to negotiate with a society weighed down by patriarchy and to challenge expected gender roles.” (Khalid, 2017)

THEMES OF IDENTITY AND BELONGING:

Another significant theme in Pakistani novels in English is identity and belonging. Pakistani writers have explored the complexities of identity and belonging in a multicultural society, depicting the struggles of individuals who move between diverse cultural and social norms. Novels such as *Home Boy* by H.M. Naqvi and *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid illumine the struggles of the protagonists in reconciling their identity and sense of belonging (Waqar, 2017).

Home Boy includes the concepts of ‘identity crises’, ‘identity’, ‘the other’ and ‘terrorist’ incorporating social psychology as a theoretical model. It depicts the protagonist's life under the microscope to reveal the patterns of identity in the globalized world, particularly impacted by the 9/11 issue in contemporary history” (Mansoor, 2012).

The attack on America is considered a powerful incident. It has shaped a new discourse of power dynamics to what Said says “American global dominance” (284) since then the concept of ‘the other to the USA’ has arisen. This concept is shown throughout the novel *Home Boy*, in which ‘the other’ is on the opposite side of the power equation. Hence, the protagonist continues with the struggles of identity crises.

Khaled Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner* revolves around the life of the protagonist, Amir who along with other Muslims living abroad, faces the loss of native identity due to immigration and being a minority in the host country. Sometimes, they adopt the foreign culture, other times they cling to their own and often try to strike a balance between the two. Duality is seen in the character of Amir as he says "I have always seen myself as an American Muslim." (p. 8). Themes of cultural contrast and Muslim identity crises have been depicted in the novel which further navigates the characters' life throughout the novel (Adhikary, 2021).

In the same way, themes of identity and belonging have been analyzed in Khushwant's novel *Train to Pakistan*. The book reveals how the protagonist develops a sense of identity and belonging within the socio-political context of the partition of the Subcontinent in 1947. Moreover, there are external factors: challenging people's expectations, conflicts, and cultural, religious and national affiliations that develop the identity of the individuals.

RELIGION AND POLITICS:

Religion and politics are also recurring themes in Pakistani novels in English. Pakistani writers have explored the intricate relationship between religion and politics in a society that is deeply divided along religious lines. Novels such as *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* by Mohammed Hanif and *In the Name of God* by Rumeena Bano elucidate the role of religion and politics in shaping the society and the lives of individuals (Tariq, 2016).

Hossain (2016) in his work *Identity Crisis and Cultural Hybridity* in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* has analyzed that Muslims usually face identity crises when they struggle to follow their religious practices freely in the host country. Additionally, Muslims living abroad face identity crises due to cultural hedonism.

Similarly, the novel *Nights of the Golden Butterfly* by Tariq Ali portrays socio-economic and political context alongside the cultural and religious identity crises of diasporic and local Pakistani characters in the wake of 9/11 (Khan,2020) .

CLASS AND INEQUALITY:

Class and inequality are also important themes in Pakistani novels in English. Pakistani writers have explored the disparities in society and the impact of these disparities on the lives of individuals. Works such as *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* by Daniyal Mueenuddin and *Moth Smoke* by Mohsin Hamid portray the struggles of individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds and their quest for upward mobility (Mumtaz, 2015).

Traumatization of being a member of an ethnic minority has been depicted in Khalid Hussein's novel *The Kite Runner* in which Hassan, a Hazara and close friend of the protagonist faces hardships due to his faith and being born in a marginalized community. The inner turmoil of the characters is shown in the novel as they strive to reconcile the demands and standards of the new society with their Afghan-Muslim identity (Hasan, 2020).

Pakistani literature in English is a rich and diverse field that explores a wide range of themes. Gender, identity, religion, politics, class, and inequality are some of the recurring themes that Pakistani fiction writers have explored in their works. These novels and short stories provide a unique insight into the complexities of Pakistani society, and the struggles of individuals in navigating their way through it. In this literature review, some of the most significant themes in Pakistani fiction in English have been explored, demonstrating the contribution of Pakistani writers to the global literary arena.

The role of Pakistani English writers in the construction of national identity and unity has long been one of the central topics in literary and cultural studies. Pakistani English literature is a relatively new stream of writing which came into its own in the 1950s and has gained recognition over the last several decades. Within this literature, Pakistani English writers have used their works to articulate questions of identity, belonging, and historical and cultural lineage, all of which are prominent issues in the construction of a national Pakistani identity.

Pakistani English writers have used numerous literary devices to communicate these messages, such as symbolism, imagery, and metaphor. For instance, Mohsin Hamid uses the character of Daru in his novel *Moth Smoke* as a symbol for class divisions in Pakistan. Through the character's journey, he

explores the complexities of social mobility and struggles with self-identity within contemporary Pakistan (Hamid, 2000). Similarly, Kamila Shamsie's novel *Kartography* uses the symbols of maps to articulate the political and cultural dissections within Pakistan, and the struggle for identity and belonging (*Kartography*, 2002).

In recent years, Pakistani English literature has been used to promote ideas of national identity and unity (Rashid, 2017). Literature is an important means of projecting and imagining a national identity by helping in the exploration of cultural heritage and shared experiences. As such, Pakistani English literature has been given a role in projecting a more inclusive and representative national identity in Pakistan. Pakistani English literature has also been used in a project to challenge the stereotypes and prejudices that have surrounded Pakistan and its people. For example, the work of Pakistani English writers has been used to challenge Orientalist and postcolonial narratives that have framed Western conceptions of Pakistan (Khan, 2012). Pakistani English literature has, then, been used to project and help create a constitution of a more equal and culturally shared world between Pakistan and the West.

The *Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Sidhwa's *An American Brat* have been analyzed using critical discourse analysis techniques and it was found that both the novels have threads running through them showing the ties between America and Pakistan. It has been highlighted how identities are constructed due to transcultural and transnational struggles in today's globalized world (Zubair, 2012).

There has been limited research into how works such as *Home Boy* by H.M. Naqvi and *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* by Daniyal Mueenuddin promote national identity and unity. Nevertheless, both works have been lauded for their representation of Pakistani culture and society as well as their engagement with themes of identity and belonging. *Home Boy*, for instance, is commended for its portrayal of the immigrant experience and the search for identity and belonging in contemporary Pakistan (Pandey, 2011). Similarly, *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* is celebrated for its representation of class, power, and gender in Pakistani society as well as its engagement with themes of identity and belonging (Mueenuddin, 2009).

Pakistani English literature has played a key role in fostering national identity and unity by offering a forum for exploring cultural heritage and portraying shared experiences. The role of literature

in the construction of national identity has been seen as particularly critical, and Pakistani English literature has been viewed as “an instrument for creating a national identity that was inclusive and more representative of the actual composition of Pakistan’s body politic” (Yousaf, 2017). Specifically with respect to *Home Boy* by H.M. Naqvi and *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* by Daniyal Mueenuddin, more research may be needed on how such novels, and other writings, contribute to national identity and unity.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for the proposed study consists of nation-building and the role of literature in fostering national identity and unity. In the context of Pakistan, literature in English has been a significant force in the construction of a national identity and the fostering of unity among the diverse population of the country. Writers of Pakistani origin, working in the English language have continuously represented the history, culture and socio-political concerns of Pakistan and have shared the lived experiences of the people of the country. The theoretical framework for this research study is drawn from Benedict Anderson's 1991 work on national identity and unity, titled "Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism," is a seminal text in the study of nationalism. Anderson defines a nation as an "imagined political community" that is both inherently limited and sovereign. It is "imagined" because members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.

DATA ANALYSIS

The works *Home Boy* (Naqvi, 2009) and *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* (Mueenuddin, 2009) represent a Pakistani national identity through the myriad and complex experiences of Pakistani individuals and communities.

Young Pakistani men learning to live in New York City are the subject of *Home Boy*, a novel that inspects questions about identity, culture and belonging in America. It tells the story of a group of young Pakistani men struggling to adapt to a new country, culture, language, and identity. It is about

what happens to the individuals of this religious and cultural heritage who find their way to America and, despite themselves, evolve into the men of New York.

Similarly, those are some of the problems that are quietly, carefully, and beautifully examined in *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* — the culture of Pakistani men from different classes, especially the landowners, but also the managers, the politicians, the small-town landowners who apparently look like cowboys but are, in reality, rich businessmen. What we see repeatedly are the ways distinct groups negotiate the tensions between them, and how they can accommodate each other while still reaping the benefits of systems that keep most people in their place. It is important to acknowledge that life is incredibly hard for everyone in the world of these fiction works — people's hands are burning, their mouths are parched, their chests are heavy — but the inequity that exists is very real and operates at all levels of society. How these men and women, boys and girls live apart and come together is the subject of the fiction.

Both works ultimately contribute to this idea of representing a Pakistani national identity since they both are invested in the idea of portraying diverse experiences, voices and cultural heritage of Pakistani individuals and communities. This is marked by the tensions and power dynamics throughout different social groups and individuals represented in both the works, which is quite essential. The narratives of the works reveal that Pakistani society is still in demand for harmony and respect for difference. Moreover, it is to be believed that having greater knowledge about such diversity within society, can foster respect in both literary depictions and reality.

The representation of Pakistan and Pakistani people means that both literary techniques reinforce and challenge stereotypes about Pakistan and Pakistani people in diverse ways. In *Home Boy*, H.M. Naqvi uses humor, satire, and wit as a way to challenge common stereotypes about Pakistani immigrants: that all Pakistani immigrants are not conservative and religious, all Pakistani people are not good at cricket and all Pakistani people are not middle class. Additionally, these stereotypes about Pakistani people are being challenged by a novel that employs multiple narrative perspectives and non-linear storytelling. This approach underscores that there is nothing like a singular national identity for Pakistani

people because the pluralism of their culture and life experiences cannot be simplified, and Naqvi believes, the complexity should be acknowledged and celebrated but to be simplified.

On the other hand, *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* challenges these stereotypes by depicting the lives of Pakistanis belonging to different social classes and diverse backgrounds, divulging the diversity and complexity of Pakistani society. The short stories present characters who are not simply defined by their ethnicity or nationality, but who are diverse individuals with different life experiences and relationships. Mueenuddin uses rich, detailed description of the characters' surroundings and inner lives to create a vivid, multi-layered portrait of Pakistani society that resists simplistic stereotypes of any kind.

At the same time, however, both works can also be said to reinforce certain stereotypes in some respects. For instance, *Home Boy* portrays Pakistani immigrants who are struggling with questions of identity and belonging as they try to find their way in a new country, a depiction that can perpetuate the stereotype of immigrants as outsiders. Similarly, *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* portrays the struggles of lower-class characters as they navigate the social hierarchies of Pakistani society, a portrayal that might reinforce the stereotype of Pakistan as a society with immobile class hierarchies.

In a nutshell, the literary methods employed in both works challenge and reinforce stereotypes and preconceived ideas about Pakistan and Pakistanis in complex, nuanced ways that reflect the diversity and complexity of Pakistan's society and culture.

Themes of cultural identity, belonging, and the immigrant experience in *Home Boy* and themes of power, class, and gender in *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* contribute to the representation of a Pakistani national identity in distinct ways. In *Home Boy*, the themes of cultural identity and belonging are central to its exploration of the immigrant experience. Chuck, the protagonist, is a Pakistani-American who feels alienated from both his Pakistani roots and American identity. The novel follows the experiences of other Pakistani immigrants in New York City, drawing attention to the complicated process of assimilation and integration into a foreign society. *Home Boy's* exploration of the immigrant experience, in this way, works to expand our understanding of Pakistani culture and identity, illustrating the many and diverse ways that Pakistani-American lives are lived.

In contrast, the short stories *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* use the themes of power, class, and gender to represent a Pakistani national identity by highlighting the complexities and diversity of Pakistani culture and society. The work pays close attention to the diversity of characters originating from different social classes and highlights power hierarchies within and across these social classes. Moreover, it depicts the gross gender injustices and limitations available for women in Pakistani society. Through its portrayal of power, class, and gender, the work offers an intricate representation of Pakistani society and the social structures that define it.

Together, these works, however, highlight the representation of a Pakistani national identity by spotlighting the diversity and complexities of Pakistani culture and society. Where *Home Boy* focused on Pakistani-Americans experience and battles with cultural identity and belonging, *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* provides a broader depiction of Pakistani society and the power structures that define it. By doing so, both works serve to complicate and further deepen our understanding of Pakistani culture and identity, and challenge the simple stereotypes and assumptions often associated with Pakistan and its people.

Both *Home Boy* by H.M. Naqvi and *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* by Daniyal Mueenuddin engage deeply with the Pakistani cultural and political context, albeit in divergent ways. *Home Boy* takes place in the United States, but it grapples with the Pakistani immigrant experience and the struggle dealing with issues of cultural identity and belonging. By depicting Pakistani-American characters and their interactions with both Pakistani and American cultures, the novel touches on the complex social and cultural dynamics that shape the Pakistani diaspora. At the same time, it also touches on broader political issues in Pakistan, such as corruption and social inequality, which are depicted as factors that lead to frustration and eventually, emigration of Pakistanis to the United States.

In Other Rooms, Other Wonders, by contrast, takes place entirely in Pakistan and deals with the social and political dynamics of Pakistani society. The work takes on issues such as social class inequality, political corruption, and gender oppression, all of which are deeply embedded in the cultural and political context of Pakistan. By depicting Pakistani characters from different social backgrounds

and their experiences navigating these power structures, the shortstories offer a richly detailed and complex portrayal of Pakistani society.

Taken together, both works reflect the cultural and political context of Pakistan to varying degrees, with *Home Boy* centering more on the experiences of the Pakistani diaspora and how they are connected to broader political issues in Pakistan, while *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* offers a more comprehensive portrayal of the social and political dynamics of Pakistan society itself. Characters navigate their Pakistani identity in the works *Home Boy* by H.M. Naqvi and *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* by Daniyal Mueenuddin, both depending on their experiences in the United States and Pakistan.

In *Home Boy*, Chuck, the protagonist, is a Pakistani-American struggling with his identity as he moves about his life in the United States. He is compelled to assimilate into American culture, and his connection to his Pakistani heritage is in contest. In the novel, the other characters are also navigating their Pakistani identity in the context of their life in the U.S. AC and Jimbo, for example, are looking back at Pakistan from the United States, and often, their relationship with Pakistan is more complicated and complex. Jimbo is a Pakistani-American rapper whose music is often rooted in his Pakistani identity, and AC is a former cricketer who struggles with a sense of identity and place after leaving Pakistan.

The characters in *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* are navigating their Pakistani identity in the context of their life in Pakistan. The work offers characters from different social classes and backgrounds who have different relationships to their Pakistani identity. For example, Husna, a servant, is at odds with her place in Pakistani society and her place in the family of her employer, and the wealthy landowner, K.K. Harouni, is conflicted about his identity in conjunction with his influence and power in Pakistani society.

Home Boy by H.M. Naqvi and *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* by Daniyal Mueenuddin both aim to contribute to inclusivity in Pakistan and promote national unity.

Declarations of a national identity are inextricably bound, as Naqvi and Mueenuddin demonstrate, with the characters' various negotiations of citizenship. In *Home Boy*, for example, the

characters have different backgrounds and relationships to what it means to be Pakistani. Through their countless experiences constructing and negotiating that identity in Pakistan and the United States, the novel gives a multifarious and sophisticated understanding of Pakistani society and culture; one that accounts for the multiplicity of peoples whose differences too often escape representations of the country and people that tend to be extraordinarily parochial.

In *Other Rooms, Other Wonders* similarly examines the complexities within Pakistani society and the relationships between people from different socioeconomic backgrounds. The collection of short stories illustrates the power dynamics within Pakistani society and the struggles facing individuals as they navigate their societal position. In reflecting these struggles, the work fosters empathy within different socioeconomic groups and encourages the reader to think about the role that power and privilege play in shaping society. Both works ultimately promote a unifying and inclusive national identity in Pakistan by providing a rich and multilayered representation that takes into account the diversity of Pakistani culture and society. In so doing, they highlight the difficulty of navigating a Pakistani identity and thus the necessity of empathy and understanding for a unified and inclusive national identity. The themes and narratives in *Home Boy* and *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* ultimately contribute to Pakistani representations of national identity, but do so in different ways.

His debut novel, *Home Boy* is certainly an exploration of cultural identity, diaspora, and the immigrant experience, following the lives of three friends from Pakistan living in New York City, negotiating what it means to be Pakistani in a foreign land and finding new energy in the storied ancientness of Pakistani culture, one that is dynamic and always evolving. The fragmented and broken structure of the novel mirrors the experience of an immigrant itself.

Then there are works like *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders*, which are straightforwardly about power, class and patriarchy in Pakistani society, set in rural Punjab and examining the lives of different classes, mixing in complex and pitiful portraits of people struggling with their place in the world, in relationships ambered with rot. A straight line and a ramp down.

While both works contribute to the representation of a Pakistani national identity by revealing the diversity that is inherent in the nation, *Home Boy* celebrates the plurality and heterogeneity of

Pakistani culture and the way in which it is constantly changing and evolving, while *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* functions to reveal the power dynamics and struggles (both small and large) present in Pakistani society. In other words, *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* focuses on a kind of story or a kind of narrative about Pakistan that highlights the importance of empathy and the promotion of unity and inclusivity, which is incredibly important in today's fractured and divided society, whereas *Home Boy* concentrates on a separate, but no less important narrative, that welcomes the diversity of the cities and diaspora.

CONCLUSION

As highlighted in this comparative analysis of H.M. Naqvi's *Home Boy* and Daniyal Mueenuddin's *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders*, Pakistani English fiction has significantly contributed to the portrayal of a Pakistani national identity, and the unity with which it resonates. The works open up the complex identity of the country, and the Pakistani diaspora in America, maneuvering through themes of cultural identity, belonging, power, class, and gender. Employing the literary and narrative devices, the works also challenge common stereotypes and prejudices leveled against Pakistan and its people, while reconfirming the positive elements of Pakistani culture and heritage. Ultimately, the analysis underscores the need for greater voices in Pakistani literature, representing the multitudinous identities found, and sought, within the nation—towards a more inclusive and global Pakistani national identity. In sum, the outcome of the comparative analysis can be applied to scholarship and policy-making work towards the creation and promotion of a more inclusive and national representation in Pakistan. Initiatives include support for Pakistani English literature as well as the broader effort to promote cultural understanding and diversity in Pakistan. Moreover, this research activates potentially new inquiries into the role of literature in the promotion of national unity and inclusivity within Pakistan, and ways to expand and improve upon this initiative in the future.

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