

**From Promise to Sorrow: The Post-9/11 America and the Ironical State of Social Freedoms
in Rana's *Hope Ablaze***

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ABSTRACT

*The research paper presents Sarah Mughal Rana's *Hope Ablaze* (2024) to understand the fabrication and limitation in the execution of standardized declarations of America on equal social rights to every American citizen. The catastrophe of 9/11 propelled the Pakistani Americans' lives to constant suspicion, torture, surveillance and incarceration. The claims of freedom of religion, expression, education, and above all, the acceptance into the nation, just became dreams in post-9/11 America. *Hope Ablaze* navigates multifaceted xenophobia including the detentions of Pakistani artists, exploitation of Muslim women's dignity, the hiring of state personnel to torture assumed terrorists under Muslim women gowns, use of power to zip the lips raising voices against marginalization, causing educational and financial breakups, and the efficiency of a leader to protect. Shaheen's (2020) exegesis of 'Pakistani Anglophone 9/11 Fiction' informed by diaspora theory serves as a theoretical framework to analyze Rana's novel also depicting the subtle challenges faced by Pakistani diaspora in post-9/11 America. By highlighting the instances of verbal and situational irony in the novel, this paper brings to center the xenophobic acts in the novel and persistent social and cultural exclusion of Muslims despite the American state's claims of individual freedom. Through this critical examination, the paper aims to remind the American State of its unflinching promise to uphold social freedoms and ensure the execution of chartered citizen rights in America to reduce the differences and to shape a more inclusive and just society.*

Keywords: Citizenship rights, irony, marginalization, Pakistani Americans, social freedom, xenophobia

INTRODUCTION

Irony occurs when a statement or an event results in contrast to what is planned, spoken and expected, e.g., America claims the safety of every citizen but detentions and killing of Pakistani Americans through its own departments like DHS shows irony in reality. Verbal Irony in language is to give opposite deliverance, e.g., Pakistani Americans do not receive freedom rights despite standardized declarations. In situational irony an event conflicts the expectation, e.g., the harassment of a Muslim teenager for her Islamicate visibility contradicts the religious freedom that America affirms.

In 2001, nineteen Al-Qaeda commandeered four American civil aviation carriers and ambushed America's World Trade Center and Pentagon, in result, America ensued a War on Terror spearheaded by American Armed Forces. Though Pakistanis were not part of the terrorist attacks on America, the Pakistani-civilians and Pakistani Americans suffered American rage during the America led War on Terror. Pervez Musharraf decided to collaborate with the American forces to rout out terrorism from the region. Although the Pakistani government helped America, Pakistan was still blamed for harboring terrorists on its land. Since 9/11, America has been complicit in relentlessly subjugating Muslims in the United States by treating them as inherent threats. It has fostered an environment where an Armageddon always seemed impending, jutting out Muslims as evil and Americans as good. Muslims in their traditional attire are often misconstrued and targeted at public places.

The fictive narratives by Pakistani novelists like Mohsin Hamid and H. M. Naqvi present the plight of Pakistani Americans in Post-9/11 America. Hamid (2007) portrayed American racism and otherness in his novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. Changez' dream of American lifestyle disillusioned after the detentions, torture and killing: "Pakistani cabdrivers were being beaten [...] the FBI was raiding mosques, shops, and even people's houses" (Hamid, 2007, p. 107). Naqvi (2009) depicted post-9/11 fear and infliction of coercive punishment meted out to Pakistani expatriates in *Home Boy*. He showed the wrongful confinements of Muslim Americans for decades. Naqvi conveyed through Chuck's internal realization that "in a changed America, it seemed anything could happen" (Naqvi, 2009, p. 112).

In *Hope Ablaze*, Sarah Mughal Rana (2024) centers the story of her novel on the setbacks that Nida, a Pakistani American, has to go through. She is an eighteen years old girl with her ankle curved, pursuing education at an American High School. She examines her identity in a culture of Americans who often misunderstand hers. She is intrinsically motivated to follow her uncle who was once a renowned Pakistani American poet but was kept in America's federal detention center to suppress his increasingly popular identity. Despite Nida's legacy of poetry running through her ancestry, she is prohibited by her mother to write. Once on her way back to home, Nida stays at a public park to offer a prayer but is suspected as a terrorist by guards of an electoral candidate participating in upcoming elections. In their search for a terrorist, a Muslim girl's dignity was left in a head cap. After this incident, she suffers extreme trauma and portrays that scene in a letter written in poetical strain. She exposes the fabricated image of the promising candidate of the upcoming senate election from her Muslim community, who harassed her under the pretext of finding a terrorist beneath her abaya. To her surprise, the letter describing this incident goes viral. Although it was altered to suit American approval, her voice against the frisking turned her resilient family once again into victims of American rage. After the dissemination of the poetic letter, Nida's personal, social and academic life is threatened due to cursing the politician of the day. Even though going through critical scenarios, she casts vote to an American politician in hope for good in the end. The paper attempts to discern the identity crises of Pakistani Americans in the light of diaspora theory especially using Shaheen's theoretical prototype, as used in his book: *National Imagination and Diasporic Identities in 'Pakistani Anglophone 9/11 Fiction'* to highlight post-9/11 dramatic change and its severe consequences on Muslim minorities in America.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Carstenson (2024) praises Rana's debut *Hope Ablaze* for its strong encouragement to stand against violence and Islamophobia as in case of Nida who confronts in front of a political rally. The text is amalgamated with both prose and verse which makes it interesting to read. Rana explicates America's Islamophobic attitudes toward Pakistani Americans in *Hope Ablaze*. In addition, Carstenson says that the selection of dual style in text is made to show America's structural discrimination. She continues that despite marginalization based incidents, Nida's standing up and her voice against injustice at a political rally promote constant hope for an optimistic horizon. Carstenson's summary based analysis creates a

research gap for diaspora theory and contradictions of America's claims.

According to Islamic School Librarian (2024), *Hope Ablaze* merges poetry with traditional prose to show Nida's dual conflicts, e.g., societal discrimination and her identity at stake. Along with, the story covers strong and modern concepts like: competition, politics, media and their extending consequences. Furthermore, the story follows Nida who likes to be like her uncle: a poet who gets public frisking and navigates xenophobic reactions on appeal for justice. However, Librarian continues that while the book is admirable, it fails to meet its potential as it leaves the reader wishing for a consolidated tie with the characters and story; further it is devoid of emotional connection and depth. Librarian points out some errors in the novel like mention of sajoed in janazah to add that sajoed is not the segment of the janazah prayer.

Aubrey Unemori (2023) analyzes the plot of *Hope Ablaze* through its advance copy. She acknowledges Rana's courage to highlight America's unjust transgressions and Muslims' cry out against them. She utters reasons for survival and still hopes for a good future after submitting a vote to an American political figure. Unemori likes the support and sincerity of surrounding characters with Nida among the hardships. However, she calls Nida's being indecisive and the wrap up of the novel dissatisfactory. She manifests the importance of writing as a means of expression for Nida but claims that the American landscape offers diaspora communities the recognition, also brings controversy that leads to social, financial and educational challenges for Muslims. At last, Unemori accentuates the severe outcomes of voicing against institutionalized bigotry and forms of government that offer faint support for Muslims, notwithstanding false claims on freedom of expression.

Balraj Sohal (2024) highlights the theme of Muslim stereotyping in the novel. Being the niece of Abdul-Hafeez, a poet kept behind bars during the war on terror, Nida maintains the legacy of writing but struggles to express herself in a society that over-suspects her religion and identity. Through the incident of public frisking and its exposure, Sohal indicates liability for Pakistani Americans e.g., Nida's life after the incident of harassment was severely affected. Furthermore, he enjoys reading the assortment of magical realism and poetry which signifies the dual battle of Nida's essence with a unique South Asian perspective. Sohal elicits from *Hope Ablaze* the struggles of Pakistani Americans for existence in modern society. Nida opposes her mother's wish to slaughter a goat for expiation, while wrestling with self within in quest for resistance above cultural practices.

Lisa Doucet (2024) reviews through advance copy of the novel and describes the aftermath of Nida's frisking in the hands of a politician and his guards. She says that poetry is a world to Nida and she loves to remember the time she spent in Poets Block. After being illegally frisked by police and surprised by dispersion of her resistance letter, Nida inspected her relations weakening; her social and educational zones narrowing. Doucet continues that Nida's mother burnt down that notebook thereby she received threats of legal actions against her. The media misconstrued her words and she found herself unable to write. Doucet highlights various intertwined themes: Islamophobia, racism and injustice among immigrant Muslims; and also appreciates Rana on raising the question on the political system particularly in America and asks readers to navigate injustice in North of America and the manipulative role of the media. Furthermore, she finds the book stumbling in its attempt to balance the issues it discusses and the weak development of many characters. However, Doucet believes that by raising the issues of Pakistani Americans, Rana takes on the readers to speak against bigotry, hypocrisy and injustice in America.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Aamer Shaheen's (2020) exegesis of 'Pakistani Anglophone 9/11 Fiction' informed by diaspora theory serves as a theoretical framework to analyze Rana's novel also depicting the subtle challenges faced by Pakistani diaspora in post-9/11 America. Diaspora is about dispersion from one's own place to other places for financial stability, educational facilities and familial connections. Diaspora was added to give Greek sense of a deleterious process about relocating people forcefully to other places, e.g., Jews and Armenians. From the 1980s and onward, this term encompassed all kinds of migrations on which theorists and critics started writing chiefly on immigrants' life and issues. Stephane Dufoix (2008) defines diaspora as "any phenomenon of dispersion from a place; the organization of an ethnic, national, or religious community in one or more countries" (p. 2). However, Kevin Kenny (2013) reveals that unwilling dispersal of people has intentionally broadened its meaning to willed dispersal. Yet, the concept of diaspora is discussed as "a category of analysis" and "a category of practice" (p. 14). Nayar (2008) describes that globalization and multicultural cities have smoothed out transnationalism, bridging various cultures and nurturing shared ethics through worldly telecommunications that have been strengthening diverse identities. It has been developing dual transformative experiences for both natives and immigrants. Postcolonial writers of diasporic identities work by considering two dimensions: one is temporal and other is spatial. For first perspective, the postcolonial writers endeavor to provoke dominant ideas of nostalgia, memory, and retrieval. The later perspective addresses a term 'Prolepsis' to uphold workplace ethics, shared esteem for hostland and serene continuity of immigrants. It is another major characteristic of postcolonial writings that causes 'de-territorialization' and 're-territorialisation' (pp. 188-190). Junaid Rana (2009) identifies the Green Revolution in Pakistan during the mid-1960s and the crumbling of domestic labor in the 1970s as the chief contributors in intra-national migration of Pakistanis towards the Persian Gulf, European countries, and the USA. He mentions the two shifts in Pakistanis' migration to the USA very significant: "Brain Drain" and "Brawn Drain" where former refers to the voluntary migration of skilled Pakistanis, while the latter involves laborers who seek U.S. visas to come together again with their families "through family preferences" (p. 56). Nevertheless, Rana brings out the policies made to monitor the roots of terrorism, for instance America's introduction of the US Patriot Act after 9/11 to expose the initiatives significantly disrupting the Pakistani diaspora in America, undermining both Muslim Americans and Muslim immigrants. This time marked pervasive criminalization, detentions, and repatriations of Pakistani migrants, assessing that over 100,000 Pakistanis were forced to return after 9/11 (pp. 49-59).

The third and fourth chapters of *National Imagination and Diasporic Identities in 'Pakistani Anglophone 9/11 Fiction'* are used as a theoretical framework, where Shaheen (2020) provides an exhaustive understanding of structural Islamophobia, racism and deep irony of the American dream. He analyzes works of various scholars and thinkers to reinforce the advocacy for Pakistanis' better condition in America. Like Nayar's (2008) claim that the event of 9/11 reduced hybridity potentials of the Muslim diaspora, he says that American media has been giving consistent misrepresentation of Muslims through critiques and literary analyses. Furthermore, the US Patriot Act has been promulgating legality on discrimination, watching out, surveillance and deportation of these diaspora. Shaheen points this marginalization out; he then considers Rana's (2009) perception of this period as time-oriented that is constantly destroying Pakistani-American identity, transforming a diverse cultural community into the delusion of suspicion and fear (p. 113). Aminah Mohammad Arif's (2009) research sympathizes with their lives swaying between the two poles, yet not fully reached (p. 114). Furthermore, Shaheen details Hamid's (2007) *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Naqvi's (2009) *Home Boy* to articulate the practical view of diaspora theory's coverage on troubles of Pakistani diaspora and expatriates in America. Changez, the protagonist of Hamid's novel, transforms from a young man eager to succeed in America or attain the

American dream to a totally dissatisfied citizen of Pakistan due to racial aggression and systemic marginalization that Changez was to contend with in the US after 9/11.

The moment of Changez' smile, while watching the attacks on the "World Trade Center," reflects his internal conflict and the growing distance with the America of his dreams (p. 116). Shaheen strengthens his view all the more by taking Naqvi's fictive character of Chuck, who aligns with Changez in the process of acculturation, isolation and reconversion, back to Pakistani roots. Shaheen adds Birte Heidemann's (2012) contribution that "Post-Orientalist practices" were adopted by immigrants so as to be saved from prejudice and terrorist tags ultimately converting into "Counter-Orientalist approach" (p.130). Its significant evidence includes Chuck's not waiting for the opportunities in the US and his return to Pakistan (pp. 129-130). Geoffrey Nash's (2012) analysis on Hamid's writing acknowledges the novel above the board due to its quality of incorporating all America's paradoxes and its capitalist drive to perpetuate disparities around the world. He expresses Americans' restricted looks on Muslims as "[d]eranged fanatics" and born to grow "violence" and "incivility" (p. 118). Anna Hartnell (2012) discusses the change in Changez' characterization as a commentary on America's multiculturalist contact zone and erasure of otherness. From these interpretations, Shaheen proceeds to point out that Changez's final rejection of American values and orientation stands as an explicit rejection of systemic racism. Shaheen connects Catherine Morley (2009) who states that the DHS is the result of prominence of an ambiance of fear. This institutional response succeeded in raising surveillance and scrutiny to harass Muslim immigrants by creating a paranoid society.

Shaheen (2020) adds Bruce King's (2007) concept on the importance of the capitalist exploitation of American society and how this feeds into the so-called identity nervousness of the diaspora (p. 116). Moreover, Shaheen analyzes Abdullah's *Saffron Dreams* (2009) to enclose the devastation of a Pakistani-American woman, Arissa Illahi who survives personal tragedy as well as social discrimination. Through this narrative, he highlights the adjustments of Muslim diaspora for their off springs in the prejudiced, hatred and violence based American society. Arissa struggles with these adversities for her son Raian, who endures "CHARGE Syndrome" and growth diseases following "fetal growth retardation" (p. 144). In addition, Shaheen analyzes Nafisa Haji's *The Sweetness of Tears* (2011) to explore the issues of interfaith and intercultural tensions in the context of a transnational family. The syntheses of sectarian differences, American militarism, and multicultural coexistence performed by Haji make a realistic representation of diasporic selves (p. 157). In line with the post-9/11 traumatic scenarios truly documented in the fictive narratives that Shaheen takes for his study, this paper illustrates Rana's *Hope Ablaze* displaying the irony in execution of American values and laws, showing how they fail to apply equally to all the citizens.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In *Hope Ablaze*, Rana (2024) effectively writes about the contrast of America's spoken and written claims on freedom rights bragged to be granted to each and every citizen residing in its national boundary. This paper draws upon verbal and situational irony in order to talk about the hypocrisies of the American Dream with regards to the Pakistani American communities. Through the integration of individual and political messages, the novel explores how liberties associated with the American constitution such as freedom of speech, equality before the law, and multiculturalism mask discriminatory behavior based on religion. Through words and actions, Rana is challenging the hypocrisy of those principles declaring that, in reality, they aim to perpetuate injustice rather than fight for it.

Irony in Justice and Law Enforcement

Rana brings forth the injustice of the American State against its proclamation. Rana calls it verbal irony to challenge the concept of justice for all. The law enforcement that was made to resolve the issues of 9/11 announced Muslims as inherent threats and terrorists. Since then, it has never needed investigation but a Muslim to blame. Each shared incident has been investigated biasedly. Thus above the law, they have been getting suspected and scrutinized for different reasons. Rana depicts Nida's mother's paranoia that she is often stalked by FBI spies. She tells that before the arrest of Al-Rasheed Five, the families were threatened, their "electricity was shut, Amma's tires were slashed, her accounts doxed and our Toyota van tailed by unidentifiable cars" (p. 48). These situations happen with each manipulated and generated event to bring unease and depression. Here, verbal irony is to critique the contradiction between the stated mission of law enforcement and the distrust it generates among minority communities. Rather than promoting safety, these practices reinforce fear and exclusion. Shaheen (2020) indicates America's sole declarations on freedom rights, like the launching of surveillance related policies is ironical to what is claimed and "language of protection is often weaponized" to suppress (p. 14).

Irony in the Concept of "Equal Protection under the Law"

In *Hope Ablaze*, Rana writes about Muslims' unfair arrest even after a minor altercation and sudden hovering over and interrogating them to show a contradiction with the country's legal promises and the reality for marginalized communities. The law, while designed to be impartial, often fails to protect those from the marginalized groups, leading to discriminatory treatment. The protagonist Nida's stay at park for prayer instigates the guards of a politician, Wilson, to suspect and bring the hidden terrorist out of the abaya. On the politician's insistence too to forcibly take off her abaya, Nida feels as if she is about to be undressed. Through the incidents of Nida's Mamou's imprisonment due to his being a poet and harassment of Nida for offering the prayer in her Muslim attire, Rana shows the mistrust and irony in America's loud declarations of social freedom rights claimed to have been granted to all her citizens equally. Shaheen (2020) exposes the structural Islamophobia that America's governmental system lets loose to humiliate and degrade American Muslims in every place despite their statements affirming a just and free society for everyone.

Religious Freedom in Question

Rana raises the question on chartered rights after observing their adverse execution. This paper presents situational irony from *Hope Ablaze*, as contrasting events are depicted to show America's religiously unjust treatment. There, Muslims face discrimination for being visibly religious. Rana depicts an incident of an officer ditching Nida on her offering the worship; she says that her dignity unraveled when left in just the head cap and "it was equivalent to the corps forcing me to undress" (p. 18). Rana critiques America's statements on giving freedom and choice in religion promoting multiculturalism. She reveals American State personnel's unjustified coercion under the pretext of legally searching a terrorist albeit inside an innocent Muslim teenager's abaya as Nida's kneeling on just a prayer mat made her a criminal. Shaheen (2020) adds that freedom of religion is often misinterpreted as an act of defiance to highlight the fake concerns that turn public spaces into sites of isolation rather than inclusion for Muslim diaspora.

The Contradiction in Celebrating Diversity

Rana effectively conveys the un-fulfilled promises America makes. She portrays that Pakistani Americans are fearful of being visible and believe that the celebration of their culture will be a threat on their doorstep. While exploring the various dimensions of xenophobia, she points out its approach in

educational settings. She says that although educational places teach equality, the American educational system has been nationalizing the minds more to spread difference. Rana portrays the conflict between Nida and her high class gym instructor. Nida got banned from basketball competition due to a headscarf which was deemed to be instigating fear in the teacher. Nida “refusing to strip to shorts and an immodest T-shirt, [is] humiliated by a teacher for barbaric modest motifs” (Rana, 2024, p. 46). Shaheen (2020) relates that diversity remains undermined by xenophobic attitudes and prevents the genuine realization of diaspora. Rana uses this irony to explore how fear and prejudice force communities to navigate the line between visibility and survival. In addition, Rana depicts the approach of the American system into the educational settings for students' emotional breakdown. She expresses it in *Hope Ablaze* when Nida's sister Zayanab finds herself deceived on recognizing a police spy in the guise of her school friend. Rana says that here in America even the “Friendships are scary” (p. 49). Shaheen also critiques how educational environments often mirror societal biases, limiting the ability of diasporic students to fully participate: “Institutions meant to foster inclusion often reflect the broader prejudices of society” (Shaheen, 2020, p. 13).

Freedom with Conditions: The American Reality

Rana depicts social freedom in the American society as delusional. In the beginning of the novel, Nida encounters a goat that her mother brings to slaughter to avert the evil eye. Muslims believe that Sadqa ends hardships; similarly, Nida's mother wishes to slaughter a goat to fend off the evil eye. However, Nida resists this act out of fear that Americans will label Muslims as superstitious. Through this scene, Rana highlights the conditional nature of acceptance whether in matters of expression or human practice so long as it does not offend Americans. Shaheen has also highlighted the conditional nature of American freedom where adoption of American culture is surely a way to live freely. Rana uses this recurring theme to challenge the universality of America's proclaimed values, revealing their selective application. Changing identity is taken as an opportunity to enjoy freedom in America. Thus, Rana criticizes the optional nature of liberty which makes Muslim diaspora adjust their identity for basic freedom.

Contradictions in Freedom of Expression

Rana highlights the public prejudice brought after wrongful representation of Muslims. She affirms that Americans seem more nationalists in the matters of Muslims. Public perceptions are undoubtedly shaped by the media of time. But it has been projecting Muslim diaspora as dangerous and violent. Every mutual conflict has been spontaneously making them culprits. Nida examines the role of the media in declaring her maternal uncle terrorist for exposing US wars and drones strikes. Rana criticizes the media for twisting the truth instead of informing the audience and reporting the humiliation of rights. Shaheen (2020) says that American media has reduced Muslims' “entire communities to caricatures of suspicion” (p. 15). Rana's characterization informs the limitations of freedom of speech and its confined space for minority communities. Nida's familial, financial, religious and social life deteriorated after the leakage of the politician's misbehaving. She adds that we get freedom but only if our words don't make them uneasy. Shaheen (2020) also emphasizes that the right to speak freely is often unequally distributed. Voicing against injustice and undesired truths offends the American state for their registering of indifference. He adds that the freedom is for those “whose words align with dominant narratives” (p. 14). By portraying such scenes, Rana critiques the principle of free expression that is undermined by societal discomfort with dissenting voices.

Economic Disparities and Broken Promises

Rana presents financial problems and broken promises made to Pakistani Americans. Nida's father faces systemic biases on his progressive approaches despite his qualifications. He remains below the list of promotions due to his being Muslim in team dynamics. Here, verbal irony lifts to contradict ideals of merit, on Nida's sorrow America tells us hard work pays off, but for us, the finish line keeps moving further away. She depicts the systemic imbalances that prohibit marginalized individuals from accomplishing the success. Shaheen (2020) discusses disorders in economic systems that are strengthening marginalization and limiting the opportunities. Irony urges Rana to dislike these structures that carry exclusion and create a gap between ideals and reality.

Public Places as Sites of Marginalization

Systemic xenophobia has licensed marginalization of Muslims, shows Rana. Americans have always justified their treatment by narrating tragic stories of the 9/11 event. It has made Americans imagine Muslims as terrorists and dangerous. This incident of Nida's harassment showcases that public spaces become battlegrounds where cultural identity is contested. Nida recounts how the officers snatched her hijab so forcefully that all sense of dignity was stripped away. This happens just on seeing an act signifying Muslim worshipping. Shaheen (2020) observes that 9/11 has institutionalized xenophobia in Americans against Muslims which has been converting daily worshipping acts into suspicion. America through DHS and media narratives has engraved in its public's minds that Muslims clad in their particular dressing code are to be identified as terrorists. Since 2001, Muslims have been receiving attacks, injuries and hatred from Americans. Therefore, Americans in order to be saved, attack on Muslims on their being visible. No guilt is ever chased out for destroying the Muslims by American State personnels' law filtered actions. Through Rana's depiction of Pakistani Americans in post-9/11 America, the paper illustrates the American State's concocted stories of justification for their prejudiced acts.

The Criminalization of Intellectual and Cultural Expression

Rana grieves over the false charges of terrorism leaving the Pakistani artists behind the bars. This shows the named-achievements the American police have regarding investigation and capturing. Nida shares that Mamou's wrongful incarceration broke Mamou and his life's pleasures. Being a poet of great popularity whose work is to express his thoughts, people and culture he begets only hatred from the authorities. Nida shows the public emotions on Mamou's arrest that Mamou's artful pieces were taken in respect as sacred things and reputed all around Muslim communities. Instead of enjoying life in America, Mamou is living life behind bars. This arrest has not only disrupted his life's joys but badly affected his family. Shaheen (2020) has critiqued the un-vague lines between artist's expression and political surveillance, noting that post-9/11 policies disproportionately targeted intellectuals within the diaspora. Thus, Rana calls for a new imagination, setting aside the 9/11 tragedy perpetrated by a few individuals now gone away, that allows lives of intellectuals like Mamou to be acknowledged.

The Irony of Political Promises

This paper through Rana's novel *Hope Ablaze* indicates the un-achieved promises of politicians they claim. This brings verbal irony in politicians' out-loud future plans developing distrust in minorities. Nida recounts the visit of a local politician in the neighborhood where he delivers a speech on unity and inclusion. However, his words subtly imply that Pakistani Americans must prove their loyalty so they can be fully accepted. The loyalty of cultural assimilation would only assure that the violent and killers are changed. Shaheen (2020) discusses that these political rhetorics often strengthen xenophobia under the

pretense of promoting patriotism. He adds that claims on unity and cohesion are to motivate for decision but they demand adherence and conformity from the marginalized groups. This way, Rana criticizes such divisive rhetorics to expose the inherent biases in calls for national solidarity.

Disillusionment with the American Dream

The paper highlights Rana's attempt to depict disillusionment of diasporics with dreams and expectations attached to the adopted places. Through this, Rana reveals the real face of America to those still dreaming of the American land, a place of all dimensional freedom. Since the 9/11 event happened, Muslims living in America have been enduring surveillance, suspicion, detention and societal discrimination for having Muslim legacy. Rana records the struggles of Nida's family in America chasing a just, free and stable life. She continues that Nida, a Pakistani American teenager, was frisked in a public park by a politician and his two guards to highlight state marginalization. Rana exposes that America's violence and prejudice have made the struggle to achieve dreams in vain. Meanwhile, America still proclaims the freedom of speech, religion and culture to give the world a multicultural America but its selective application is making Pakistani Americans' lives marginalized. The policies and prejudicial approach of Americans have made the American ideals fabricated in its running. Shaheen (2020) critiques the narrative of the American Dream as a myth for diaspora communities, arguing that structural inequalities prevent its full application. He says that this myth has often excluded people who dream of broad opportunities in America. These diaspora often get disillusioned from their wish to acquire freedom in America. Thus, Rana marks the inclusivity of America's foundational ideals, exposing the systemic xenophobia endured by Pakistani Americans.

This paper examines verbal and situational irony from *Hope Ablaze* to critique the contradictions between America's proclaimed freedom and institutionalized marginalization. Rana weaves the story of *Hope Ablaze* through various discrimination based incidents to explicate the difference between national ideals and their implementation, signifying the exclusion of Muslim minorities in America. It brings the fact that new forms of pain are being inflicted in public spaces which have been transformed into exclusion zones, while cultural expression is increasingly criminalized through actions such as Mamou's imprisonment. Likewise, the depiction of relatively constrained rights to religion and self-expression shows how these rights are, in reality, restricted when proved inconvenient for the regime or the people. Rana demonstrates this subjugation by showing how Nida's religious and artistic expressions become political statements because of the hostile environment. The paper uses Rana's novel and Shaheen's work of literary criticism to demonstrate how xenophobia penetrates public areas, workplace environments and cultural events to challenge the values of inclusivity and fairness.

CONCLUSION

The paper analyzes the fabrication in equal execution of America's announcements, legalities, attitudes and approaches for all the Americans. Verbal and situational ironies are the two types this research studies to strengthen the analysis on inequality, injustice and marginalization serving *Hope Ablaze* as ground to explore numerous scenes highlighting multifaceted xenophobia endured by Pakistani Americans. Being the citizens of America, Muslim diaspora remains unnoticed in rights of existence unlike the rest of Americans. Shaheen's work on 'Pakistani Anglophone 9/11 Fiction' is used as a supportive framework to explicate Rana's observations. Furthermore, this paper shows the increasing approaches of American prejudice in educational, public, work sites and on media platforms with each passing day. Muslim teenagers becoming the victim of harassment, questions on attire and no hopes of justice but a legal justification to suspect and search terrorists are analyzed through the paper. Moreover, the paper discusses why every Muslim is fated to be perceived as an inherent danger and how these

prejudices increasingly restrict the comfort and security of Muslim life? The paper attempts to revise the affirmations America confidently pronounces regarding her egalitarianism and at the same time discriminates her Muslim citizens reminding them of their making the 9/11 strikes perpetrated against her in the first place. Thus lacerating their consciousness with a collective guilt for which only some individuals were responsible in fact. Rana successfully informs on America's nationalist side of sticking to the memories of one-sided loss that allows justification for torturing Muslims in general and Pakistani American Muslims in particular after being blinded with the nationalist anger resulting after 9/11. By means of verbal and situational irony she offers a harsh, yet witty commentary on the perceived paradox between the American constitutional ideals as envisioned by her founding fathers and practical reality of post-9/11 statesmanship. Thus, Rana advocates for the possibility of change and the true reality of the American dream to prevent physical and emotional damage.

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