

REFUTING THE AMERICAN WAR ON TERROR AND THE ‘CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS’ NARRATIVES: H. M. NAQVI’S *HOME BOY*

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Abstract

This study probes H. M. Naqvi’s *Home Boy* as a rebuttal to the rhetoric of American War on Terror and its antecedent intellectual foundation, ‘The Clash of Civilizations’ narrative presented by Samuel Huntington. The American War on Terror narrative has diffused into politics, laws and American culture industry in post- 9/11 context. Consequently, Muslim identity and Islam as a religion are connected with criminality, terrorism and security threat for America. This study uses Khalid A. Beydoun’s *American Islamophobia: Understanding the Roots and Rise of Fear* to explain the anti-Muslim energy of the American polity towards Muslims in post-9/11 America through Naqvi’s *Home Boy*. The treatment of the American Muslims by the FBI and the enactment of laws such as the PATRIOT Act and the Homeland Security Act are the outcome of the longstanding American Islamophobia. The treatment met out to three Pakistanis, renaissance men, known as metrostanis in Naqvi’s *Home Boy* reflects American structural Islamophobia. Muslims become victims of the American state terrorism in Naqvi’s *Home Boy*. Furthermore, Naqvi traces the origin of modern terrorism to Europe, the killing of Archduke Ferdinand by the Serbian nationalist organization. Consequently, Naqvi reverses the trope of Muslims as terrorists and Islam as religion connected with terrorism through *Home Boy*. In addition, Naqvi dismantles ‘the clash of Civilizations’ narrative through the contribution of these metrostanis – by extension of Muslim immigrants – to the American Banking system, Academy, pop culture and horticulture. Naqvi rebuts the image of Muslim immigrants as trojan horse by presenting them glue between Islam and the West. The study uses close reading supplemented by a historicist approach for the textual analysis of Naqvi’s *Home Boy*. The study suggests going beyond ‘the Clash of Civilizations’ thinking dividing the world on tribal lines. We need neither the clash nor the dialogue of civilizations narrative but an end to civilizational thinking as Dabashi suggests.

Introduction

Naqvi’s *Home Boy* (2009) is a novelistic response to the rhetoric of US War on Terror and its intellectual foundation, ‘The Clash of Civilizations’ thesis presented by Huntington and Bernard Lewis. Naqvi possesses “the revolutionary potential of an amphibian intellectual”

floating over the Western and Eastern canons and environments as Dabashi (2017, p.229) would say. Steeped in the intellectual tradition of the West and the cultural tradition of Pakistan, like his characters, AC, Jimbo and Chuck, he has his pulse on the “global dialectic” of East and West. Graduating from Georgetown University, USA, in Economics and English literature, he taught Creative Writing at Boston University. His award of the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature stands as testimony of his place in the Western literary tradition. His revolutionary potential as a literary intellectual is evident from his interview about *Home Boy*: “I had a fire in my belly”. Shaye Areheart (2009) describes Naqvi’s novel in *The New York Times* “at once immigrant narrative, bildungsroman and New York City novel, with a dash of the picaresque”. *Home Boy* represents the American Dream turned into an American nightmare for Metrostanis and by extension for all Muslims in the post- 9/11 American context.

Furthermor, Naqvi dismantles the myth of “the brown terrorist menace” as a category of American Islamophobia through *Home Boy*. Deepa Kumar (2021) writes that “the brown terrorist menace has furnished the grounds on which to expand US global hegemony” (p.v). Naqvi debunks the foundational myth of US global hegemony and the War on Terror narrative in the post- 9/11 world through *Home Boy*. The rhetoric of the American War on Terror has penetrated government institutions and American culture industry. Consequently, post-9/11 American novelists - Don Delillo, John Updike, and Amy Waldman - project Muslims through the lens of terrorism. Naqvi rebuts the imaginary of Muslims as terrorists in the American culture industry in the post- 9/11 context through his novel, *Home Boy*. This study probes how metrostanis, the representative of South Asian Muslims, became the target of American Islamophobia and War on Terror narrative in the post-9/11 America. Further, the study explores the contribution of these metrostanis to American polity and questions the ‘Clash of Civilizations’ narrative. The study explores how these metrostanis - by extention Muslim immigrants to America and Europe - through their presence and contributions to America negates the “Clash of Civilizations” and the medieval division of the world as *Dar al Herb* and *Dar al Islam*.

Research Question

How does H. M. Naqvi rebut the American War on Terror and the ‘clash of civilizations’ narratives, from Beydoun’s perspective, through his novel, *Home Boy*?

Theoretical Framework

This study uses the theoretial model of Islamophobia proposed by Khalid A. Beydoun. Beydoun (2018) explains a tripartite model of American Islamophobia in his book, *American Islamophobia: Understanding the Roots and Rise of Fear*. Beydoun presents an integrative model of prive Islamophobia, Structural Islamophobia and dialectical Islamophobia. He defines private Islamophobia as “the fear, suspicion and violent targeting of Muslims by private actors” (p.32). Structural Islamophobia is the “fear and suspicion of Muslims on the part of government institutions and actors” visible from “the enactment and advancement of laws, policy and programming built upon the prseumption that Muslim identity is associated with a national security threat” (p. 36). Dialectical Islamophobia connects and feeds private Islamophobia and structural Islamophobia. It is defined as “the process by which structural Islamophobia shapes, reshapes and endorses views or attitudes about Islam and Muslim subjects inside and outside of

American borders” (p.40). Both, structural and private Islamophobia legitimizes and validates each other culminating on the demonization of Islam and Muslim identity. In addition to Beudoun’s model, the views of other theorists - Peter Morey, John F. Esposito and Deepa Kumar - on Islamophobia are utilized to supplement Beudoun’s model for probing Naqvi’s *Home Boy*.

Research Methodology

This study is qualitative in its nature. The study uses Naqvi’s novel, *Home Boy*, as primary text for fictional response to the American War on Terror narrative. Furthermore, a pool of research articles and books are used as secondary sources for the analysis of the novel. The study uses close reading along with a historicist approach for the textual analysis of H. M. Naqvi’s *Home Boy*.

Literature Review

Naqvi’s *Home Boy* is analyzed by literary critics as resistance genre. Hirsh Sawhney (2011) in *The Guardian* review writes that *Home Boy* focuses on “three New Yorkers of Pakistani origin” depicted as “secular men” who “enjoy women, rhapsody and cocaine at Tja” before 9/11. However, the situation changes for these metrostanis after 9/11. They are suspected of Arab terrorists and are caught at the house of their mysterious friend, Shaman, “a Pakistani Gatsby” by the FBI. Consequently, the treatment at the Detention Centre forces Chuck “to reconsider his own religious and national allegiances”. Sawhney writes that Naqvi’s characters are “props designed to explode misconceptions about drug users, Pakistan or Islam”.

Asma Mansoor (2012) highlights “resistance identity” in Naqvi’s *Home Boy* (p.24). Mansoor uses the socio-psychological paradigm of identity and identity crisis for the analysis of the novel. The interrogation of Chuck in the prison, according to Asma Mansoor, works as a catalyst in the formation of a “resistant form of identity” (p.32). Chuck’s “reconstructed identity of his Muslim self” and his resistance identity are “of a symbolic order, functioning within a more personal domain” (p. 36). Going through the process of a “redefinition of his identity since his pro-western consciousness of his Self” has been liquidated, Chuck does not “opt for a radicalized Islamic identity” (p.37). He adopts “non-violent Islamic identity” and rejects his Americanized name, Chuck (p.37). Asma Mansoor writes that “his reversion was indeed reactionary” but it stems from his own deep rooted self (p.39).

Peter Morey (2018) makes a comparative analysis of Amy Waldman’s *The Submission* and H. M. Naqvi’s *Home Boy*. Morey writes that these novels make a direct engagement with “Islamophobia as a form of cultural racism” (p.128). Similarly, focusing on the postcolonial perspective of the novel, Guven (2019) considers *Home Boy* as a resistance narrative “against the continuities of orientalism and exploitation” (p.57). Using Edward Said’s theoretical model, Guven interprets *Home Boy* as a resistance narrative against American imperialism. Like wise, Schiavini (2021) views *Home Boy* as both mimetic and subversive of US fictional tradition. Schiavini writes that *Home Boy* makes allusions to and engages in dialogue with the American literary canon. *Home Boy* is the re-writing of Fitzgerald’s *Great Gatsby* from a migrant’s perspective. Schiavini highlights the mimetic-subversive tradition of Fitzgerald’s American dream in post-9/11 novels.

As part of a resistance genre, Shah and Sheeraz (2022) project *Home Boy* as a “critique of a Neoliberal prison regime and its policies of erasure” (p.1000). This politics of erasure works through strategies of de-patterning and disorienting Pakistani immigrants, AC, Jimbo and Chuck, resulting in “resistance and resentments among them” (p.1000). Being the custodian of neoliberalism and capitalism, the US uses preemptive and proscriptive strategies to eliminate the Muslim threat to neoliberal values in the post-9/11 context. Consequent upon this role, the US becomes a neoliberal prison regime pursuing the de-patterning and disorienting of Pakistani immigrants through “sensory deprivation techniques” and “shock therapy, severe punishment and brutal methods in the process of interrogation” (p.1003). The violent and brutal strategies of the neoliberal prison regime inflict “a psychological damage, erases his earlier personality and regresses him into an infantile state” (p.1006). Contrary to the purpose pursued by the neoliberal prison regime to re-write and re-pattern, “its violent policies of erasure give birth to resistance among the targeted prisoners” (p.1008). Chuck turns against neoliberalism and capitalism and thinks of God, prayer and terrorism.

Elaborating on *Home Boy* as a resistance novel, this study focuses on *Home Boy* as a counter narrative to ‘Muslims as terrorists of the world’ in the post-9//11 American imagination. Focusing on the deep rooted American Islamophobia and its attendant ‘War on Terror’ narrative, *Home Boy* inverts the post-9/11 narrative of terrorism, projecting Muslims as victims of American state terrorism.

Analysis

Focusing on the roots of American Islamophobia, Khaled A. Beydoun writes that “Islamophobia is the modern progeny of Orientalism” imagining Islam as an ideological foil to the West. (p.36). Similarly Morey (2011) places post-9/11 Islamophobia in the historical “Islam” and “the West” discourse and the civilization thinking of Western civilization. Naqvi also projects American Islamophobia from a historical perspective through his novel, *Home Boy*.

Naqvi uses a comparative paradigm to deconstruct American Islamophobia through *Home Boy*. In the very opening of the novel, he links Islamophobia to historical Negrophobia and anti-Semitism as “we would become Japs, Jews and Nigers” (p.1). Giroux (2015) writes that this “historical memory is a crucial battleground for challenging a corporate-surveillance state” (p.131). Naqvi projects Islamophobia in the context of American history and its legacy of totalitarianism burgeoning forth in new forms. Irum Sheikh (2011) writes that the creation of “domestic enemy aliens” and “US domestic policy” are twins in times of crisis and war (p.2). Consequent upon the Pearl Harbor attacks, the U.S government put 100,000 Japanese into Internment Camps. Similarly, Shaheen (2001), highlighting American phobic psychology, writes that “motion pictures tarred the Chinese and Japanese as “the Yellow Peril”, and Russians “the Red Menace” in the American film industry (p.5). Shaheen prequels Naqvi in highlighting the displacement of the Native Americans, denial of basic civil rights and segregation of blacks and the Jews and Japanese Holocaust. Beydoun (2023) highlights how the American Constitution and the American Supreme Court, played similar roles in the case of Japanese and Muslims in the name of “protecting national security” (p.61). Beydoun writes that the rights of citizenship were not safeguards for the Japanese from “the war- time racism” of President Roosevelt upheld by the Supreme Court ruling (p.61). Beydoun writes that the

Supreme Court upheld “the Muslim ban” of President Trump in the tradition of the Roosevelt Executive Order.

The roots of American Islamophobia can be traced back to the European tradition and American history. Beydoun (2023) writes that “Orientalism is the mother of Islamophobia” (p.75). American Islamophobia originating from European Orientalism and Enlightenment is corroborated by the writings of the American founding fathers, American case law, and policy on immigration and domestic policies. It strategically frames Muslims in terms of terrorism. Post-9/11 American Islamophobia is “a modern extension and articulation of an old system” of the collective unconscious of the West. Similarly, Esposito (2019) sees Islamophobia from the historical and comparative perspective of “anti-Semitism, xenophobia and racism” (p.15). Moreover, the historical roots of American Islamophobia go back to America’s inheritance of medievalist views of Islam and Muslims from European Christendom.

Both, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism, are European constructs, transported to America. Little (2008) writes that “by 1900 anti-Semitic and anti-Islamic sentiments were as American as apple pie” (p.4). He writes that after the Second World War, the European holocaust and Israel’s creation, anti-Semitism declined and Jews were “westernized” (p.4). However, Islamophobia evolved further and Arabs were “demonized” and labelled as “anti-Western terrorists” (p.4). Looking at American Islamophobia, the European perceptions and encounter with Islam are visible in the genesis of the United States. Wright (2016) writes that Oriental despotism and the imaginary horrors of the Barbary pirates played a vital role in shaping American national identity and American democracy. In the 1787-88 constitutional debates, Islam was projected through the polemical English Protestant traditions.

Naqvi puts his fingers on the pulse of European-American history and diagnoses the American malady. Just as Jews, Japanese and Negroes were historically presented as metaphors, similarly Muslims in the post-9/11 parlance were projected through the metaphor of terror and the terrorist. Dabashi (2013) writes that Muslims are metamorphosed into “classic metaphor of fearful fantasy” in the post-9/11 context (p.102). They are deprived of historical interpellations and worldliness. There are parallel patterns in Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and Negrophobia. Negrophobia combines biological and cultural racism in the treatment of black people. In this regard, Sheikh (2011) writes that like the Blacks, “the terrorist Muslim men among us” and “sleeper cells” are imagined as a threat to security and this sense of fear informs the state as the guardian of US citizens (p.21). Salaita (2007) writes that the word “niggers symbolizes profiling and mistreatment” on the basis of total ontological difference (p.18). Equating the racial profiling of Muslims with that of the “Niggers”, Salaita writes, that Muslims are “America’s new niggers” (p.18). Similarly, Meer & Noorani (2008) making a comparison between the “discursive representation” of anti-Semitism and contemporary Islamophobia in Britain, writes that just as Jews were considered “unassimilable”, Muslims are framed in terms of incompatibility and opposition to “the canon of Brittishness” (p.206).

The same discursive representation of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia are visible in the post-9/11 American context. Just as Jews were presented as anarchists and Bolsheviks in the first half of the twentieth century, similarly Muslims are projected as fascists in the post-9/11 context. Just as Jews were deprived from their German citizenship through the 1935 Nuremberg Laws, similarly the rights and liberties of the American Muslims were suspended through the PATRIOT Act, Homeland Security Act and Executive Orders. However, despite

Naqvi's lumping of Islamophobia, negrophobia and anti-Semitism, there are divergent paths of these phenomena. Yet, the common denominator of these phenomena is European Christendom – by law of inheritance, the United States. Matti Bunzl (2005) highlights the exclusively Christian image of Europe as the common point between anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. Renton and Gidley (2017) write that the War on Terror giving birth to Islamophobia is not the exclusive historical form of anti-Muslim energy. Historicizing post-9/11 Islamophobia, Naqvi writes "I understood that just like three black men were gangbangers, and three Jews a conspiracy, three Muslims had become a sleeper cell" (p.121). Lean (2018) writes that Jews and black African Americans were "outsiders" in the American imagination in the past but these communities also resist their villification and stereotyping in the American landscape.

Beydoun's private Islamophobia is visible from the Brawlers's attitude towards these metrostanis in the bar. They attacked these metrostanis for being "A'rabs" and "Moslems, mohi'cans, whatever" (p.24). As the perpetrators of 9/11 were Arabs in origin, so, Arab identity was criminalized and obfuscated with Islam. This shows a monolithic approach towards Muslims and Arabs in the post-9/11 context. This reductionist approach ignores the racial and religious divisions among Arabs and Muslims. The Christian Arabs have a historical existence in the Arab World. Similarly, Muslims hail from diverse regions, culture and races. This reductive approach on the basis of religion and colour spectrum threatened the life of Sikh community and Christian Arabs in post-9/11 America.

Post-9/11 American Islamophobia echoes the contours of early modern English Islamophobia. Looking at Renaissance English literature, the early modern English fear of the Ottoman Empire after the fall of Constantinople 1453 seems political and religious. Both princes and popes of Europe were worried about the Ottoman Empire as 'the present terror of the world'. Early modern Islamophobia and its attendant stereotype were the products of European-cum-English fears of Ottomanism. Dabashi writes about the long trajectory of Western Orientalism and the framing of Muslims through Greek Orientalism as the outcome of rivalry and enmity towards Persia. European Orientalism towards the Ottomans was based on "rivalry and fear" in the early modern age (p.102). Both forms of Orientalism were different from the later "Orientalism of domination" during the heydays of the European colonial adventure. Being inheritor of British imperialism after the Second World War, American Islamophobia is the continuation and manifestation of this psychology of domination projected through the rhetoric of the War on Terror.

Muslims in the post-9/11 context are seen as antagonistic to American civilization. Esposito writes that Islam's threat to the West is three fold: "political, civilizational and demographic" (p.16). Just as Hitler saw Jews as a threat to Aryan civilization and followed a policy of ghettoization towards them, similarly, George Bush followed a policy of ghettoization and holocaust towards Muslims in post-9/11 world. Lean (2018) writes that the confrontational historiography of "Islam and the West" projects Islam as foreign and outsider to Europe and America (p.65).

Naqvi presents President Bush's speech in *Home Boy* to highlight American domestic and global policy towards Muslims. George Bush confronts and threatens the whole Muslim World like a bully as "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists" (p. 98). There is no third space in American thinking beyond the typology of enemy and allies. The American policy of

ghettoization and holocaust towards Muslims is evident from the Homeland Security Act and the global War on Terror. Both these were, in reality, war against Muslims within and outside of America. The first casualties of this so called War on Terror were the people of Afghanistan and Iraq. Similarly, Muslims were hunted by the FBI, turning their American dream into an American nightmare. This condition of American state is what Noel Carroll terms “agonal sovereignty”. Naqvi represents the conditions of Muslims perceived as a threat to order and civilization. Muslims became the victims of “an unwritten code” (p. 121). Consequently, AC questions the foundational myths of liberty and freedom of the American founders in the post-9/11 American paranoia in *Home Boy*.

Naqvi projects the post-9/11 condition of America in terms of the McCarthyism of the Cold War era. He represents the post-9/11 American scenario as ‘terra incognita’ for American Muslims. America represents a nightmare for Chuck after his return from Karachi. In post-9/11 paranoid America, Muslims were hunted like animals. Police used terror tactics in dealing with Muslims. Chuck describes the terror of the law enforcement agencies and their presence as, “I feel like a marked man. I feel like an animal” (p.206). Asma T. Uddin (2024) writes that Islamophobia, although a complex matter, has “elements of racialization and securitization” (p. 38). She explains racialization in the context of South Asian Muslims from the perspective of brownness. Asma T. Uddin views securitization of Muslims perceived as “both internal and external security threats” in the post-9/11 political imagination (p.38). Aroosa Kanwal (2024) considers this institutional violence against Muslims as “geographies of dehumanization” (p.2). Naqvi projects the United States as a Benthamite panopticon for Muslims in the post-9/11 world, where Muslims are quarantined and hunted by the FBI. In addition, Naqvi uses several strategies, as the study suggests, to dismantle the narrative of ‘Muslim terrorist’ projected by the post-9/11 American novel and culture industry.

H. M. Naqvi counters American Islamophobia and its associated narrative of ‘Muslim terrorist’ through Muslim immigrants’ contribution to America. Just as Tariq Ali (2005) appropriates the medieval history of Islamic civilization to counter western conflation of Islam and terrorism and highlights Muslim contributions to European Renaissance and Enlightenment through his novel, *A Sultan in Palermo*, similarly, Naqvi focuses on pre-9/11 history and the contribution of Muslims to America through his novel, *Home Boy*. Naqvi uses American Muslims’ contribution to America as a strategy to counter the image of Muslim “Other” as the Trojan horse projected by post-9/11 American novelists. Novelists like Delilo, Updike and, Amy Waldman alienate American Muslims from the American landscape by stripping off their American identity. Naqvi projects American Muslims as part of this American landscape and highlights their American identity and contribution.

Naqvi projects the contribution of Muslim immigrants to America through three Metrostanis. Before 9/11, the three Pakistani immigrants, Chuck, AC and Jimbo, assimilate themselves to the hedonistic and capitalist values of American life as “renaissance men” (p.1). Naqvi dismantles the projection of Muslim immigrants presented as Trojan horses by post-9/11 fiction through these metrostanis. They had deep understanding of “the great global dialectic” (p.1). Their Americanized cryptonyms reflect their assimilationist approach to American values and life. They had imbibed the literary and cultural traditions of the West. Naqvi rejects the “Clash of Civilizations” narrative and projects integration and dialogue of civilizations through the assimilative model of these metrostanis. Chuck contributes “to the procrustean machinery

that made capitalism tick” by becoming “a banker, an investment banker” in the US before 9/11 (p.28-29). He dreams of Americanizing his family system. Similarly, Ali Chaudry, known as AC, pursues an “on and off again doctorate” in intellectual history and represents the American academy. He is projected as “a charming rogue, an intellectual dandy, a man of theatrical presence” (p.2). Jimbo, Jamshed Khan, bearing “a Semitic nose” is a “DJ slash producer, a vocation with certain catchet” (p.3). His contribution to American pop culture is evident from musical compositions. Similarly, Old Mr. Khan contributes to the ecological diversity of the United States through his gardening. Focusing on his pursuit of eco-diversity in America, Old Mr. Khan imports a “very special plant” for his mission (p.53). These ‘metrostanis’ contribute to the three major components of the American system; banking (capitalism), music (American pop culture) and the American Academy.

In addition, H. M. Naqvi debunks the myth of ‘the clash of civilizations’ and the War on Terror rhetoric through the contribution of Muslim immigrants to America. AC questions the medievalist and tribal thinking propagated by Huntington, Lewis and other proponents of Culture Talk. AC projects a humanistic vision of civilizations and projects Muslim immigrants - “We are the glue” - through an integrational prism of cultures (p.20). The presence of Muslims in Europe and America and their contribution have changed historical geographical thinking and citizenship. These immigrants are the glue and the cementing bond of western and Muslim civilizations. AC highlights the importance of universal human civilization based on responsibilities, commitments, bonds and friendship. Both the clash and dialogue of civilizations paradigm reinforces the Orientalist mental mapping. Naqvi focuses on universal human civilization through AC.

Similarly, Tariq Ramadan questions the medieval geographical-cum religious division of *Dar al Harb* and *Dar al Islam* due to the presence of Muslim immigrants in Europe and America. Tariq Ramadan (2004) writes that “Islam is western religion” in modern parlance due to the presence of a tangible population of Muslims in Europe and America. He questions the medieval geographical division of *Dar al Harb* and *Dar al Islam* established by the medieval Muslim jurists and theologians in the context of Muslim immigrants in Europe and America. Such geographical, tribal and civilizational divisions are not applicable to the modern globalized world. Naqvi projects Muslim immigrants in the West through his glue model. The presence of large Muslim populations in the West also negates the religious-cum-geographic division of *Dar al Harb* and *Dar al Islam* of Muslim medieval thinking. Further; their contributions to American Academy, popular culture and capitalism in *Home Boy* demonstrate that Muslim immigrants are mediators between Islamic and Western civilizations. Tariq Ramadan writes that Muslim immigrants are “drawing the shape of European and American Islam” through their integration of Western culture and attire with the basic tenets of Islam. (p.4). Furthermore, Ramadan (2012) writes that Muslim immigrants will be the prime mover of “an ideological shift” in Western policies towards Muslim countries and Islamic religion and civilization (p.136).

However, their assimilation and acculturation to American system and values is not a safeguard in the context of post-9/11 American Islamophobia. The American nightmare for Muslims within America and across the world is the direct result of ‘Homeland Security’ and Global War on Terror. Consequently, as Peter Morey writes, “from being a “Home Boy” - a hip and trusted member of the New York scene - Chuck becomes persona non grata told to

“go home, boy” (p.146). Implicitly Naqvi critiques the assimilationist and multi-cultural models of the West towards Muslim immigrants. Roy (2007) also highlights the dilemma of the assimilationist approach for Muslims. Roy writes that Westernization implies two things in Western parlance: secularization as the post-Enlightenment image of the West, and Christianization as Christianity is the base of Western civilization. Consequently, “the Christian Right and Secular Left” forge a common ground against Muslims (p.ix). In post-9/11 paranoia, neither the assimilationist model nor the multi-culturist model guarantees safety for Muslims in America.

H. M. Naqvi debunks the myth of Muslims as terrorists and ‘War on Terror’ rhetoric through *Home Boy*. Naqvi differentiates between jihad and terrorism. In the post-9/11 American novel, there is a conflation of terrorism and jihad. Old Man Khan speaks of his gardening as jihad. He tells Shehzad about his contribution to the perseveration of life through gardening as the highest form of jihad: “doing God’s work, making Heaven on earth” (p.54). Naqvi rebuts the post-9/11 obfuscation of jihad and terrorism.

Naqvi dismantles the nexus of Islam and terrorism and traces the roots of modern terrorism to Europe. Chuck dissociates Islam from terrorism through his narrative of Islamic history. Chuck tells Grizzly that Islam is historically associated with empire but not terrorism. He projects the Serbian guy who assassinated the Archduke of Austria leading to First World War as the first terrorist of the modern twentieth century. Jews were terrorists before 1948, replaced by Palestinians in the post war era. Naqvi dismantles the equation of Islam with suicide bombing propagated by the American cultural industry in the post-9/11 context. Chuck tells Grizzly that suicide bombing was started by the Japanese and then carried on by Hindus, the Tamil Tigers in the Eighties. Chuck tells Grizzly that “Muslims are Johnny-come-latelies” (p.116). Terry Eagleton (2005) also associates terrorism to Europe. Originating as a political idea from the French Revolution, the modern democratic state and terrorism are twins and grew together. Similarly Olivier Roy (2004) deconstructs the nexus of religion and suicide bombing. Roy gives the example of the “metaphysical terrorist” of nineteenth century Russia becoming a literary topic for Andre Malraux’s *La condition humaine* (p.43). AC, who has the pulse on European history, questions the whole rhetoric of the Homeland Security Act and projects post-9/11 American Islamophobia through a historical prism.

AC questions the whole idea of the American “national security” and the War on Terror narrative. AC notes that “in the name of national security, states commit crimes” (p.136). AC is the archetypal figure of Sahar Aziz’s (2022) “Secular Dissident Racial Muslim” who is critical of American foreign and domestic policies. AC compares the post-9/11 condition of American Muslims with the internment of Japanese “because they posed a security threat” (p.136). Beydoun writes that the idioms of “national security” and “enemy aliens” deployed by the United States in the post-9/11 context against Muslims are a replication of the American encounter with Japanese in the period from 1942-1946. The western myth of Human Rights is debunked through American blurring of combatants and non-combatants. Similar treatment is the lot of Muslims in the post-9/11 context, as “now it is us” (p.136). Civil and human rights were totally ignored in the name of Homeland Security to “secure our borders and our way of life” (p.136). Zizek (2002) writes that the language and idioms used by America in the post-9/11 context are hollow and mystify rather than clarify the situation. Similarly, Beydoun demystifies the myth of National Security and subsequent War on Terror on internal and

external fronts. He defines the War on Terror as an Imperial war based on false myths unleashed on Muslims through domestic and international fronts.

Naqvi projects America as responsible for the roots of modern terrorism. AC projects American foreign policy and its Cold War politics as the prime causes of the historical 9/11. Fighting the Cold War against the communist Soviet Union, the United States trained and turned “bands of Afghan” fighting the Red Army into “Mujahedeen – the Holy Warriors” (p. 10). AC echoes Eqbal Ahmad describing Afghan Mujahedeen as “good guys” and comparing them to the founding fathers by Reagan administration (p.10). Eqbal Ahmad (2001) writes that these turbaned men with their ferocious looks were hailed as “freedom fighters” that were fighting the “Evil Empire” by President Reagan (p.2). These Afghan Mujahedeen were described as “the moral equivalent of our Founding Fathers” (p.2). Eqbal Ahmad writes that Osama bin Laden was the “moral equivalent of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson” (p.2). After defeating the Red Army and diffusing the global threat of communism after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Naqvi writes, the Afghan Mujahedeen were left in the lurch by the US. Furthermore, these Muslim Cold warriors became simply Muslim Warriors in the post-Cold War era. Consequently, in the void of “the obscure Afghan civil war” the Taliban emerged as the progeny of the Mujahedeen. Ahmed Rashid (2000), borrowing from Karl Marx, terms the Taliban as “Afghanistan’s lumpen proletariat” (p.32). The Taliban are the last progeny of the Great Game of the Superpowers in Afghanistan. Eqbal Ahmad writes that the United States projected “militant Islam as a counterweight to Communist parties” during the Cold War in the Muslim world (p.17).

The Taliban were the choice of the American New Game in Central Asia. In the context of the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the emergence of Central Asian states, with their rich oil and gas resources, the United States and Pakistan picked the Taliban to ensure the safety of pipelines for tapping the oil and gas resources of the Central Asian States. This is why AC tells “they are not much different from their fathers” (p.11). These fundamentalists were Mamdani’s “Good Muslims” throughout the Cold War era. However, due to a shift in American foreign policy and American global geo-political and strategic interests, the Taliban were transformed into “the villains of modern civilization” and history as Naqvi writes in *Home Boy* (p.11). This is how Naqvi holds the United States culpable for the fundamentalism and terrorism of the twenty first century. Zizek considers the Taliban and “this apparent ‘regression’ into ultra-fundamentalism” as the outcome of the US-Pak-Saudi Cold War alliance.

Naqvi projects the United States of America as a terrorist state in the post-9/11 world through *Home Boy*. Eqbal Ahmad writes that “terrorism is “the use of terrorizing methods of governing or resisting a government” (p.5). Keeping this definition in mind, the United States of America used terrorizing methods to deal with Muslim immigrants after 9/11. Beydoun theorizes the treatment of American Muslims in the post-9/11 context in terms of America’s historical treatment of blacks and black identity. In the name of Homeland Security, civil rights of Muslim immigrants were violated. In the Metropolitan Detention Centre, the interrogation officer tells Chuck “you aren’t American” and “you got no fucking rights” (p. 107). The Metropolitan Detention Centre became the symbol of the American geography of terror for Muslims. This symbol of terror and dehumanization was associated with other American symbols of terror, Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo, as “MDC was ‘America’s Own Abu Ghraib” (p.105). Giroux writes that the domestic front of the War on Terror has turned every social

space into the panopticon. These transgressive behaviors of the United States of America are historically upheld by national security and interests. Justifying his argument from the American treatment of the Japanese, as “they posed a security threat”, AC relates, “and now it is us. It is me”. Beydoun writes that America adopted the “Good Muslim, Bad Muslim” policy towards American Muslims. “Good Muslims” were those who displayed American patriotism and served as “interlocutors and informants” for the FBI (p.121). Those refusing to serve the cause of American Empire were termed “Bad Muslims” and were targets of American structural Islamophobia.

Chuck and AC represent the image of Mamdani’s “Bad Muslims” as critics of American foreign policy and its treatment of Muslims. AC, pursuing an on and off doctorate in intellectual history is critical of Bush’s speech and American history. AC and Chuck are the “Secular Dissident Racial Muslims” who criticize the American War on Terror and American foreign policy. Speaking about Bush’s speech, AC eulogizes Chomsky, Zinna and Ema Goldman as heroes. These figures are critics of American foreign policy. The Aristotelian hamartia of these metrostanis, Chuck, AC and Jimbo, was that they didn’t play the role of interlocutors and informants for America and dreamed for American liberties in the post-9/11 world. Beydoun writes that in the post-9/11 context American Muslims forsaking their civil liberties are termed “good Muslims” (p.122). Projected as “bad Muslims”, AC, Chuck and Jimbo were arrested “on terrorism charges, or suspicion of terrorism or something” (p.167). Looked at from a psychoanalytical perspective, America projects its own terrorist image onto Muslims in the post- 9/11 world. Zizek argues that the “murderous fanaticism” attributed to others by America is present in the soul of America (p.43). He cites the example of “two million Rightist Populist ‘fundamentalists’ present on the American soil (p.43).

Chuck sees the post-9/11 American policy towards Muslim immigrants from the comparative lens of the treatment to Black people in America. Chuck lumps the Muslims, South Asian Muslims, under the racial category of brown. Brown is the new racial category associated with criminality and terrorism. Chuck highlights this replacement of black by brown in post- 9/11 American imagination as, “I was told, brown was the new black” (p.29). Black is a metaphor for oppression. Beydoun writes that blackness was officially constructed as the contrasting image of whiteness for enslaving black Africans and reducing them to the status of property and chattel. Reducing them to property, black people were kept away from the sphere of law. Just as the indigenous peoples of the Americas were a source of land for the whites, similarly, the black were the source of labor for them. Muslims like Blacks are outlaws and out of the sphere of law in the post-9/11 context in America. When Chuck tells the interrogation officer “I know my rights”, the interrogation officer retorts “you are not American” and “you got no fucking rights” (p.107). Chuck dreams of the pluralist vision of America while the interrogation officer speaks of the exclusionary and nativist image of America. In the context of American structural Islamophobia, the Muslim ‘Other’ is seen through the lens of criminality. Just as blacks were associated with criminality, Muslims were suspected of terrorism. Furthermore, there is historical convergence between Islamophobia and negrophobia in America. Among the enslaved Africans, there was a sizable population of the black Muslims in the US. During the era of Civil Rights Movement, the Nation of Islam is the living example of the historical convergence of Islamophobia and Black Nationalism. The key figures of the Nation of Islam were Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali. They were pursuing the

emancipation of Black Americans and were trying to blend Black Nationalism with Islamic principles of justice, equality and freedom.

H. M. Naqvi debunks the foundational Enlightenment vision of America propagated by the official American narrative. In the paranoid state of post-9/11, the United States has turned into the medieval stage where retributive justice is the law. The claims of Western enlightenment upheld by the Founding Fathers are not applicable to the medievalist condition of America. AC watching President Bush's speech on television criticizes American policy as an "eye for an eye" (p.98). Criticizing American claims of secularism, AC vents his feelings as "the heirs of the fucking Enlightenment, and our response, ah, biblical" (p.98). This process of 'Othering' Muslims on the basis of religious identity and projecting them as a threat to American values and civilization has diffused into the American psyche. Writing about President Trump's Executive Orders, Aroosa Kanwal highlights, that these Orders are the extension and replication of post-9/11 Islamophobia projecting Muslims as a threat to America's national security.

The American media and cultural industry played an obnoxious role in exacerbating America's war psychosis against Muslims. The American media presented 9/11 as a second Pearl Harbor and implicitly suggested the use of lethal technology against Muslim nations. *The Post* suggests that consequent upon "this unimaginable 21st century Pearl Harbor" the US should bomb the countries and cities of the Muslim world hosting the perpetrators of 9/11 (p.41). This war psychosis is inherited by the American collective unconscious from its myths, its colonial and imperial history. Inheriting this war psychosis from its European forefathers, exercised during Indian Wars against the Natives Americans and against the Japanese during World War II, America donned the imperial mantle as a super- power. The American war psychosis divided the world into two poles during the Cold War. Using states and countries as proxies, using Stalin against Fascism and the Afghan Mujahedeen against the Soviets, America has grown up on this war psychosis. Following its own tradition and history, America adopted a triumphalist siege mentality in its War on Terror. This War on Terror is an American war on Muslims who are projected in the post-Cold War era as a threat to America's global and hyper-imperialism. This war psychosis of America is visible from the US-Israeli War of Choice on Iran at the moment.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the American War on Terror and its associative narrative of 'Muslims as terrorists' is the outcome of the fundamentalist and triabalist thinking. In addition to the War on Terror considered by many Muslims as War on Muslims, the 'Clash of Civilizations' narrative strains the relationship between Muslim world and America. Furthermore, these narratives strengthen fundamenatlists on both sides of the divide and minimize the space for moderate forces in the world. This is why Tariq Ali' terms this so called clash of Islam and America as the clash of fundamenatlisms in the post-9/11 context. This study suggests going beyond the War on Terror and 'clash of civilizations' narratives by forging a common human destiny and humanity based on justice, equality and fraternity as foundation for world peace.

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