

Longing for Belonging: Home, Homemaking and Diasporas in the Selected Pakistani Fiction WritingKifayatullah^{*1}, Syed Hanif Rasool², Ahmed Jalal³**Original Article**

1*. Assistant Professor, Department of English Language & Literature, University of Chitral
Email: kiffayat@gmail.com

2. Assistant Professor, Department of English, Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Email: syedhanifrasool@kkkuk.edu.pk

3. Lecturer, Department of English, Edwardes College, Peshawar
Email: mir_ahmad_jalal@yahoo.com

Abstract

Pakistani fiction offers a rich tapestry of the diaspora's life. Living in a foreign land and culture miles away from their homeland, diaspora's life is marked by arduous journeys, perpetual struggle for settlement and career, legal restrictions, social exclusion, and racial discrimination. The increasing phenomenon of Islamophobia has put the diaspora in an even more precarious existential situation. As a consequence of social, political, and economic exclusion, the Pakistani diaspora faces a sense of homelessness in a foreign land and, hence, nostalgia for the homeland. This study delves into the intricate relationship between longing and belonging within the context of diaspora as depicted in the selected Pakistani fictional literature. It seeks to understand how concepts of Home and the practices of homemaking contribute to the complex experiences of individuals and communities displaced from their places of origin, as portrayed by Pakistani authors. By using textual analysis as a research method, the paper attempts to uncover the themes, motifs, and narratives related to Home, homemaking, longing, and belonging within the context of the Pakistani diaspora. In addition, this study explores how literary artists employ storytelling as a methodological intervention to comprehend the interplay of Home, longing, and belonging in diasporic narratives through a literary lens.

Keywords: Longing and Belonging, Home and Homemaking, Diaspora, Pakistani Fiction

Introduction

Roaming the planet looking for solace, they've settled in small towns that make them feel smaller still, and in cities that have small buildings and even taller loneliness.

(Aslam, 2004, p. 9)

The contemporary world marked by intense socio-political and religious-economic turmoil has given rise to frequent migration around the globe. Forced by poverty, insecurity, and substandard life, people from Africa, Asia, and Latin America have flocked to the West seeking a rosy life. In the late 1940s, a chain migration to Great Britain began when an increasing number of seamen started to join British industry. Soon afterward, they began to call their relatives over to join them (Anwar, 1979). In the beginning, these workers from Commonwealth states cherished unrestricted entry into Britain as it was in line with the increasing demand for skilled labor. However, the local community protested the flow of migrants, and the government, in response to widespread protest, introduced the 1962 Immigration Act. The act, however, did not curb the influx of migrants. The 'prospective migrants knew that once they had obtained their vouchers from kinsmen in England, they were guaranteed entry when they arrived at Heathrow' and so, 'in the early 1960s virtually every able-bodied man who was not otherwise engaged set off for Britain (Ballard, 2007, p. 30).

It was men alone who arrived in Britain in the first phase of migration, leaving wives and children at home. These workers paid periodic visits to their families. Getting permanent residency was an unimaginable thought at this stage. They, like their predecessors, looked forward to eventually returning home and living a comfortable retired life. Some, however, chose to stay with the newly arrived family members who were now working. When the voucher was lifted, the practice of bringing dependent children to Britain increased significantly to increase the earning capacity. These children were then put to work as soon as they entered the age sanctioned for labor. The authorities, however, soon realized that the migration of dependent children is happening exponentially. As a result, they changed the policy and 'began to insist that the whole family - wives and daughters as well as sons - should be reunited at the same time (Ballard, 2007, p. 31). The migrants started to bring their families, though for a few months initially. But the 'mold had been broken'. The settlers had by now become highly confident that they could bring and settle their families. Consequently, the number of families settled has increased significantly since 1970, and most of them have obtained citizenship as well.

As to kinship and marriage, an interesting phenomenon has marked the Pakistani diaspora. Unlike Sikh and Hindu communities, where almost all marriages happen outside the community, Pakistanis are believed to exhibit the opposite tendency. Rather than choosing prospects from within the community and reducing the ratio of marriages back home because of their social values and pressure, they prefer cousin marriages. Consequently, the ratio of overseas marriages in the Pakistani diaspora is significantly higher than Sikhs and Hindus. It is probably because 'Sikh and Hindu migrants have no prior obligations concerning their children's marriages and can place them where they choose, Muslim migrants are members of much more closely-knit kinship networks, within which they usually find themselves under intense pressure to accept offers of marriage on behalf of their siblings' children back in Pakistan' (Ballard, 2007, p. 33). Muslim communities, in doing otherwise, face intense social stigmatization of becoming 'anglicized' and forgetting their duties towards their social community. As a result, the frequency of marriage with prospects back in Pakistan increases as the migrant's children reach the right age. Moreover, the migrant community practices a continuous exchange of resources and people with its relatives in Pakistan. The driving force behind this frequent and continuous interaction, according to Ballard (2007), is 'first kinship'; second, 'the growing differential in material wealth between the two arenas'; third, 'the uneasiness of Pakistani settlers in Britain, especially in the face of recession and rapidly growing racism; and finally, 'Britain's immigration law, which, despite fundamental injustices in its content and applications, still offers at least a chance for those with kin in Britain to climb out of the Third World and into the First' (p. 35).

The Pakistani diaspora, according to the Office for National Statistics census (2011), is the largest in the UK, comprising 1,174,983 people of Pakistani descent. However, despite being the oldest and the largest diaspora, Pakistani immigrants have continuously found themselves in the unnegotiable conundrum of existential crises. The British-Pakistani community has yearned for integration, which has proved to be the "myth of return" and, hence, has ended up in "ghettoization" (PILDAT, 2008). One of the pressing issues is the issue of a fragmented sense of self. With each passing generation, the community's sense of self is becoming more and more fragmented and alienated. The earliest migrants may feel rooted in their origin, but in the veins of the new generation runs English blood, considering itself British rather than Pakistani (Ember and Skoggard, 2005). These generations, however, take pride in calling themselves British Muslims, showing strong affiliation with religion rather than culture. The problem of identity has become more crucial in the aftermath of 7/7 and 9/11, with an unprecedented surge in Islamophobia, generating great discontent among British Pakistanis.

As a consequence, migrants from South Asia have been subjected to racial hate and, in extreme cases, violence. For instance, the Honeyford Affair in Bradford Ethnic, where a teacher insulted Pakistani culture, substantiates the manifold increase in racial tendencies (Halstead 1994; Akhtar 2013). The discrimination also plagues other avenues, such as the labor market, where the chances of success for Asian labor are minimal (Carmichael and Woods, 2000), and education,

where the students find it hard to continue their education and are dropped at an early stage (Modood et al., 1997). There, however, has been more excellent resistance to racial discrimination shown by the Pakistani diaspora. British Pakistanis became more vocal against racial policies in the early 1980s. They rejected the term 'Black' to represent them (Modood, 1994), popularizing the term 'cultural racism' as opposed to color racism in connection to them (Hoffman, 1996).

The question of women has remained significant in the diasporic debate. Are women advantaged or disadvantaged? It should be noted that migration to Great Britain has chiefly been male-dominated. Women started to migrate to meet and finally settle with their families only after immigration laws were relaxed. Overwhelmed by the feeling of alienation, the job prospects of Pakistani women as compared to British women with the same level of education, were significantly low because of their origin (Evans, 2000). Later-generation women, however, show increasing participation in the public sphere (Brown, 2007). Some researchers believe that religious factors greatly influence the rights of women. For instance, (Hoodhboy, 2005) argues that discrimination against Muslims was fueled by global incidents such as the Rushdie affair, the Palestine-Israel issue, and America's war on Iraq. In the aftermath of these events, the Pakistani diaspora has been frequently associated with the notion of extremism. The extremist image of Muslims has primarily been portrayed through the media. For example, the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights found that blatant bias was carried out by the media against terror suspects, mostly Pakistanis, even when they were found guilty (IHF 2005, BBC 2015).

The present paper attempts to explain the existential dynamics of the Pakistani diaspora, a recurrent trope in British Pakistani diasporic fiction, by illustrating the pivotal point of home and belonging. Within the intricate tapestry of diaspora, individuals grapple with a profound sense of "unhomeliness" which can be defined as the obscure feelings that simultaneously draw and repel a person in her relation to a place' (Leon, 2009, p. 15). They, therefore, yearn for places of origin to find a sense of belonging in new and often unfamiliar lands. This complex interplay between longing and belonging has been a recurring theme in literary works where authors delve into the emotional and psychological depths of diaspora experiences. Pakistani diaspora literature, in particular, has emerged as a powerful medium for articulating the multifaceted emotions and identities of those who have left their homeland to settle in various parts of the world. These literary creations offer a unique lens through which to explore the evolving notion of Home, the practices of homemaking abroad, and the challenges and triumphs faced by members of the Pakistani diaspora.

Research Objectives

This research aims to delve into the nuanced relationship between longing and belonging within the context of diaspora, as depicted in selected Pakistani fictional literature. Specifically, it seeks to:

1. Examine how the selected Pakistani fictional works portray home concepts and homemaking practices.
2. Understand the complex experiences of longing for one's homeland and the quest for belonging in foreign lands as articulated by Pakistani authors.
3. Analyze the authors' literary techniques and storytelling methods to convey the diaspora experience.
4. Investigate how these fictional narratives contribute to a deeper understanding of the Pakistani diaspora and its cultural and emotional connections to its place of origin and adopted Home.

Methodology

The research is based on the critical analysis of the selected fictional writings. The selection of fictional works for this research is a crucial step in understanding the portrayal of longing, belonging, Home, and homemaking within the context of the Pakistani diaspora. A diverse range of fictional works authored by Pakistani writers have been carefully chosen to ensure a

comprehensive exploration of the subject matter. Moreover, the paper has used analytical close reading as a research method to accomplish the aforementioned research objectives. The analysis involves analysis of the selected fictional works to uncover the themes, motifs, and narratives related to Home, homemaking, longing, and belonging within the Pakistani diaspora context. The following analytical approaches have been applied:

- Close Reading
- Character Analysis
- Setting and Environment
- Comparative Analysis
- Thematic Exploration

Hence, this research methodology combines a careful selection of fictional works, rigorous literary analysis, thematic exploration, and ethical considerations to comprehensively understand how Pakistani authors portray the themes of Home, homemaking, longing, and belonging within the diaspora context. Through these methods, we aim to shed light on the literary contributions to the discourse on the Pakistani diaspora and its emotional and cultural dimensions.

Significance of the Study

This study holds significant academic relevance for several reasons. First, it contributes to the growing body of literature on diaspora studies by offering a unique literary perspective on the Pakistani diasporic experience. By analyzing the portrayal of Home and homemaking in selected Pakistani fictional works, the study sheds light on the diaspora's emotional and cultural aspects that may have been overlooked in the traditional academic discourse. Second, the paper provides an insight into the emotional resonance of diaspora experiences as depicted in literature. It explores how authors use storytelling to capture the complexities of longing and belonging, making the diaspora's experience more relatable and empathetic to readers. Through these narratives, readers gain a deeper appreciation of the challenges faced by diaspora communities and the enduring connections they maintain with their homelands. Third, the research underscores the role of literature as a means of cultural heritage preservation within diaspora communities. By analyzing how fictional narratives serve as vessels for cultural memory and identity, this study highlights the importance of literature in preserving and transmitting cultural heritage across generations. In conclusion, this research enriches our understanding of the Pakistani diaspora's experience by examining the portrayal of Home, homemaking, longing, and belonging in selected Pakistani fictional literature. Through this exploration, we aim to bridge the gap between literature and academia, offering fresh insights into the diaspora's emotional and cultural dimensions while celebrating Pakistani authors' literary contributions.

Concepts of Home

Home as a physical space is deeply ingrained in the human experience. It signifies a place of shelter, security, and comfort. Scholars have explored the significance of the physical Home as a source of stability and belonging. This perspective investigates how a dwelling's architectural design, geographical location, and material attributes contribute to one's sense of Home. The physical space is not merely a structure but a tangible embodiment of belonging, shaping individual identities and providing a sense of rootedness. In contrast to the physical aspect, the concept of Home as a symbolic space delves into the emotional and psychological dimensions of what Home represents. Home, in this context, transcends the confines of bricks and mortar. It embodies memories, emotions, and cultural identity. Researchers have emphasized how individuals and communities imbue their homes with symbolic meaning, utilizing them to express their cultural

heritage and personal narratives. As a symbolic space, Home serves as a repository of continuity, identity, and connection, bridging the gap between past and present.

Homemaking practices encompass various activities related to constructing, maintaining, and personalizing physical homes. Scholars have investigated how architectural styles, building materials, and interior design choices reflect cultural values and identities. This perspective delves into the tangible aspects of creating a home, examining how choices related to architecture, decoration, and spatial arrangement influence one's sense of belonging and attachment. Homemaking extends beyond the physical environment to encompass social and cultural practices within the Home. This dimension of the literature explores how daily routines, traditions, and family dynamics shape the experience of Home. Researchers have investigated the role of social interactions and shared cultural practices in reinforcing a sense of belonging within the family unit and the broader community. These practices are central to creating a nurturing and culturally rich home environment.

Diaspora and Belonging

Diaspora studies have evolved to incorporate various theories that seek to understand the experiences of dispersed communities. This literature review section explores prominent theories such as the homeland/hostland framework, transnationalism, and the concept of imagined communities. These theories provide frameworks for understanding how diaspora communities navigate their dual identities, negotiate their sense of belonging in their host land and homeland, and engage in transnational practices that connect them to their places of origin. The challenges of belonging in the diaspora are central themes in the literature. Scholars have examined the complex dynamics of identity negotiation, assimilation, and acculturation faced by diaspora communities. This includes tensions between maintaining cultural traditions and adapting to host land cultures and experiences of discrimination and marginalization. The literature highlights these challenges' emotional and psychological impact on individuals within diaspora communities and the strategies they employ to foster a sense of belonging in new environments.

Artistic and heritage practices within the context of diaspora studies are a burgeoning area of interest. Researchers have recognized the power of artistic expression, encompassing visual arts, literature, music, and performance, in capturing the experiences and emotions of diaspora communities. Additionally, cultural heritage preservation is crucial in maintaining a connection to one's homeland and passing on traditions to future generations. This literature review section explores how artistic and heritage practices serve as both a methodological tool for researchers and a means for diaspora communities to articulate their sense of longing and belonging in creative and culturally significant ways. In the subsequent sections of this research paper, we apply these theoretical foundations to exploring longing and belonging within the context of selected Pakistani fictional literature. Through this analysis, we aim to gain deeper insights into how Home, homemaking, and the diaspora experience are portrayed in these literary works.

Discussion and Analysis

Representation of Longing for Homeland

In the selected fictional narratives authored by Pakistanis, the theme of longing for the homeland emerges as a poignant and recurring motif. Authors vividly depict the emotional landscape of characters who grapple with a profound yearning for the place they once called Home. Through the lens of literature, we explore how Pakistani diaspora writers capture this deep longing, often characterized by nostalgia, reminiscence, and aching memories of their homeland. The narrative techniques employed to convey this theme have been closely examined, shedding

light on storytelling's artistic and dynamic power to articulate the complexities of longing for one's roots.

Depictions of Homemaking Abroad

The diaspora experience involves a transformative journey of homemaking abroad, where individuals and communities endeavor to establish a new sense of Home in foreign lands. In these fictional narratives, authors portray homemaking's challenges, triumphs, and nuances in unfamiliar environments. This aspect of the research delves into the physical and emotional aspects of creating a sense of Home in a foreign land, exploring how characters adapt to new surroundings, establish cultural connections, and navigate the intricacies of cultural hybridity. The role of architectural descriptions, social dynamics, and cultural practices within these narratives was examined to gain insights into the processes of homemaking abroad.

Navigating Dual Identities

The Pakistani diaspora experiences often entail the navigation of dual identities—the simultaneous belonging to both the homeland and the host land. Within the selected fictional narratives, authors depict characters who grapple with questions of identity, heritage, and belonging. The research explores how authors illuminate the complexities of dual identities, examining the emotional conflicts, identity negotiations, and cultural adaptations experienced by diaspora characters. The narratives provide a rich tapestry of characters who straddle multiple worlds, offering readers a glimpse into the intricate dynamics of belonging to two different cultures and the unique challenges and opportunities it presents.

Through these thematic explorations, this research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how Pakistani authors convey the diaspora experience in their fictional narratives. The insights gained from the analysis of longing, homemaking, and dual identities contribute to a deeper appreciation of the emotional and cultural dimensions of the Pakistani diaspora as depicted in literature.

Pakistani Diaspora in Bapsi Sidhwa Novels

Bapsi Sidhwa is a renowned Pakistani author whose novels have significantly contributed to the representation of the Pakistani diaspora. Her works delve into the lives, struggles, and aspirations of individuals and families who have left Pakistan and settled in various parts of the world. While the thematic exploration of the Pakistani diaspora in her novels is extensive, here are some key points highlighting the portrayal of the diaspora experience in her works:

Multigenerational Diaspora

Bapsi Sidhwa's novels often depict multigenerational diaspora experiences, where characters from different age groups have varying connections to Pakistan. This allows for a comprehensive examination of how diaspora identities evolve.

Sense of Belonging and Alienation

Sidhwa's characters grapple with complex emotions of belonging and alienation. They experience a longing for their homeland, even as they establish new lives in foreign lands. This duality of identity and the tension it creates are central themes in her novels.

Cultural Hybridity

The author explores the notion of cultural hybridity in her works. Characters in her novels adapt to new cultural contexts while striving to preserve their Pakistani heritage. Sidhwa examines how cultural hybridity influences their identities and relationships.

Community Dynamics

Sidhwa's novels shed light on the dynamics within diaspora communities. She explores the bonds and conflicts among community members, reflecting the diversity of experiences and perspectives within the Pakistani diaspora.

Narrative Perspective

Sidhwa employs various narrative perspectives, including first-person and third-person narration, to provide readers with a deep understanding of her character's inner thoughts and emotions. This allows for a more intimate exploration of the diaspora experience.

Political and Social Context

The author often places her characters within specific political and social contexts. Her novels touch upon historical events, political movements, and societal changes that impact the lives of diaspora individuals and families.

Cultural Traditions

Sidhwa's novels highlight the importance of cultural traditions and rituals in maintaining a connection to Pakistan. These traditions serve as a source of comfort and identity for her characters.

Identity Formation

The process of identity formation is a recurring theme in Sidhwa's works. Her characters grapple with questions of self-identity, ethnicity, and nationality as they navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by their diaspora experiences.

Notable novels by Bapsi Sidhwa that explore the Pakistani diaspora include *Ice-Candy Man* (1980), *The Crow Eaters* (1978), and *An American Brat* (1993). Through her rich storytelling and compelling characters, Sidhwa offers readers a window into the complex world of the Pakistani diaspora, illuminating the struggles, triumphs, and enduring connections that define their lives.

Bapsi Sidhwa is known for portraying strong and resilient female protagonists in her novels. These women typically possess many admirable qualities, including intelligence, determination, courage, and modesty. They are characters who grapple with various societal and cultural pressures, often from their families and the broader Pakistani society. However, they endure these challenges until they reach a breaking point, at which they assert themselves and fight for their own identity and agency.

Here are some examples of Sidhwa's characters who embody these traits:

Ayah in *The Ice Candy Man*: Ayah is a central character who experiences the trauma and upheaval of partition in India in 1947. Despite the horrors she witnesses and her challenges as a marginalized figure, she remains resilient and determined. Her story sheds light on the plight of women during a tumultuous period in history.

Zaitoon in *The Pakistani Bride*: Zaitoon is another character who navigates difficult circumstances. Her marriage to a stranger from a remote village starkly contrasts her urban upbringing. Despite the cultural clashes and hardships, Zaitoon displays courage and perseverance as she seeks to make her place in a new and unfamiliar environment.

Feroza in *An American Brat*: Feroza, as the title suggests, is a young Pakistani woman living in the United States. She faces the challenge of straddling two cultures and finding her identity amidst the cultural clash. Her journey reflects the experiences of many immigrants as they negotiate their heritage and the new world they inhabit.

Re-locating her homeland amidst the alien atmosphere was difficult for Feroza, but she never surrendered herself despite all the odds. Edward Said articulates:

It is the unhealable rift between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true Home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted. And while it is true that literature and

history contain heroic, romantic, glorious, and even triumphant episodes in an exile's life, these are no more than efforts meant to overcome the crippling sorrow of estrangement. The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever. (Said, 2001, p. 173)

Bapsi Sidhwa's work is significant for its portrayal of strong female characters and its focus on giving voice to marginalized women in Pakistani society. Through her novels, she explores their struggles, hopes, and aspirations, ultimately contributing to a broader understanding of women's history and sense of belonging in the context of Pakistan. Her characters serve as inspirational figures who confront adversity with resilience and determination, making them symbolic of the strength of women in the face of societal challenges.

Pakistani Diaspora in Hanif Kureishi Writings

Hanif Kureishi is a British-Pakistani author known for his insightful and thought-provoking writings that often explore themes related to identity, migration, and the Pakistani diaspora in the United Kingdom. His works provide a nuanced portrayal of the experiences and challenges individuals and families face within the Pakistani diaspora. Here are some key points highlighting the portrayal of the Pakistani diaspora in Hanif Kureishi's writings:

Identity and Cultural Conflicts

Kureishi's characters grapple with questions of identity, especially in the context of being part of both British and Pakistani cultures. They often experience conflicts related to their cultural heritage, religion, and familial expectations, highlighting the complexities of dual identities.

Generational Differences

Kureishi frequently explores the generation gap within Pakistani diaspora families. His works depict the contrasting perspectives and aspirations of first-generation immigrants and their second-generation British-born children. These differences in outlook often lead to tensions and misunderstandings.

Assimilation and Alienation

Kureishi delves into the themes of assimilation and alienation. His characters navigate the process of integrating into British society while simultaneously feeling disconnected from their Pakistani roots. The author portrays the challenges and consequences of this delicate balance.

Social Realism

Kureishi's writings are known for their social realism, providing a gritty and honest portrayal of life in multicultural urban environments. He addresses issues such as racism, social inequality, and the struggles of working-class immigrants.

Family Dynamics

Family is a central theme in Kureishi's works. He explores the dynamics of Pakistani diaspora families, including the influence of traditional values, arranged marriages, and the tension between individual desires and family expectations.

Narrative Style

Kureishi employs a variety of narrative styles, including first-person narration and multiple perspectives, to provide readers with intimate insights into his characters' thoughts and emotions. This allows for a more immersive exploration of the diaspora experience.

Notable works by Hanif Kureishi that delve into the Pakistani diaspora include *My Beautiful Laundrette*, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, and *The Black Album*. Through his literary lens, Kureishi offers readers a window into the lives of individuals navigating the complexities of identity, culture, and belonging within the context of the Pakistani diaspora in the UK.

Pakistani Diaspora in Sara Suleri's Writings

Sara Suleri is a Pakistani-American author and scholar known for her reflective and introspective writings that touch upon identity, diaspora, and cultural heritage themes. Her works provide a unique perspective on the experiences and challenges faced by individuals within the Pakistani diaspora, particularly those who have settled in the United States. Here are some key points highlighting the portrayal of the Pakistani diaspora in Sara Suleri's writings:

Memoir and Autobiography

Suleri's writings often take the form of memoirs and autobiography, offering a deeply personal exploration of her own experiences as a member of the Pakistani diaspora. Her works provide readers with an intimate understanding of her journey and reflections on identity.

Multicultural Identities

Suleri's narratives delve into the complexities of multicultural identities. She reflects on her upbringing in Pakistan, her experiences as a student in the United States, and how her identity evolves and adapts to different cultural contexts.

Family and Heritage

Family is a central theme in Suleri's writings. She explores the dynamics of her Pakistani family, including her relationships with her parents and siblings. Her works often delve into preserving cultural heritage and traditions within the diaspora.

Sense of Belonging and Alienation

Suleri's writings touch upon the themes of belonging and alienation. She reflects on the challenges of adapting to a new cultural environment and the sense of displacement that can accompany diaspora experiences.

Language and Communication

Language plays a significant role in Suleri's writings. She examines how language shapes identity and communication, particularly in navigating multiple languages and cultures.

Feminism and Gender Dynamics

Suleri's writings also address feminist themes and gender dynamics within the Pakistani diaspora. She reflects on her experiences as a woman and how gender roles and expectations intersect with cultural identity.

Postcolonial Perspectives

Suleri's works often adopt a postcolonial perspective, examining the legacy of colonialism and its impact on identity and culture. She reflects on the complexities of postcolonial identity and heritage.

Notable works by Sara Suleri that explore the Pakistani diaspora and related themes include "Meatless Days," which is a collection of autobiographical essays, and "Boys Will Be Boys: A Daughter's Elegy," which reflects on her relationship with her late father. Through her reflective and lyrical writing style, Suleri offers readers a profound and reflective exploration of the Pakistani diaspora experience and the interplay of identity, culture, and belonging.

Pakistani Diaspora in Nadeem Aslam Writings

Nadeem Aslam is a Pakistani-British author known for his eloquent and lyrical prose exploring themes related to the Pakistani diaspora, identity, displacement, and political and social upheaval in individuals and communities. His works provide a deep and nuanced portrayal of the

Pakistani diaspora, particularly in the United Kingdom. Here are some key points highlighting the portrayal of the Pakistani diaspora in Nadeem Aslam's writings:

Cultural Hybridity

Aslam's novels often delve into cultural hybridity, where characters grapple with the fusion of Pakistani and British cultures. This theme is reflected in their names, clothing, culinary preferences, and daily rituals. Aslam explores how cultural hybridity shapes their identities.

Religion and Spirituality

Religion and spirituality play significant roles in Aslam's works. Characters in his novels often grapple with questions of faith, spirituality, and the role of religion in their lives. This exploration extends to their experiences as part of the Pakistani diaspora.

Conflict and Displacement

Aslam's narratives frequently touch on the impact of conflict, violence, and displacement on individuals and families. His characters may be directly affected by political upheaval, war, or persecution, leading to their migration to the United Kingdom and subsequent experiences in the diaspora.

Longing for Homeland

The theme of longing for the homeland is a recurring motif in Aslam's writings. His characters often yearn for their places of origin in Pakistan, and their memories of the homeland are imbued with nostalgia, loss, and a deep emotional connection.

Interpersonal Relationships

Aslam's novels delve into the complexities of interpersonal relationships within diaspora communities. He explores the bonds, conflicts, and alliances that form among individuals and families navigating life's challenges in a foreign land.

Social Realism

Aslam's writings are characterized by social realism. He paints a vivid and often gritty picture of life in multicultural urban environments, addressing issues such as racism, discrimination, and social inequality faced by diaspora communities.

Narrative Style

Aslam employs a rich and evocative narrative style that immerses readers in his characters' inner thoughts and emotions. This style allows for a deeper exploration of the diaspora experience.

Transnational Connections

The author highlights the transnational connections that diaspora individuals maintain with their homeland. This includes remittances, communication with relatives in Pakistan, and ongoing engagement with Pakistani culture and politics.

Notable works by Nadeem Aslam that explore the Pakistani diaspora and related themes include "Maps for Lost Lovers," "The Wasted Vigil," and "The Golden Legend." Through his lyrical prose and deeply empathetic storytelling, Aslam offers readers a profound and contemplative exploration of the Pakistani diaspora experience and the intricate interplay of identity, culture, and displacement.

Findings and Discussion

Themes of Longing and Belonging

The analysis of the works by Bapsi Sidhwa, Hanif Kureishi, Sara Suleri, and Nadeem Aslam reveals profound insights into the themes of longing and belonging within the context of the Pakistani diaspora. Across these authors' narratives, longing for the homeland emerges as a universal and deeply human emotion. Characters' experiences of longing are marked by nostalgia, a yearning for the familiar, and the persistent pull of memories tied to Pakistan. This longing transcends borders and generations, connecting individuals in the diaspora with their cultural roots. Simultaneously, the theme of belonging is explored in multifaceted ways. Characters grapple with the challenges of establishing a sense of belonging in foreign lands while negotiating their dual identities. The narratives depict the barriers to belonging, such as discrimination and cultural alienation, and the moments of connection and integration within diaspora communities. The journey toward belonging is often marked by resilience and adaptability, demonstrating the capacity of individuals to navigate the complexities of diaspora life.

Implications for Understanding the Pakistani Diaspora

The findings from the analysis of these authors' works have significant implications for our understanding of the Pakistani diaspora. First, they underscore the universality of the diaspora experience, highlighting that themes of longing and belonging resonate across borders and cultures. The emotional landscape of the diaspora, as depicted in literature, serves as a bridge that connects individuals from diverse backgrounds who share similar feelings of displacement and yearning.

Furthermore, these literary portrayals shed light on the lived experiences of diaspora communities, enriching our comprehension of the complexities they face. They illuminate the tension between preserving cultural heritage and adapting to new environments and the role of family, tradition, and faith in shaping diaspora identities.

Literary Insights into Diaspora Studies

Exploring the Pakistani diaspora through literature offers valuable insights into diaspora studies. The literary lens provides a unique and intimate perspective on the diaspora experience that complements and enriches academic research. The use of narrative techniques, emotional resonance, and cultural depictions in these novels can inform and inspire scholarly investigations into diaspora communities worldwide.

Moreover, literature serves as a medium for cultural preservation and transmission within the diaspora. Through their storytelling, these authors actively contribute to preserving cultural heritage, traditions, and languages. Their works become repositories of collective memory and serve to pass on cultural knowledge to future generations.

In conclusion, exploring longing and belonging in the writings of Bapsi Sidhwa, Hanif Kureishi, Sara Suleri, and Nadeem Aslam illuminates the emotional and cultural dimensions of the Pakistani diaspora experience. Their literary contributions expand our understanding of diaspora communities, enrich diaspora studies, and underscore the enduring power of storytelling in fostering empathy and preserving cultural heritage. These authors invite readers to embark on a journey of discovery, traversing the landscapes of longing and belonging that define the diaspora experience.

Conclusion

In the writings of Bapsi Sidhwa, Hanif Kureishi, Sara Suleri, and Nadeem Aslam, the Pakistani diaspora is vividly portrayed, providing a multifaceted and deeply insightful exploration of

the complexities, challenges, and triumphs that define the lives of individuals and communities navigating the diaspora experience. Through their unique perspectives, these authors offer readers a tapestry of narratives that collectively contribute to a richer understanding of the Pakistani diaspora. As we conclude this examination of their writings, several key themes and observations emerge:

Identity in Flux

One of the central themes that resonates across the works of these authors is the fluid and evolving nature of identity within the Pakistani diaspora. Characters grapple with dual identities, cultural hybridity, and the tension between their Pakistani heritage and the cultures of their host countries. The process of identity formation is depicted as dynamic, with individuals adapting, negotiating, and sometimes struggling to reconcile their multiple cultural affiliations.

Longing and Belonging

Longing for the homeland and the quest for a sense of belonging in foreign lands are recurring motifs. The authors skillfully convey the depth of emotions associated with longing, often characterized by nostalgia, memories, and a profound connection to Pakistan. Simultaneously, they portray the challenges of establishing a sense of belonging in new and unfamiliar environments, where cultural, social, and political landscapes may differ significantly from the homeland.

Family Dynamics

Family is a central pillar in the characters' lives within these narratives. The authors delve into the intricacies of family relationships, exploring how traditions, expectations, and generational differences impact the diaspora experience. Family serves as both a source of support and, at times, a source of conflict as characters navigate their cultural journeys.

Cultural Preservation

The preservation of Pakistani culture and heritage is a prominent theme in these writings. Characters try to maintain their cultural traditions, including language, rituals, and cuisine, to preserve their connection to Pakistan and pass on their heritage to future generations.

Socio-Political Context

The socio-political context of the host country and Pakistan plays a significant role in these narratives. Characters are affected by political turmoil, conflict, and discrimination, impacting their decisions to migrate and their experiences within the diaspora.

Narrative Styles

Each author employs a distinctive narrative style, ranging from the introspective and autobiographical in Sara Suleri's works to the gritty social realism in Hanif Kureishi's writings and the lyrical prose of Nadeem Aslam. These narrative choices enrich the reader's engagement with the characters' inner worlds and the nuances of their diaspora experiences.

In conclusion, the writings of Bapsi Sidhwa, Hanif Kureishi, Sara Suleri, and Nadeem Aslam collectively illuminate the multifaceted nature of the Pakistani diaspora. Through their literary contributions, readers gain insight into diaspora life's emotional, cultural, and societal dimensions. These authors capture the struggles and triumphs of their characters and provide a bridge for readers to connect with and empathize with the diaspora experience. In doing so, they celebrate the diversity and resilience of Pakistani diaspora communities and contribute to a broader conversation about the universal themes of longing, belonging, and identity in an ever-globalizing

world.

References

- Aslam, N. (2004). *Maps for Lost Lovers*. Vintage.
- Akhtar, P. (2014, November). 'We were Muslims but we didn't know Islam': Migration, Pakistani Muslim women and changing religious practices in the UK. In *Women's Studies International Forum* (Vol. 47, pp. 232-238). Pergamon.
- Ballard, R. (2007). The Political Economy of Migration: Pakistan, Britain, and the Middle East. In Kalra, V. S. (Ed.). *Pakistani diasporas: Culture, conflict, and change* (21-50). Oxford University Press.
- Ember, M., Ember, C. R., & Skoggard, I. (Eds.). (2004). *Encyclopedia of diasporas: immigrant and refugee cultures around the world. Volume I: overviews and topics; Volume II: diaspora communities*. Springer Science & Business Media.
- Anwar, M. (1979) *The Myth of Return*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Cilano, C. (2009). "Writing from Extreme Edges": Pakistani English-Language Fiction. *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, 40(2-3).
- Cilano, C. (2013). *Contemporary Pakistani fiction in English: Idea, nation, state*. Routledge.
- Claire, C. (2011), "A Comparative Approach to Pakistani Fiction in English", *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 47:2, 122-134
- Gupta, S. (2005). "Beyond 'Asian Culture': Hybrid Identities and the British Asian Text." "Wasafiri," 20(1), 15-22.
- Ibrahim, H. (1998). Transnational Migrations and the Debate of English Writing in/of Pakistan. *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature*, 29(1).
- Jamal, A. (2007). "Diaspora and Hybridity in the Fiction of Hanif Kureishi." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 43(5), 501-513.
- Kumar, B. (2012). Longing and Alienation in Diasporas. *International Journal on Multicultural Literature (IJML)*, 69.
- Kureishi, H. (1985). "My Beautiful Laundrette: Screenplay." Faber & Faber.
- Rahman, Z. (2010). "Re-reading the British Pakistani: Identity and Belonging in the Fiction of Hanif Kureishi and Nadeem Aslam" (Doctoral dissertation, University of London).
- Said, E. W. (2013). *Reflections on Exile: and other literary and cultural essays*. Granta Books. p. 173.
- Salahuddin, A., Zakar, D. M. Z., & Usman, D. A. (2020). Threshold: A Spatial and Ideological Barrier in South Asian Fiction-A Case study of Pakistani Women Fiction Writers. *South Asian Studies*, 31(1).
- Sarwal, A. (2007). "Transcultural Identities: Narratives of South Asian Diaspora." "Interdisciplinary Literary Studies," 8(1), 48-66.
- Shamsie, M. (2017). Pakistani-English Writing. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature*.
- Sheffer, G. (2006). *Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Sidhwa, B. (2000). *The Crow Eaters*. Penguin UK.
- Sidhwa, B. (2008). *The Pakistani Bride*. Milkweed Editions.
- Sidhwa, B. (2012). *An American Brat: A Novel*. Milkweed Editions.
- Sidhwa, B. (2020). : *Ice Candy Man*. Penguin UK
- Silva, K. (2009). Oh, give me a home: Diasporic longings of Home and belonging. *Social Identities*, 15(5), 693-706.
- Suleri, S. (2018). *Meatless Days: Introduction by the Winner of the 2018 Women's Prize for Fiction Kamila Shamsie* (Vol. 3). Penguin UK.
- Toivanen, M. 2014. *Negotiating Home and Belonging: Young Kurds in Finland*. Turku: University of Turku. Available at: <https://www.doria.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/98544/Annales%20B%20389%20Toivanen%20DISS.pdf?sequence=2>