



THE DIASPORIC LIFE OF PAKISTANI-AMERICAN GIRL IN DUR E AZIZ AMNA'S *AMERICAN FEVER*

Diktha Aurilya Ghardini Novi Sugiarto*, Irana Astutiningsih, Sukarno
Jember University

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 30-10-2023

Accepted: 29-10-2023

Published: 21-12-2023

Keyword: American
Fever, diaspora, Bhabha,
postcolonial, hybridity

ABSTRACT

American Fever is a novel that tells the story of a high school girl from Pakistan named Hira who joins a student exchange program for 1 year in America. As a diaspora subject, Hira's arrival in America raises issues related to identity. Hira is seen as a stranger and she also has difficulty to adapt in a new environment with a different culture from Pakistan. Therefore, Bhabha's theory of postcolonialism is applied in this study. This thesis aims to reveal the cultural strategy undertaken by Hira to survive in America by connecting with contextual conditions and to find out the author's views on diaspora issues through the novels she wrote. This thesis is a critical-qualitative study. Primary data are from novels and secondary data are from the internet, books, and articles. The results of the analysis of this novel show that as a diaspora subject, Hira experiences a phase of 'unhomeliness' caused by her first arrival to America. Then, to overcome this condition, Hira applies a cultural adjustment known as mimicry. The result of mimicry is that Hira has a hybrid identity, as a Pakistani and an American. Amna, as the author of this novel conveyed her idea regarding the issue of diaspora that he experienced in 2008 that diaspora subjects will experience 3 phases namely 'unhomeliness', mimicry, and hybridity when they come to the host country. In conclusion, Bhabha's postcolonial theory is related to the events in American Fever which are the depiction of the author's personal experience as a diaspora subject in the past.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: dikthaurilya2000@gmail.com

ISSN : 2597-7385 (Online) - ISLLAC : Journal of Intensive Studies on Language, Literature, Art, and Culture is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

INTRODUCTION

American Fever (Amna, 2022) is the debut novel written by Dur E Aziz Amna in 2022 which talks about the cross-cultural experience of a Pakistani girl who lives in America. This novel has won the Hopwood and Busch Prizes when it was still a draft. Therefore, as the very-fresh published novel with a great award, before it was officially published, it is important to analyze this novel in order to know the recent perspectives of the cross-cultural author on the diasporic experience in America.

The interesting part of this novel comes when Hira moves to Oregon. A 16-years-old girl from Pakistan who only knows the life where she was born is forced to make herself accustomed and survive in the new place. Moving to the host country indicates that Hira is a diasporic subject. She faces the feeling of unhomeliness when some people in Oregon consider her a stranger. As a strategy to survive for a year in America, she makes adjustments so she can feel welcomed by the new society. Her mother's culture, Pakistan culture is still applied in her daily life, meanwhile, she has to adapt herself in the American culture. The result of applying an adjusted strategy is that Hira can be identified as having a hybrid identity.

Diaspora is the immigration of communities from one place to the other place, or more specifically from East to West. The migration of the nonwhite global periphery to the West challenges the notion of West identity and makes the multicultural question which can be identified as a post-Second World War or postcolonial phenomenon (Hall & Morley, 2019:105). By the year 2019, the population of Pakistanis in America reached the number of 554.000 people (Budiman, 2021). The greatest numbers of Pakistanis who live in America are Muslims and they always put their religious and traditional values first (Ghani, 2016:18). Therefore, analyzing how Pakistani-Americans survive as diasporic subjects when living in America where Muslims are not as majority is interesting. The title of this thesis is also chosen because the migration of Hira to America has caused the experience of unhomeliness, mimicry, and hybridity which are three aspects of postcolonial theory by Bhabha.

To analyze the diasporic life of Hira, the theory of Bhabha's postcolonial is applied. The cultures in a postcolonial disseminate the cultural hybridity of their borderline condition (Bhabha, 1994:6). It makes the cultural identity always an ongoing process (Wulandari, 2008:3). In *American Fever*, Hira is in between Pakistan and American identity. She has to maintain her mother's culture while she also has to accustom herself to the new culture, America. By using the theory of Bhabha's postcolonialism, the diasporic life of Hira

can be analyzed fully because it can explain the unhomeliness, mimicry strategy, and hybrid identity aspects that are experienced by Hira. Also, this research aims to study the contextual background and to find the ideological point of the author through the idea of diaspora.

METHOD

Researchers employing qualitative methods delve into the richness of narrative text, seeking a nuanced comprehension that goes beyond the confines of numeric data analysis. Qualitative research is used to find the depth of understanding of narrative text rather than a numeric analysis of data (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, and Razavieh, 2009). The data that are used in this analysis are in the form of written text. Also, the method to analyze the data is using critical thinking. Therefore, this analysis is conducted by using critical qualitative. The critical qualitative has three steps in analyzing the data, they are describing, interpreting, and explaining. There are 2 categories of data needed in this research, they are primary data and secondary data. The primary data of this research are the sentences and dialogues from *American Fever*. The secondary data are the collection of data that have existed before that are used to support the analysis of the primary data. These data are obtained from the internet sources, the books, and the articles. There are three steps to collect the data: reading the source of data comprehensively, reading line-by-line sentences that contain three aspects of Bhabha's postcolonialism, and highlighting the important data.

After collecting the data, the next step is processing the data. For the primary and secondary data, the data that have been highlighted from the novel and the internet, books, and articles are put together in a Word document. These data then are classified based on Bhabha's post-colonial theory which includes unhomeliness, mimicry, and hybridity. After that, the next step to do is selecting the data. In this part, the data are chosen by considering the importance of them. The important data are still included for the next step of analysis while the unimportant data are deleted.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

American Fever tells a story about a young immigrant girl from Pakistan who moves to America. There are many reasons for immigrants to leave home, for example; to escape war, poverty, and harsh governments. The immigrants move for better living conditions. Meanwhile, throughout its history, America has been popular as a country that gives many

opportunities, so there are many people in the world who decide to move there in order to get a better life (Taus-Bolstad, 2006:4). Hira, as the Pakistani and the main character of the novel moves to America for the academic purpose. She joins the student exchange program which enables her to study in America for 1 year.

Hira is very enthusiastic about moving to America. She feels that living in America is a big opportunity for herself in order to get the freedom she never gets in Pakistan. In Pakistan, Hira studies at a girls-only Islamic school which limits the freedom of the students. As a matter of fact, Pakistan is regarded as a nation with a moderate religion if compared with other Muslim countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Afghanistan (Rizvi, Jamil, and Shaikh, 2020: 75). Therefore, everything such as the way to dress, behave, and talk of the students is still strictly regulated in Islamic way.

Before Hira came to America, she considered her host mother Kelly, and her daughter Amy as people who were different from her. ... but I knew enough about them to know all the ways they were different from me. White. Christian. American (Amna, 2022: 25). Afterwards, the problem of Hira's movement to America starts when she arrives in America. In her hometown, she considers her host mother and the daughter as strangers, however, in the host country, people there also consider Hira as the stranger.

'Hello,' I said. 'How are you today?'

His beautiful eyes looked deep into mine as he opened his mouth and screamed, 'Don't touch me, stranger!' (Amna, 2022:61)

The newness of Hira in America gives her a bad experience when she tries to greet people in the host country. Hira dresses differently from them and other things such as her race, body posture, and accent must be different and that is why she is considered as the immigrated person or in other words, the stranger to the people in the host country. This issue is the usual condition for the diasporic subject as Hall and Morley (2019: 192-193) state that the condition of being outside and inside (familiar stranger) is called "alienation" or "deracination" and these terms have been the classic late-modern state. In addition, the alienation can be assumed based on the contradiction of psychic recognition (Bhabha, 1994: 60) which emerges in Hira's case as well.

After Hira arrives in Oregon, she starts missing her family. It is because she has never gone too far from her family since she was a child. On the first night when she is in Oregon, she cries realizing that she is far away from home. She remembers the last moment at the

airport when her family accompanied her. A few days later, Hira feels frustrated with her newness. She experiences some culture shocks. She encounters the gap between her homeland and the host country. Because of this, Hira always shadows the condition in her own home. At this phase, Hira feels nostalgia because she cannot escape from the memory of her homeland although she has been in America. According to Sadek in Purwati (2017: 19), nostalgia is the feeling of loss and displacement. It frequently evokes negative connotations and negative feelings like anxiety, sadness, and depression. One of the reasons why someone feels nostalgia is because she feels dissatisfied in the new country. Hira as the diasporic subject feels disappointed when she moves to Oregon because the condition is far from her expectations. Therefore, she tends to nostalgia the events in her mother country. The feeling of disappointment Hira causes her to compare the gap between the host country and the mother country. The result shows that she thinks that her mother country is better than the host country.

Hira always misses her mother country. She keeps nostalgic about everything that ever happened back home. She cannot replace her home above anything else. Home, for her, is irreplaceable. Home is the only place where everything is hers. That is why when Hira moves to America, she is considered a stranger, when the place, culture, friends, and habits are not like her home in Pakistan, she feels the homesickness.

I was at that stage of missing home, where I was wondering what I remembered and worrying that I had forgotten too much. Of course, what I didn't know then is that one forgets things only to remember them again (Amna, 2022: 124).

The feeling of nostalgia and culture shock is not only felt by Hira but by other immigrant students as well. At first, when they still do not have the circle, they hang out with the Americans at the cafeteria. The immigrant students tell the story about their first day in American school. However, the American students do not treat them well. Therefore, in the next few days, they finally decided to make a group of immigrant students in the school. The group finally consists of 3 students, Hira, Hamid (an Omani boy), and Nicole (a French girl). At break time, they always go to the canteen together and they lessen their interaction with other American students.

I've since learned to recognize the specific closeness that comes from being outsiders together (Amna, 2022:83).

This situation, when the immigrant students make their own group in the host country is

the common thing. According to Laguerre (2006: 135), social recognition is not really important for diasporic subjects, however, there are still deviations between the group and the rest of society. Therefore, the diasporic subjects tend to form their own group, communicate with foreign languages, stay in touch with others, preserve their mother country's manner, and occasionally engage in a multinational network of diasporic friends and family. In the case of Hira, she makes a group that consists only of immigrant students, they are not comfortable with the new culture, habits, and friends in America. Then, they always talk about the gap between their mother country and the host country.

The homesickness experienced by Hira gives her difficulty in adapting to the new society. The feeling of becoming a stranger also remains embedded in her mind. She is in the tedious stage where she cannot enjoy herself being in the new environment with the new habits, new culture, and new people. Also, Hira cannot replace her home country in the memory. For her, America is still a foreign country with strange people, cultures, and places. She admits that it is not easy to be a newcomer in America. This stage can be identified as the feeling of unhomeliness. Bhabha (1994: 13) explains that "...the unhomeliness – that is the condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations. To be unhomed is not to be homeless". Tyson (2006: 421) says that someone cannot feel comfortable in a new home because it is not like the home he used to live in. It relates to the diasporic subjects when they move to a new host country. The "new" home they live in presently cannot give the same atmosphere, comfort, and condition as the home in the mother country. This issue then can be linked with the crisis of cultural identity experienced by the immigrant psychologically.

The feeling of unhomeliness of Hira in America relates to some events where she suffers alienation, homesickness, and culture shock. These feelings are also challenges for her while she has to finish her 1-year student exchange program. In order to make her get accepted in the new society, she has to make a change in her way of thinking. She needs to apply the cultural strategy if she wants to survive in the new host society.

Hira's Survival Strategy: Mimicry

Living as an immigrant student is not easy for Hira. At the first of her coming, she finds it difficult to adapt to the new society when everything is different from her mother country. She has to learn the new culture, values, and habits. Moreover, she has to get used to the way of living in America in a very short time. The difficulties she faces in America force her to apply a cultural strategy. Specifically, for the diasporic subjects, the term used to

define this cultural strategy is called "mimicry".

Although Hira is not really interested in learning specifically about the culture in America, however, whatever she wants it or not, there is the compulsion to adapt to the new culture in order to survive and to be accepted in the new society. According to Purwati (2017: 24), for the diasporic community, learning the host language is the first crucial cultural strategy to survive because language is a tool for communication in every society. If the diasporic subjects maintain their own language without trying to learn the host's language, they cannot interact with other people in the host society which makes them unable to fulfill their needs.

Before she moved to Oregon, Hira learned how to speak and write in English. It is because of the influence of her parents. Her mother is an Anglophone Literature graduate and was the assistant of her professor in English. Also, her father has studied English from the age of 20 when he was at university. Hira's parents are fluent in English. Therefore, they want their children to be able to speak and write in English. Then, Hira and her younger brother Faisal have studied English since they were children when they went to English-medium schools. (Amna, 2022: 27). It shows that Hira has gotten the academic English before. It is influenced by her parents who have a high academic level as well. The indirect quotation shows that Hira is familiar with English. She learned it from a school in Pakistan.

The ability of Hira in English is good. For her, English is a formal academic learning. However, practicing English for communication in daily life feels like being forced when she is not ready yet. In other words, she is unfamiliar with the use of English in daily life, but she has to do it (Amna, 2022: 54). Therefore, in her first two weeks in Oregon, Hira finds it difficult to interact with people by speaking English.

During my first two weeks in Oregon, I struggled to express myself, telling Ammi over the phone that living in English felt like wearing shadi ke kapray to bed. Kelly, however, interrupted me often to marvel at my sentences, asking me what that word I had just used meant and how I had learned such good English. I detailed to her the length of British rule in the subcontinent but felt irritated at the lowliness of her expectations. I was used to my parents with their painfully high standards, who, when they called to tell me my O Level grades had come back all As, sounded happy but unsurprised (Amna, 2022: 78).

As a matter of fact, the constitution and the body of law in Pakistan are arranged in English. The aspects of law in sociological, economic, information-technological, and

statistical are mostly regulated in English. The industrial and business sectors are largely managed in English as well. Therefore, English in Pakistan is recognized as a pattern of life and it also affects culture gradually (Haque, 1993: 15). Moreover, the students in Pakistan have a high urge to learn English. Besides English as an international language, students also believe that mastering English can improve themselves (Rehman and Manssor in Zahid, Ghani, and Yasir (2018: 19). It shows that in Pakistan, there are many students who realize the importance of learning English. Although English is not the mother language, the young generation of Pakistanis feels the need to learn it. The English ability of students also relates to their socio-economic (Zahid, Ghani, and Yasir, 2018: 19). The higher the economic condition of students is, the higher their English proficiency is.

Hira, in this case, is the daughter of educated parents. Both parents also work which makes the economic condition of her family quite high. In addition, she was raised in a place where English is crucial. Therefore, her parents also have a high standard of English for her (Amna, 2022: 78). Indirectly, she has done mimicry since she was a child. Applying English in her daily academic life and learning it comprehensively is also one of the ways to adapt to the globalization era. The feeling of getting offended because Kelly has a low standard of English is reasonable due to her effort in studying English which is high. Yet, the low standard of English expected by Kelly is reasonable as well since Bhabha (1994: 86) states that in doing mimicry, the diasporic subjects produce the cultural product which is 'almost the same, but not quite'.

In the novel, Hira finds a different culture because of individualism. The first thing Hira notices from the practice of individualism is the house chores. Americans tend to prepare their own food while Hira is never taught to prepare the food herself. In her home, cooking is one of the least respected tasks which is usually done by the mother, the eldest daughter, or the servants (Amna, 2022: 71).

According to Morasso and Zittoun (2014: 29), for immigrants, food has the necessary role since it is the center of identities, meanings, and memories negotiation. Sutton and Laurens and Masson in Morasso and Zittoun (2014: 29), the new experience of cooking the new food will make Hira construct a new identity because of the effects of her resettlement and adaptation to the American lifestyle. After time passed, Hira finally could prepare food for herself although it was only fried bread or fried egg, however, she also learned how to prepare a simple breakfast and lunch like heating frozen food in the microwave and making instant ramen. Hira, however, in the mimicry of preparing her food

alone also shows disapproval. She is not fully comfortable with the fact that she has to prepare the food for herself. It causes Hira seldom to eat. The reason is that sometimes when she back home from school, she is too tired to cook. Hira's uncomfortable feeling of being independent gives the problem to her body. She does not get eating enough food and it makes her lose weight.

Undoubtedly, I was not getting fed. Looking back at photographs, I can see a waning of my body over those initial months – sunken cheeks, and thinning wrists. Some of it was Kelly's Americanness – the brash individualism of thinking you owed cooked food only to yourself would be horrifying to anyone back home (Amna, 2022:119).

The quotation above shows that Hira makes a 'mockery' of the culture of individualism. Mockery is the result of mimicry. The diasporic subjects try to adapt to the new culture while they still also believe and feel pride in their mother's culture. The gaps between the two different cultures then lead the diasporic subjects to do the 'mockery'. In this case, Hira who feels the difficulty in adapting to Americans' individualism in preparing food mocks the culture by saying "the brash individualism".

The cultural strategy also can be applied in the school. Hira, as the student, has to position herself in the new school environment. One of the cultural strategies that is applied by Hira is joining the sport. According to Bashir, Abro, Anwar, and Ali (2016: 109), physical education programs are seen as essential components of educational systems in developed nations, including Great Britain, the United States, and Australia. In comparison, however, physical education is one of the most neglected subjects in developing nations like Pakistan because there is such a big gap between sports and academics.

Hira is not used to doing physical activities at school in Pakistan. When she moves to America, she gets a culture shock because of the sports activity at school. There is a big connection between academics and sports in America. Hira wants to join volleyball as her way to make friends at school as well. Therefore, Hira decides to join the volleyball team along with Amy.

The cultural strategies applied by Hira in order to survive in America are in the scope of language, individualism culture, and the school system. Hira tries to imitate and appropriate the way of American living so she can be accepted by society, however, there are challenges along the way she does mimicry which leads to some problems of postcolonial to exist such as disavowal, mockery, rejection, and disagreement. They are the common thing because psychologically, there must be confusion for the diasporic subjects

when they move to the host country. These problems, nevertheless, will still lead Hira to have a hybrid identity. She will become part of Pakistan and America as well.

Hira's Hybrid Identity

The strategy of adapting and appropriating to the new culture leads Hira to have a hybrid identity. Hybrid identity means practicing the new culture in the diasporic daily life while still maintaining the mother culture. It makes Hira have two identities; as Pakistani and as American. The mother culture of Hira cannot be separated from her religion, Islam. Through the religion, the way of living and the culture of its community are shaped. Pakistan is dominated by Muslim and Hira the main character of the novel is also from the Muslim family. When Hira moves to America, she still maintains the mother culture which relates with Islamic values.

The practice of the religious values for diasporic subjects is not prohibited according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Article 27 which supports "the right of minorities, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language" (Bhabha, 1994). It means that keeping the mother culture which relates to the religious values in diasporic life is allowed since it is part of human rights. However, in the case of Hira, she still has to do an appropriation because of the different culture in the new host country. If she wants to survive, she must negotiate her religious values in America where Islam is not as majority. The result of her cultural adaptation is what is called a 'hybrid identity'.

Firstly, upon her coming to America, Hira keeps preserving 'halal food' (Amna, 2022: 62). In Islam, according to the Qur'anic verse (6:121) "Eat not of (meats) On which Allah's name Hath not been pronounced: That would be impiety", halal food refers to the halal animals such as chicken and cow which are slaughtered by Muslim with pronouncing of God's name 'Allah-u-akbar' (Dahlan, 2017: 234). In America, where the majority is Christian, it is quite difficult to find a butcher who sells 'halal meat'. Therefore, at first Hira usually only eats non-meat cuisine such as vegetables, eggs, fish, and breads. In addition, infrequently Hira goes to the halal butcher to buy chicken.

As time goes on, the mother culture that Hira applies in her diasporic life affects her body negatively. In Pakistan, she usually eats meats while in America she seldom eats meats. It makes her body thinner than before. Moreover, the individualism of making her own food and her volleyball practice make her seldom eat. These factors lead Hira to not eat enough food which causes her to be malnutrition. Furthermore, in the middle of her 1-year exchange

program, she suffered from TBC disease which is hypothesized as the cause of her weak immune system and malnutrition (Amna, 2022: 179). Because of this, in order to survive, Hira needs to negotiate between her mother culture and the new host culture.

Kelly, as the host mother, feels worried about Hira's physical condition. Therefore, she asks Hira to give up halal. When Hira still wants to question her parents about the decision to break halal, Kelly forces her to make her own decision. According to Dahlan (2017: 238), a Muslim's choice of how to negotiate the host culture may also be influenced by the presence of non-Muslim family members.

That night, she made a hearty beef stew; my cold had finally broken me and I had decided to give up halal. She offered the serving bowl to me again and again. When I told this to Ammi later, she said, 'Yeah, she's guilty because she's never around for you.'

'Well, the food was delicious.'

My body was satiated, my mouth remembering a taste it had forgotten: dark, fatty, salty meat (Amna, 2022: 138).

The quotation above shows that Hira finally decides to break halal. The factors that have been mentioned above are the reasons for her decision. Moreover, her host mother also plays an important role since her influence is because of Hira's physical condition. Hira realizes that culture is an ongoing process. She cannot survive if she keeps applying her mother's culture, it is halal food.

Hira also cooks the Pakistani food occasionally. She can survive by eating American food but still maintain Pakistani foods. American foods nowadays are a fusion of other countries as America is a country with many immigrants. According to Maria (2021: <https://www.superprof.com/blog/usa-food-roots/>), the present-day foods in America began influenced by other countries since 1920's, the end of World War I. It was named as the international cuisine with Italian and Mexican food. Then, with the occurrence of globalization, the foods in America started getting influenced by Chinese, Russian, Jewish, Greek, and African. According to Admin (2011), the characteristic of American cuisine is that the foods are mostly prepared in the simplest way and the spices are not as mild as Pakistani food. The foods that mostly can be found in America the processed flour like pasta, and bread with the simple cooking of meat which produces pizza, lasagna, and sandwiches. Americans also like to eat fast food and frozen food to efficiency their time. Because of the wild flavor of their foods, Americans also like to eat food from other countries such as Pakistan because

it is flavorful (<http://www.pakistaniinusa.com/different-between-pakistani-and-american-food/>). Pakistanis, however, based on Jin (2021), represent foods as their tradition and customs. Their cuisines are the fusion of Central Asia, the Mughal legacy, the Middle East, and the Indian subcontinent (South Asia) which are rich in spices and flavors (<https://researchpedia.info/difference-between-american-food-chinese-food-and-pakistani-food/>). Based on the explanation above, it is common thing when Americans to do fusion on their food.

On Thanksgiving, Hira is asked by Kelly to make the dish from Pakistan. When trying to cook the Pakistani dish, Hira asks her mother Ammi via Skype. She writes down everything she needs and the procedures of how to make an Indian-Pakistani cuisine named 'Bhindi'. Finally, she has to make the dish although she feels that it is not really the same as the 'Bhindi' she had back home, however, the Americans who eat with her feel satisfied with the food (Amna, 2022:142). Hybridity in the foods Hira causes her to break the halal way of slaughtering halal animals and still making Pakistani food.

In Islam, the term halal is not only regulated for cuisines; however, the beverages also have halal limitations. The popular prohibition for Muslims is that they are not allowed to drink alcohol (Dahlan, 2017: 232). Hira as a Muslim never drinks alcohol in Pakistan, yet, she starts drinking alcohol when she moves to America.

'Can I taste that?' I asked Amy, pointing to the cup. She raised her eyebrows, then wordlessly handed it to me. I took a small sip.

'It's not sweet!'

'Why would it be?' she said, laughing.

The Quran mentioned wine alongside milk and honey as delicacies the righteous would receive in Heaven. I had always imagined it would be a combination of the two – thick and sweet like the fortified Complian Ammi gave us when we were small.

'I can't believe people like that. It tastes horrible.'

I grimaced, more for effect than anything else, but from that day on, I drank alcohol whenever it was offered to me in Lakeview, joining the long line of Muslims who abstain from pork but capitulate to alcohol (Amna, 2022:74).

Back in Pakistan, Hira has never drunk alcohol because alcohol is one of the drinks that is included as the haram beverage. In Islamic values, Muslims are not allowed to eat or drink haram foods and beverages. While in America, the first time Hira drinks alcohol is because she is influenced by Amy. On the other hand, Hira also feels curious about the flavor of

alcohol. Amy tends to drink Kelly's alcohol when Kelly is not home. On that night, Hira is offered alcohol by Amy when they are watching a film together. Finally, Hira decides to try wine. She does not like the taste at first, however, she feels that her conversation with Amy can get along intimately. After that, every time she is offered alcohol by her friends, she always accepts it. Hira believes that alcohol can make her closer to her American friends.

The hybrid identity in Islam religion is also shown on Ramadan. Ramadan is the holy month for Muslims because, during the days of Ramadan, they will do fasting and celebrate Eid al-Fitr. In Islamic law which is also called the Islamic way of life, fasting means there is no food or drink from the start of fajr prayer until sunset. All adults in good health as well as postpubescent teenagers are obligated to fast throughout the holy month of Ramadan. They further strive to avoid activities like having sex, smoking, and other behaviors that distract people from thinking about God. Yet, there is a great deal of latitude and constant discussion regarding how the teachings of Islam ought to be put into action on a case-by-case basis; in other words, the law of fasting is conditional (Salem, 2017: 84).

Hira as a Muslim in the United States also tries to do fasting. She prepares her own *suhur* (the Muslim tradition of eating a meal before fajr) and when she breaks fasting, she eats dinner with her host family. When Hira does fasting, however, there are many people around her who disagree with her choice. Kelly, her host mother thinks that it is not proper for a young kid to do fast by herself. Hira's friends also consider fasting too hard to be done while she still practices volleyball. Her parents also insist she not fast because all the travelers are excused not to fast in Ramadan (Amna, 2022: 86). In contrast, Hira still decides to fast and finally her parents respect her choice.

I turned off the kitchen light and took my plate to the dining table. I set it down and took a photo of Ammi and Abbu. Then I ate, enjoying the taste of fried bread so much that I forgot I was alone, that no nearby mosque would announce the start of the fast, that there was no one else in the entire town up at this hour, readying themselves to fast for God.

The next day, Abbu responded to the picture.

'Mashallah. Happy to see my daughter appeasing both cultures. You're fasting, but that paratha looks like a map of the USA' (Amna, 2022: 88)

The quotation above shows that Hira still wants to maintain her culture which also relates to her religion. She tries to apply the Islamic way when she lives in America. According to Mohamed and Smith (2017: 105), about 8 out of 10 Muslims in the United States fast during

Ramadan. Therefore, it is something common for Muslims to fast in America. Hira, however, cannot fast until the end of Ramadan. The reason is that she cannot balance her school activities with fasting (Amna, 2022: 97). Her volleyball practice is one of the reasons she decided to break her fasting activities. When Hira chooses to not continue fasting, her parents show the agreement since it is actually hard to do fasting when Hira is far away from home.

After Ramadan ends, Muslims around the world usually celebrate what is called Eid al-Fitr. According to Salem (2017: 94), Eid al-Fitr means "the feast of the breaking of fast". In Pakistani culture, when Eid comes, the Muslims usually wear their new dress. Hira also keeps applying her mother's culture to wear the new dress on Eid al-Fitr. She wears the traditional clothes that her mother had bought her. She wears it when she goes to school. After arriving at school, she only accepts the Eid greeting from her diasporic friend Hamid. Her American friends do not greet her on the Eid al-Fitr. Eid al-Fitr is also an event where all of the families gather to eat together and have small talk. In this case, because Hira is far from her family, she greets her family via telephone. When she talks with her family, they also talk about the nostalgic events of Eid al-Fitr back home last year. Hira feels that the Eid al-Fitr this year makes her feel lonely because the conditions in the new host country are not like in the mother country. Then, she also makes 'pulao', a Pakistani dish. She cooks the traditional food from her mother country to give the same atmosphere on Eid al-Fitr in America. It shows that although Hira lives in America, she still maintains her mother's culture of Ramadan like fasting and celebrating Eid as the Pakistanis do in their hometown.

In America where Christians are the majority, Hira has to position herself in the different religious values. She needs to make a positive image of herself as a Muslim. Therefore, she also tries to be an open-minded person. It is shown when she starts joining the church with Kelly, her host mother. Kelly wants Hira to know about Christian. In order to respect Kelly's invitation Hira decides to go to church. Although at the beginning, Hira feels the domination idea of Christians who think that America is the safer place for Muslims, especially Hira as a girl. It is because, in 2011, there was a terrorist attack in Pakistan (however this research does not try to examine this problem in more detail). Generally, according to Mohamed and Smith (2017: 122), because the main problem of the Muslim country was the terrorist attack, Americans tended to view Islam negatively in the past. Recently, however, Americans have had more positive on viewing Islam, they treat Muslims "warmer". In the novel, people in the church sincerely welcome Hira as a Muslim in the

church (Amna, 2022: 85). The pastor even offers Hira acknowledgment of Islam in the church. At that moment, because it is Ramadan, Hira chooses to give the Eid presentation and the pastor agrees with her.

Hira's parents do not mind when they know that Hira goes to the church for the first time, yet, when Hira tells them about the Eid presentation she will do, her parents do not agree with her.

'Hira, I thought you were going to church once to make Kelly happy. Why are you doing this presentation?'

...

'It'll be a nice opportunity to represent Pakistan, Abbu,' I said instead, feebly.

...

I told the pastor I didn't want to do anything that might be considered inappropriate in a church,

...

'You can represent Pakistan at school and home,' Abbu said, in that strict voice of his that used to send shivers down my spine. ...

I said a non-committal 'Yes, Abbu,' knowing I would do it anyway, surprised and somehow sad that I didn't feel the old fear (Amna, 2022: 108).

The decision of Hira to give the Eid presentation at the church has been inviolable since she does not want to listen to her parents' opinion about it. She thinks by giving the Islamic presentation at church, people can be acknowledged about Islam. Moreover, she also can make a close relationship with the Americans. Before giving the presentation, there is a fashion show of Muslim figures exhibited by Hira and her 4 other American friends. After doing the fashion show, Hira then gives an explanation about Eid, the importance of fasting, and the lunar calendar (Amna, 2022: 111). The response of the Christians at the church is good on Hira's presentation. Even the pastor asks her the recipe of Pakistani traditional foods to Hira. After that, Hira regularly goes to church with Kelly and Amy. The decision of Hira to join the church can be seen as a strategy for surviving in the new culture. She tries to get into the society, yet, she is not fully involved in the substantial idea of the religious values in the host country. She still has the strict strain of her religion, which is Islam.

In Islam, there is also strict regulation of the relationship between women and men. According to Ba-Yunus (2002: 103), in Islam, men and women are prohibited from having "premarital courting, dating, intimacy or sexual intercourse". Moreover, based on *the sunnah*

of the Prophet Muhamad, men and women are unable to touch one another, they have to dissociate from each other. The relationship allowed between women and men in Islam is only a marriage. Therefore, every activity that leads to intimacy or sexual intercourse outside of a marriage is seen as a sin in the eyes of God (Nasr, 2002: 184). In Pakistan, this religious law mostly prevails in a strict way. Hira's family applies this belief as well. Since Hira was a child, Abbu has mentioned that "Boys are not friends, he had said. Classmates, yes. Husbands, yes. But not friends" (Amna, 2022: 28). This makes Hira not get used to having the relationship with boys before.

In America, however, where Hira meets with the students abroad, she starts making friends with boys. The first is with an Omani boy named Hamid. They become a best friend because of the same feelings as a Muslim diasporic student. Their relationship is only pure as a best friend. The second boy who has a relationship with Hira is Ali Zaidi. Ali is the son of Ammi's Pakistani friend who studies at New York University. They are from Pakistan and Ammi tells Hira about it in case Hira needs help when she studies abroad. At first, Hira tries to reach him via *Facebook*. After being friends on social media, Hira was also used to communicating via telephone. They tend to share their life stories and they seem comfortable with each other. Hira then has a romantic relationship with Ali. She always shares her experience with Ali and they have intense communication. After some months of intense communication via social media, Hira then decides to visit Ali in New York. When they meet, they share stories, have lunch together, and touch each other as the quotation below.

Our eyes met and held. A second? A minute? Then he leaned in and kissed me, and I, who had imagined this obsessively, wished for it devotedly, practiced diligently on the back of my hand, stood still, and let him, thankful that one of us had done this before (Amna, 2022: 169).

The quotation above shows that Hira who has a romantic relationship with Ali does an action she is not supposed to do if she is in Pakistan. When Ali kisses Hira, it means they touch each other. On the indirect quotation that has been mentioned above in Islamic values, women and men who are not in a marriage relationship are not allowed to be in a dating relationship and to touch each other. Hira has broken the Islamic rules her father told her that a boy only can be a husband. The influence of her movement to America where the students get used to making friends with the boy, having a boyfriend, and even having a sexual activity outside of marriage can be the factor why she starts to normalize the

relationship with the boy. On the scale of sexual intercourse, however, Hira still maintains not having sex before marriage. It also can be identified that Hira is influenced by the culture in the host country, however, she does not fully follow the habits in America. This shows the hybrid identity where Hira chooses to date a boy and do the physical touch, but she keeps her virginity by not having sex with her boyfriend.

I leaned back, offended at the distinction she was making. Sure, I had as little social status at Lakeview as Sam and Alicia did, probably less, but I certainly wasn't in the business of virginity valuations. I was a virgin because most unmarried people back home were. In American high schools, I was coming to find out, that being one was a personality trait (Amna, 2022: 99).

When Hira chooses not to have sexual intercourse, it means that she has done the mockery of American culture. In liberalism, when everyone has their own choice to make the decision of themselves, Hira still believes in the value of her mother's culture. In Pakistani cultures, which are mostly influenced by Islamic values, losing virginity outside marriage is considered a sin. Although Hira breaks some Islamic rules in America for example having a boyfriend and kissing her boyfriend, she does not fully break the rules because she still believes in her mother's culture that sexual intercourse outside marriage is prohibited. She keeps following her mother's culture. This condition can be defined as mockery since it is one of the acts that show the disavowal of the host country. Hira imitates the American culture without full imitations because she still keeps her mother's culture's belief.

Being trapped between two cultures leads Hira to have a hybrid identity. Her hybrid identities in America can be seen in some factors, they are; breaking halal food, cooking Pakistani dishes, drinking alcohol, fasting in Ramadan although not a full 1-month, celebrating Eid al-Fitr with Pakistani culture, joining church, dating a boy, and not having sex. Having two cultures applied in daily life as the diasporic subject who lives in the host country is the result of the mimicry that is done by Hira in order to survive in America. In conclusion, the unhomeliness feelings of Hira leads her to mimicry which makes her have a hybrid identity. Culturally, Hira is part of both countries; they are Pakistan is the mother country, and America is the host country. In other words, as the diasporic subject, Hira's identity is an ongoing process.

Ideological Point of the Author Concerning Pakistani Diaspora in America through the Novel

The last subchapter examines the ideological point of the author about Pakistani-Americans as diasporic subjects through *American Fever*. It tends to reveal the author's intention through her literary work. The criticism of literary work always relates to the background of the authors because the authors are usually influenced by the environment they live in producing their literary works.

Dur E Aziz Amna, the writer of *American Fever* was born in Rawalpindi, Pakistan in 1992. She has lived in Rawalpindi since she was a child. When she grew up, she moved to the United States to finish her study on English Literature degree at Yale University (graduated in 2015) and Helen Zell Writers' Program at the University of Michigan (graduated in 2021). She has worked for Bridgewater Associates, L2 Inc., and the University of Michigan. Mostly, her writings are influenced by her cross-cultural experiences. She is also the subject of diaspora because she spent her childhood in Pakistan and after graduating from high school, she moved to the United States. She is living in Newark, USA. Amna's literary works have been published in Al Jazeera, Financial Times, Longreads, Dawn, Himal Southasian, and the New York Times. In 2022, she was chosen as 30 Under 30 in Forbes. She also won the Bodley Head Essay Prize at the Financial Times in 2019. Her works are in the form of essays and tell the story of her cross-cultural experience, *American Fever* is her first novel.

The movement of Hira for 1 year in a student exchange program is the depiction of Amna's movement to the USA (Goyal, 2022). In 2008, Amna also did a student exchange program during high school. Her experiences then led her to write this cross-cultural novel. Hira in the novel is the representation of Amna in real life, however, Hira has been more dramatically formed in such a way. In this novel, Amna tries to share her ideology about being an immigrant. The experience of unhomeliness which is caused by migration and memory, the loss and language, the translation of culture and tradition, and the difference between Pakistan and America is tried to be conveyed in the story of a young girl named Hira.

The issue of the limit of being a girl in Pakistan is shown in the novel. As Hira cannot feel the freedom to express herself (Amna, 2022: 12). This is because of the patriarchal society she lives in. Amna expresses her idea through this traditional value which leads to an American dream for the main character. She considers America as the shining dream for the immigrant who needs a new destiny, especially women in Islamic society. In this novel, Amna gives criticism about how the immigrant thinks as well. She wants the reader to know

that being an immigrant is the forever condition where they are as the person who left and as a person who came. The immigrants cannot fully leave their mother culture while they need to learn how to be part of a new host society.

Amna shares her experience on the movement to America when Hira starts making a group that consists of diasporic students only. It is something common in America for diasporic subjects to form their own group. The reason is that they are sharing the same feeling of being outside together. They always talk about the gap between America and their mother country. It is the same with Hira who only wants to be friends with Hamid and Nicole. Amna, the college student finds that the diasporic subjects tend to form a diasporic group (Amna, 2022:83). This group cannot be formed without migration.

In the adaptation of language, when Hira gets mocked by her host mother because of her accent it also indicates how Amna feels as an immigrant (Amna, 2022: 78). Pakistan, the country she has known since she was born is the main language named Urdu. English in Pakistan is the second language and the international language. Amna grew up in an environment where there is a local dialect of Punjabi that her parents spoke and Urdu. Yet, the school is mostly regulated in English. It signifies that English is a language that she has learned in the academic sphere, while Punjabi and Urdu are the languages of her daily life. She wants to reveal her restlessness when she is expected to know and get used to English for her movement to America. She tells the reader about how the mother language is the main language that can be spoken even unconsciously. She also is a little bit angry when the American questions her English and some vocabulary that she does not get used to and as her accent. It is shown in the novel as what Hira feels about how she is 'straightjacketed' by English.

The feeling of unhomeliness depicted in the novel, especially for Hira at her young age is an interesting thing since when a young girl moves to a host country, she can experience the alienation feelings of being a stranger (Amna, 2022: 61). Amna wants to show that facing a newness is not always fun. Being a part of a new society is not always awful. It is more ironic because the movement of a new country is the most important phase of an immigrant life. When life in the host country does not go too well, Amna shows the big need for the diasporic subject to adapt to the new host society. She tells the reader that moving to a new country means that the immigrants have to adapt to the new culture, new values, new people, new language, and new habits which are usually different from their mother country. Learning the host culture is seen as an effort to fit into the new society although, in the end,

it is more like an obligation for the diasporic subjects. If the diasporic subjects want to be accepted by people in the new society, they have to apply cultural strategies.

The cultural strategies applied by Hira in the novel are in the scope of daily life and the academic sphere. For daily life, she applies English in her daily communication with her host family, friends, and teachers (Amna, 2022: 54). She finds it a little difficult since she gets used to using English only in school when she is in Pakistan. Then, she imitates the American way of living, which is individualism. The individualism is new for her since in Pakistan, the children usually still depend on their parents. Meanwhile, in America, children have been taught to be responsible for themselves (Amna, 2022: 120). Hira also started joining sports (volleyball) (Amna, 2022: 59) while in Pakistan, sport is unnecessary on the academic. The efforts of Hira to adapt to the new society show that Amna thinks that cultural appropriation is the strategy every diasporic subject must have.

Then, the cultural appropriation leads Hira to have a hybrid identity. The concept of postcolonialism by Bhabha is appropriate and is explained clearly through the act of the main character in the novel. Amna implies that the influence of being trapped between two cultures forces Hira to be part of both American and Pakistani. Also, Amna reveals that the parents of diasporic subjects have an important role since they are the reminder for the diasporic subjects of how crucial their mother culture is.

The explanation and the critical thinking above show how to relate the author's idea to the story of the novel she wrote. This is because every literary work is the product of the ideology of the author that has been internalized (Bertens, 2001: 185). The author is influenced by her experience, environment, culture, values, habits, and society where she lives. It also shows that there is a relationship between the novel and the background of the author.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

From the analysis, it can be concluded that Hira as the diasporic subject has made the cultural adjustment in order to survive in the midst of American society. The experiences of the culture shock, homesickness, and alienation caused by Hira's movement to America lead her to do a cultural appropriation named 'mimicry'. In the process of doing mimicry, however, she does not fully duplicate American culture which is called as mockery. The result of mimicry and mockery is that she has a hybrid identity. She follows the new culture in America while she does not leave her mother's culture completely. The

condition of in-betweenness leads Hira to have an ongoing cultural identity process. In addition, her parents who are in Pakistan still have a crucial influence on Hira when she decides to make a decision on cultural appropriation, her parents continue to emphasize the significance of the mother culture to her.

From the ideological point of view of the author, Amna, the author writes Hira's story in the novel as the experience of herself alone when she moves to America. She demonstrates how Pakistani cultures, which are mostly impacted by Islamic values, set boundaries, particularly for women. Amna depicts the American Dream for Pakistanis, especially in the academic sphere. It makes the student exchange program to America desirable to Pakistani students. When the Pakistanis move to America, however, they need to apply the cultural strategy in order to get accepted by American society. The cultural strategy can be a disavowal also because Pakistanis do not forget about the mother culture. It makes them have a hybrid identity because the diasporic subjects become parts of two identities, the American and Pakistan.

I realize that there are still many deficiencies in this research, but I hope this research can contribute to diaspora studies that relate to the theory of postcolonialism by Bhabha for future research.

REFERENCES

- Admin. (2011). Difference between Pakistani and American food? <http://www.pakistaniinusa.com/different-between-pakistani-and-american-food/>. [Accessed on 1st June 2023].
- Amna, D. E. A. (2022). *American Fever*. New York: Hachette UK.
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L.C., Sorensen, C. K., and Razavieh, A. (2009). *Introduction to Research in Education: 8th Eighth Edition*. Canada: Cengage Learning.
- Bashir, D. A., Abro, D. A. A., Anwar, D. S., and Ali, D. M. (2016). A State of Physical Education and Sports in Pakistan: A Critical Analysis on Lack of Infrastructure and Framework in Pakistani Institutions. *The Shield*. 11: 107-121. Sindh: University of Sindh.
- Ba-Yunus, I. (2002). Ideological Dimensions of Islam: A critical paradigm. In *Interpreting Islam*. Edited by H. Donnan. London: SAGE Publications
- Bertens, H. (2001). *Literary Theory: The Basics*. London: Routledge
- Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Budiman, A. (2021). *Pakistanis in the U.S. Fact Sheet*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/fact-sheet/asian-americans-pakistanis-in-the-u-s/#panel-01e57a4a-ee65-4950-a3b2-f85d72fdf368>. [Accessed on November, 23th 2022].

- Dahlan, M. (2017). Food Practices: The Ethics of Eating. In *The Practice of Islam in America*. Editor E. E. Curtis IV. New York: New York University Press.
- Forbes. (2022). *PROFILE: Dur e Aziz Amna*. <https://www.forbes.com/profile/dur-e-aziz-amna/?sh=684cf144251e>. [Accessed on October, 13th 2022].
- Ghani, N. (2016). Pakistani Migrants in the United States: The Interplay of Ethnic Identity and Ethnic Retention. *American International Journal of Social Science*. 5(4): 17-26.
- Goyal, S. (2022). "Telling Stories That Feel True": A Conversation with Dur e Aziz Amna. <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/telling-stories-that-feel-true-a-conversation-with-dur-e-aziz-amna/>. [Accessed on 21st June 2023].
- Hall, S. and Morley, D. (2019). *Essential Essays, Volume 2: Identity and Diaspora*. Durham: Duke University Press Books.
- Haque, A. R. (1993). The Position and Status of English in Pakistan. In *The English Language in Pakistan*. Editor R. J. Baumgardner. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Jin. (2021). *Difference between American Food, Chinese Food and Pakistani Food*. <https://researchpedia.info/difference-between-american-food-chinese-food-and-pakistani-food/>. [Accessed on 1st June 2023]
- Laguerre, M.S. (2006). *Diaspora, Politics, and Globalization*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Maria. (2021). *USA Food Roots*. <https://www.superprof.com/blog/usa-food-roots/>. [Accessed on 1st June 2023].
- Mohamed, B. and Smith, G. A. (2017). *U.S. Muslims Concerned About Their Place in Society, but Continue to Believe in the American Dream: Findings from Pew Research Center's 2017 survey of U.S. Muslims*. Pew Research Center
- Morasso, S. G. and Zittoun, T. (2014). The trajectory of food as a symbolic resource for international migrants. *Outlines - Critical Practice Studies*. Denmark: The Outlines Association. 15(1): 28-34
- Nasr, S. H. (2002). *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity*. New York: HarperCollins Publisher
- Pew Research Center. (2011). *American Muslim Perspective: Annual Report*. Washington D.C.
- Purwati, L. (2017). *The Hybrid Identity Experienced by the Main Character in Esmeralda Santiago's Almost A Woman*. [Unpublished Thesis]. Jember: English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Jember University.
- Rizvi S. Z. A., Jamil S., and Shaikh A. I. (2020). Diaspora, Remittances and Dependence on Arab Countries: A Case of Pakistan. *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal (LASSIJ)*. 3(2): 74-84.
- Salem, J. (2017). Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, and Eid al-Adha: Fasting and Feasting. In *The Practice of Islam in America*. Editor E. E. Curtis IV. New York: New York University Press.

- Taus-Bolstad, S. (2006). *Pakistanis in America*. Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Company.
- Tyson, L. (2006). *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide 2nd edition*. New York: Routledge
- Wulandari, F. T. (2008). *Searching Cultural Identity in Yann Martel's Life Of Pi*. [Unpublished Thesis]. Jember: English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Jember University.
- Zahid, Z., Ghani, M., and Yasir, G. M. (2018). Low and high English Language proficiency of the learners in Pakistan: A comparative study of two different education systems. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Education Research*. 4(1): 18-23.