

# Acculturation of an Immigrant Family with Pakistani Heritage in The Post 9/11 United States

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**Abstract** This paper aims to provide a critical analysis of an American miniseries named *The Night Of*. The show narrates the story of Nasir/Naz Khan, a second-generation Pakistani immigrant and the problems he and his family encounter in the United States in the context of post 9/11. Movie critics and reviewers have pointed out briefly the racial discriminations against Naz by the society as a Muslim and the possible terrorist following the 9/11 events regardless of analyzing the psychological changes happening to him as an immigrant with Pakistani heritage. Acculturation strategies as a branch of cross-cultural psychology provided by Berry and his colleagues, considering the values of society of origin and the host country, offers a framework for analyzing the psychological and cultural aspects of immigrants' lives. This study endeavors to investigate the Khans' process of acculturation and cultural maintenance in encountering different societal institutions. Moreover, it is shown how they oscillate between acculturation strategies so as to fit in the mainstream. Consequently, it is concluded how certain strategies does not work and Naz resorts to the strategy of marginalization which is moving away from both American and Pakistani values and thus becomes a potential criminal.

**Key words** Cross-Cultural Psychology; Pakistani Immigrants; Post 9/11; Acculturation Strategies; *The Night Of*

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### **Introduction: The Night of an Accident Turning into a Tragedy**

Movies and TV series like a mirror hold up the issues of the society. *The Night Of*, a mini TV series, created in 2016, is a post 9/11 cultural product which revolves around immigration and its continuous cultural and psychological effects to the next generation of immigrants. It unfolds painful rupturing experiences of living in two cultures, Pakistani and American. Gaining opportunities by living in the USA, the Pakistani family tries to adapt and assimilate to the mainstream. However, being a Pakistani immigrant in the United States is considered a bad combination in the era when war on terror policies are regulated in different institutions of the host country.

*The Night Of*, an American mini TV series, offers a tale of survival. The story traces the life of Nasir/Naz Khan, an American-born college student who is living with his Pakistani immigrant parents in Queens struggling to meet both ends of fitting in the American mainstream while respecting Pakistani heritage. He goes to school outside his neighborhood for better education. He is a good student and tutors the schools' basketball team players. His brother also is a talented student. One night, Naz ignores his parents' cultural values and experiences a wild night of drugs, alcohol, and sex with the stranger. When he wakes up, he finds himself in a house where there is a girl murdered in blood. Although he tries to flee the crime scene, he is arrested in the vicinity of the house with a bloody weapon on his pocket. Furthermore, there are witnesses confirming his entrance to the house while accompanying her. Despite the allegations against Pakistani-American Naz, his lawyers find a way to refute them. The jury deadlocks six to six and the District Attorney withdraws the law suit for continuance since the police find another suspect. Naz is released from prison but he now realizes that he has failed in cherishing both Pakistani and American values and the show ends with a scene in which he is alone on the beach taking drugs.

Movie reviewers have criticized the miniseries from racial aspects. They have mentioned the stereotyping against Naz and his family as Muslims in different social settings of school, the court, the police station and media. Among them, the most in-depth analyses are the reviews by *Vox* and *AV/TV CLUB* which mentioned stereotypes against Naz as a Muslim immigrant in the Post 9/11 in the police and judicial system (WanDerWerff; Wilkins). Moreover, it is proposed that there is a lack of respect towards Naz and his immigrant family and they are deliberately manipulated by authorities such as detective Box and Alison Crowe, the lawyer who accepted Naz's case pro-bono (Wilkins). Additionally, the review in *New York*

*Times* mentioned how the dark and violent side of Naz is unveiled as the narration progresses (Tobias).

Although movie critics focus on the racial bias against Pakistani Muslim Naz in the TV series, they did not consider psychological effects of racism as a cultural conflict between American and Pakistani values and accordingly their adjustment strategies in the context of post 9/11 have been ignored. In order to fill this gap this study attempts to show how the Pakistani family, the Khans, acculturate in the United States. The characters' acculturation is analyzed by the help of cross-cultural studies. Berry and his colleagues in their theory on acculturation strategies focus on reactions of different individuals in an alien culture regarding the values of the society of origin and settlement. In this case of study two issues are addressed; one is the acculturation of an immigrant family and the other is their Pakistani Muslim background. This research benefiting from theories by Berry and his colleagues tries to highlight how the Khans reanalyze their acculturation strategies and oscillate among different strategies of assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization in order to survive the different crises they face; incidents such as 9/11, its consequences, and Naz's trial are among them. In doing so, their interactions with different institutions (education, media, police force, and judicial system) are investigated.

To discuss the context of Pakistani diaspora in the United States, this study utilizes Considine's doctoral dissertation, *Family, Religion, and Identity in the Pakistani Diaspora: A Case Study of Young Pakistani Men in Dublin and Boston*, which he later published as a book in 2018. Considine elaborated on the cultural conflicts of Pakistanis in the United States and Ireland. He has interviewed several first and second-generation Pakistanis in America and shed light on their dual identities due to the Pakistani heritage that have to be embraced at home and American culture which is encountered at school and work. The book offers different cultural conflicts between American and Pakistani values on notions such as drugs and alcohol, premarital sex, and dependency of the Pakistani youth to their parents which help this study to investigate the Khans' behaviors from different perspectives.

### **Acculturation Strategies: Assimilation, Integration, Separation, and Marginalization**

Acculturation is a process that happens in plural societies to those with different cultures experiencing first-hand contact with the new culture and this leads to the changes in behaviors of either or both groups (Berry et al., "Acculturation Attitudes")

186; Redfield et al. 149). In order to discuss acculturation, the two cultures of origin and settlement should be investigated (Berry and Sam 300). Mainly, place of settlement in which cultural changes occur is plural societies with different peoples from different ethnicities. Plural societies are defined as societies in which “more than one cultural or ethnic group is represented in the population, and for which there is some likelihood that such groups will be able to maintain themselves into the future” (Berry et al., “Acculturation Attitudes” 186). Hence, diverse cultural values as a result of individuals with two societies of origin and settlement in plural societies can create conflicts which can be settled by their adjustment strategies (Berry et al., “Comparative Studies” 494).

Another factor that should be analyzed in the process of acculturation is considering which type of acculturating group individuals are. “Many kinds of cultural groups may exist in plural societies and their variety is primarily due to three factors: voluntariness, mobility, and permanence” (Berry, “Immigration” 8). One of these groups are the immigrants who migrated to the new land to experience acculturation voluntarily and permanently (Berry, “Immigration” 8; Berry and Sam 295).

Although it seems that immigrants voluntarily choose to become part of a new culture and will acculturate easily, they undergo psychological problems resulted from encountering new socio-cultural values, language, food preferences and dress codes (Berry and Sam 301-302; Berry, “Acculturation” 699). Sometimes such changes can create cultural conflict and acculturative stress such as confusion, anxiety, and discrimination from the dominant culture during intercultural exchanges (Berry et al., “Comparative Studies” 492; Berry, “Acculturation” 700). Moreover, advanced acculturative stress can be shown in psychopathology or mental disease such as serious mental disturbances and severe depression and anxiety as a result of acculturation (Berry, “Immigration” 12; Berry and Sam 298). To manage such conflicts, they adapt and use acculturation strategies as a response to the stress entailed by the new cultural setting.

Berry and his colleagues presented a model of acculturating strategies from the view of the non-dominant groups which individuals use in plural societies. Two main factors are taken into notice in categorizing four modes of acculturation which are cultural maintenance and participating in the host country’s activities. While the former focuses on how preserving motherland’s culture impacts immigrants’ lives, the latter emphasizes the importance of being involved with the mainstream in the process of acculturation (Berry, “Immigration” 9). The influence of these two points (1 & 2) is shown in the following figure.

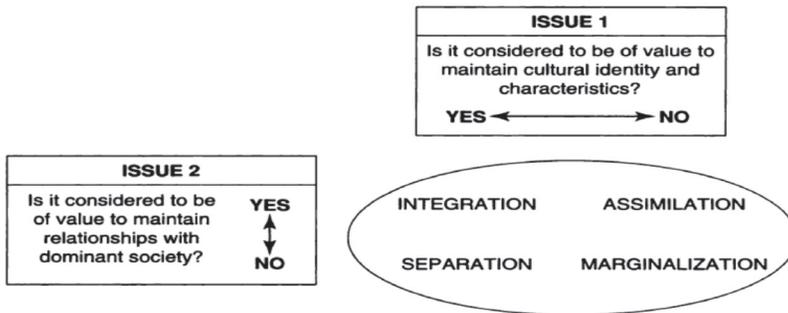


Fig.1. Acculturation Strategies (Berry and Sam 296)

Four modes of acculturation, assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization are introduced by Berry and his colleagues as a result of the two mentioned factors. Assimilation occurs when “individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures” (Berry, “Immigration” 9). By utilizing separation, individuals try to become closer to their heritage and distance themselves from the values of the host land (Berry, “Immigration” 9). When individuals show interest in both maintaining their original culture and simultaneously seek participation in the dominant culture of the larger society, they use integration as the strategy (Berry, “Immigration” 9). According to Berry, integration is the best strategy for reducing stress caused by immigration when neither the host land nor the homeland is superior to each other in promoting their cultural values (“Acculturation” 708). The final ultimatum happens when the individuals are under feelings of alienation, loss of identity, and what has been termed acculturative stress (Berry, “Cultural Relations” 13). Coping with such feelings, they resort to marginalization as acculturation in which they lose “interest in cultural maintenance (often for reasons of enforced cultural loss) and [also] in having relations with others (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination)” (Berry, “Immigration” 9).

### **Post 9/11 and South Asians’ Acculturation Strategies in the United States**

One of the most important factors in analyzing acculturation strategies of the immigrants is considering the nature of the host or the larger society (Berry et al., “Comparative Studies” 494). The society of settlement tries to protect its cultural maintenance from diasporic communities, their cultural varieties and their influence on the culture of the mainstream. Hence, “national majority [not only the host government and institutions, but also the people of the country] considers migrants to be the root of its difficulties, and draws on racial definitions that combine the idea of natural race and the idea of culture in order to make them scapegoats” (Wieviorka 71).

Although the United States has been described a country which welcomes immigrants regardless of ethnic, racial, or religious backgrounds, the 9/11 terrorist attacks have changed the American policies toward Muslim immigrants from several countries including Pakistan. Considine in his study on the Pakistani diaspora in the United States discussed the racism toward the Pakistanis by the mainstream and its linkage to the 9/11 events and the subsequent “War on Terror” policies (*Family, Religion, and Identity* 49-50). In 2009, in continuance of the post 9/11 laws against Muslims, Pakistan was announced the most dangerous place in the world by White House and a haven for fundamentalists and anti-western terrorist activities (Considine, *Islam, Race, and Pluralism* 1). Pakistanis in the United States, also, are targeted as threats to national security by different institutions because of their racial, ethnic, and religious similarities to the 9/11 hijackers (Considine, *Family, Religion, and Identity* 49-50). Such policies lead to the “confusion and anxiety amongst second generation Pakistani Americans, who started to see themselves as strangers in and potential enemies of the only country that they had ever considered home” (Considine, *Islam, Race, and Pluralism* 4). Considine outlined the racial discrimination towards Pakistanis in American context to show that Pakistanis are institutionally stereotyped and associated with terrorism because of their Muslim background (see table 1).

Common theme	Ireland	US
<b>Marker of racism</b>	Skin colour and ethnic background	‘Muslim features’ and religious background
<b>Racial slur</b>	‘Paki’	‘Terrorist’
<b>Type of crisis racism</b>	Mainly economic-based, linked to collapse of Celtic Tiger and the culture talk of migrants taking jobs from ‘natives’	Mainly national security-based, linked to the events of 9/11 and the culture talk of young Pakistani Muslim men being a threat to American security
<b>Forms of racism</b>	Racist violence	Racial profiling and institutional racism

Table 1: Markers of Racism, Racial Slurs, and Types and Forms of Racism against Pakistanis in the United States. Source: (Considine, *Family, Religion, and Identity* 168).

Pakistanis are stereotyped in the United States after the events of 9/11 and their acculturation accordingly should be distinguished from other immigrants. Bhatia and Ram challenged the universalist model presented by Berry and his colleagues which suggests that all immigrants undergo the same psychological process. In the modified model, historical and political events related to non-western and non-

European immigrants in the United States are considered as factors of analysis. Bhatia mentioned narratives from post 9/11 era in which instances of psychological distress among the South Asians are offered. Sharing the same religion, race, and color skin with the 9/11 hijackers, South Asians are stereotyped as potential terrorists (25-26). Thus, the context of post 9/11 is significant in discussing the immigrants' interactions in society of settlement.

Another matter being modified by Bhatia is presenting counter argument to the clear boundaries in Berry's model. By considering notions of post colonialism, hybridity, and diaspora, and focusing on the acculturation as a process and not a product, Bhatia emphasized on the constant negotiation among acculturation strategies (36). According to Bhatia and Ram, there is no neat boundary in choosing one strategy ("Rethinking Acculturation" 15). The individuals experience "the sense of constantly negotiating between here and there, past and present, homeland and host land, self and other" (Bhatia and Ram, "Rethinking Acculturation" 3). He cites instances from South Asian immigrants who oscillate among strategies. There are South Asian families, for instance, who thought that they were integrated; yet, after 9/11 they were proven wrong and they resorted to marginalization so as to be safe from verbal and physical harassments against South Asians (Bhatia and Ram, "Theorizing Identity" 144-146). Thus, although integration is considered the best strategy in Berry's model, it cannot be applied by South Asians in Post 9/11 United States and it is shown that oscillation is a key to survive such conditions.

### **The Khans Struggling Racial Bias and Cultural-Intergenerational Conflicts**

The Khans, Nasir and Hassan's parents, move to the United States from Pakistan in search of the American Dream of success, standard lifestyle, better social condition and prospect for themselves and their children. Considerable rate of Pakistanis has left their homeland to settle in America during the last decades. "Pakistanis are the seventh largest ethnic minority in the US, and within the Muslim population, they are the single largest group" (Considine, *Family, Religion, and Identity* 1). Naz is the son of a cab driver and a saleswoman who are working hard so that their children can have a peaceful life. The sons also search for better lives than their parents'. Hassan is a straight-A student at school and Naz is also a good student tutoring his classmates. They want to pursue higher education for better employment opportunities than minimum-wage jobs such as his father's which he repeatedly detaches himself away from. When Naz is asked about the ownership of the cab by Andrea and later by the detective and lawyer, he mentions that his father is the owner and not him.

Stereotyping against the Khans as Pakistani immigrants in different institutions are vividly portrayed throughout the narration. After 9/11 Pakistanis are introduced national threats and enemies to the nation by the American government and such announcements paved the way for the verbal and physical harassments by the mainstream (Considine, *Islam, Race, and Pluralism* 1-4; Maira 267). In court, when Naz is accused of being a violent child at school toward his classmates, he justifies them as part of his defense to the physical aggressions against him and his father in the immediate days of post 9/11. He says that he was bullied physically at school because he was a Pakistani Muslim and could be easily associated with the terrorist attackers. Additionally, he mentions how his father for the same reasons was assaulted in his cab.

The Police stereotypes Naz because of his Pakistani heritage, dark skin, and Muslim background. With no enough evidence to be charged, Naz is forced to plead guilty. Detective Box or as Naz's lawyer calls him "subtle beast" tries to obtain his confession by manipulating him and pretending to be friendly to him and his family. He uses the testimony of witnesses whose reliability are under question. During the trial the same evidence against Naz is challenged by his lawyers and it leads to the police's announcement on new discoveries regarding other suspects which have been neglected initially. One witness says that he "could have been light-skinned black, uh, Latino, I really don't know" leading by the Police, he becomes uncertain and says "could have been [not Caucasian], sure, why not?" Other instances of racism are recounted when Pakistani Naz is called by racial epithets. Another witness, who has addressed Naz a terrorist on the street, "Ah, look, Mustafa left his bombs home," mentions that he has warned Andrea not to go out with a guy like that. He states that he does not know either of them, Andrea or Naz, but by the judge of his light dark skin, he associates Naz with terrorists (Episode 1, 00:48:20-00:48:43).

Regarding Naz's trial, media has drastic effects against Pakistani Muslims. The media and news agencies play a seminal role in misrepresenting and vilifying the Muslim minority as the vicious other. (Alsultany 9). The press disseminates information on Naz's conviction and his background while he is still on trial so as to attract more audience. Under the influence of media's misrepresented news about Naz's trial, Hassan is harassed verbally and physically at school. Defending himself and his brother's innocence, he fights back and gets suspended. Another impact stemming from an earlier conviction of Naz by the media is the racist graffiti sprayed on the city wall saying "Muslims go home."

Such measures, not only do perpetuate against the Khans they create hostility

among the mainstream but also by the Pakistani-Americans who blame the Khans for the greater reinforcements of their marginalization in the host country. According to Considine after the events of 9/11, Pakistanis experience Pakophobia, aversion toward Pakistanis, as they are called terrorist not only from the the Americans but also from who try to distance themselves from their motherland (*Islam, Race, and Pluralism* 24). In one part of the show, a Muslim woman wearing burka swears at the Khans. Another instance of Pakophobia can be traced in the testimony of Naz's friend as a hostile witness who helps the prosecution in character assassination of Naz, describing him as a drug dealer and a criminal in front of the jury.

Police and media create adverse condition for Naz's trial. Media's allegations against Naz may not influence the jury since they are not permitted to have access to the news, but the stereotypes disseminated against Pakistanis and Muslims after 9/11 and Naz after the incident affect the witnesses' testimony. Being under the same influence, the prosecutor does not withdraw charges against Naz when the new possible suspects ,Andrea's ex-boyfriend, is identified. The jury cannot agree on a verdict and Naz's case is declared a mistrial. Mistrial cases according to American judicial system may be tried again later if the prosecutor brings the case again. The DA, Ms. Weiss does not ask for the retrial, the charges are dropped, and Naz goes free. If Naz's lawyers did not undermine the testimonies and evidence against Naz, the jury would not lock six to six and he would be imprisoned for the crime he did not commit. Although he is released from prison, Naz and his family experience stress after 9/11 and Andrea's murder. Hence, racial biases has brought anxiety for the family..

Apart from being offended by the mainstream and American institutions, the Khans' cultural conflicts (meriting both Pakistani and American values) can lead to their acculturative stress. In Berry's terms, it is important to notice the distinction between the home culture and host culture in analyzing individuals' acculturation. Such diversity in cultures can be traced in the languages, ideas, beliefs, values, behavioral patterns, religions, social patterns, manner of speaking, foods, and dress protocols. To elaborate more on the different values of American and Pakistani culture, the TV series unfolds several incidents on different characters' interactions.

Naz's acculturative stress stems from the contradiction between his American values and his parents' Pakistani heritage. Some Pakistani tradition, values, attitudes, and norms are in contradiction with everyday American culture. Naz in search of having intimate relations goes to a party without his mother's consent. He is a dependent 21-year college boy living with his parents; whereas in American culture young adults leave their parents' house at the age of 18 to become independent. In

Pakistani culture, family is considered a significant factor in their lives; moreover, Muslim communities are collective rather than independent (Considine, *Family, Religion, and Identity* 33). A study by Cheung and Spears suggests that moving from interdependent cultures (such as Muslim countries) to independent cultures (like western countries) create psychological distress for the immigrants due to their incapability to adjust (Khawaja 41-42). Naz needs his family's support at the age of 21 and they instill their values into his life. Seeking his parents' approval at home and American society's acceptance, he is obliged to fulfill Pakistani and American values which are sometimes in opposition. Therefore, such contradictions add to the confusion and distress of an immigrant who is already stigmatized. This stress is manifested in a scene when he is alone on the street and practices talking to girls at the party. He seizes the opportunity to meet girls when Andrea rides on his father's cab for a destination. He abuses drugs and alcohol and spends the night with a stranger at her house. While alcohol consumption is considered a normal everyday activity of American life, it is called immoral western pastime by Pakistanis (Considine, *Family, Religion, and Identity* 108); premarital sex is also discouraged (Considine, *Islam, Race, and Pluralism* 90). All these integral elements of social activities in the United States are considered red flags from Pakistanis' perspective.

Naz tries to distance himself from his parents and disobeys them so that he can assimilate in the mainstream. Naz, a second-generation immigrant, seeks to blend in the American mainstream by mimicking his African American college friends. In doing so, he shows interest in hip hop music and speaks with African American accent while his parents speak Urdu and watch Pakistani movies at home. Therefore, along with his cultural conflicts, Naz's acculturative stress stems from his intergenerational conflicts with his parents. "These intergenerational conflicts [among Pakistani generations] are typically caused because younger individuals breach traditional family roles, standards of behavior, friendship choices, and parental expectations" (Considine, *Family, Religion, and Identity* 34). Tensions between Naz and his parents creates largely on notions such as sex before marriage, partying, meeting girls, dating, drug and alcohol abuse, having different taste in music, having African-American friends, and eventually prioritizing American culture over Pakistani values.

Having been born and raised in Pakistan, Naz's parents are more concerned about values and norms originating from the homeland. Although the parents mention that they have abandoned Pakistan, they merit some of its values. Naz's mother disapproves of Naz's friends and forbids him to go to the party. However, she wears no burka, no hijab, works outside the house, and speaks directly to men (the detectives

and the male lawyer); which are all considered disobeying Pakistani and Muslim values (Considine, *Islam, Race, and Pluralism* 78). So, she also shows some deviation from the principles of the homeland. Naz's father, allows his wife to work outside house and he talks face-to-face with women which are considered unconventional in Pakistan. Therefore, surviving the new culture, the Khans sometimes adopt flexible attitudes in facing different situations in an attempt to reduce the detrimental effects of cultural conflicts on their live.

### **The Khan's Acculturation Strategies; Oscillation from Integration and Assimilation to Separation and Marginalization**

Naz's parents try to utilize integration of both Pakistani and American culture to fit in the mainstream and instill such tendencies to their children. Naz's mother merits both Pakistani and American culture. In other words, she sometimes renounces her Pakistani background by not wearing burka, or hijab and working as a sales woman. Unlike to what her Pakistani heritage dictates, she attempts to integrate in the mainstream. On the other hand, she is depicted as a woman who clings to Pakistani norms, language, music, movies, food, tradition and tries to foster them in their home which is manifested in her attitude; She prevents her sons from going to parties, where they can blend in the new culture. Naz's father also supports his wife's decisions all along.

However, Islamophobia after 9/11 and the rise of racial discrimination against Muslims in western societies affect the Khans' integration. Integration strategy presented by Berry's model is possible when both the majority and minority cultures have equal status and power (Berry, "Acculturation" 708; Bhatia and Ram, "Rethinking Acculturation" 13). In this sense, the choice of strategy depends on the individual as well as the societal norms. Despite instances of inequality, bias, and discrimination against the Khans which have been mentioned earlier, Naz's parents try to integrate by cherishing partly American culture and to some extent Pakistani heritage. Still, choosing such strategy is impossible because the host country after 9/11 attacks views all people from Pakistan as terrorists and after each crisis (Andrea's murder) reminds them about their belief.

Having failed in integration, Mr. and Mrs. Khan use another strategy which is separation. Naz's parents are a cab driver and a saleswoman who works with Pakistanis. Based on Berry's model, their attitude, separation, can be justified since they want to avoid cultural conflict (Berry, "Acculturation" 708). It is shown in the TV series that in times of crises, they have no friend or family to ask for help. Preventing the cultural conflicts, they detach socially from Americans. Although

the couple appreciate the cultural products of the motherland at home, they do not appeal for the aid from their Pakistani acquaintances who can be allegedly or actually in connection with terrorist groups. Because of the similar restrictions against their country, they have never returned there and mention this repeatedly as a defense in face of authorities who are charging Naz with murder. Unlike their sons who are socially interacting with the mainstream at school, it is undemanding for Naz's parents to adopt separation there being not actively involved in the country's institutions.

Naz employs assimilation to blend in the American mainstream on several occasions throughout narration. Naz's assimilation as Berry and Sam suggested arises from the need to fit in the new context (Berry and Sam 299). By utilizing assimilation according to Berry, Naz, an immigrant, tries to resemble the behavioral norms of the dominant group which entails various operations (Berry, "Acculturation" 708).

Being assimilated structurally to the educational system of the mainstream is one of the measures taken by Naz so as to blend in the United States. He is a student in the American education system and needs to be assimilated structurally to the greater community besides his parents. He is a good student and tutors basketball players in college team. During the testimonies at court, it is revealed that he sells drugs to his classmates at school which can be considered an attempt to become popular among them. It seems that he is relatively successful since he is invited to their party.

Naz seeks strong ties of social acquaintances by becoming friends with African-American friends; among them he feels less marked as non-white. In doing so, he changes his attitude and closes, mimics their accents and listens to hip-hop music. The same behavior pattern can be traced in Naz's interactions in jail. He joins Freddy's gang and mimics them in order to survive. At prison he becomes assimilated with the gang and looks like them after a while. Having spent time at prison, the skinny scared boy at the police station turns to a muscular man who walks with a head held high at court.

One of the actions done by Naz for less visibility and assimilation in the American culture is avoiding his Pakistani sounding name, i.e. Nasir. Nasir prefers to be called Naz because its pronunciation is easier by the non-Pakistanis and he can become less visible in the mainstream. Thus, he tries to assimilate by disconnecting himself free from any association with Pakistan and the negative connotations it has among the Americans.

Naz by violating his Pakistani values tries to assimilate in America. Spending

night with Andrea, having premarital sex, drinking alcohol, and abusing drugs are all considered renouncing the Pakistani Islamic heritage. When Naz is asked about his night with Andrea, he mentions it was fun to be with someone who is not similar to my conservative Pakistani community.

Despite Naz's efforts in assimilation, this strategy is not an option for a Pakistani-American person. Naz cannot get rid of his Pakistani roots given that he lives in a post 9/11 era when the Pakistanis are discriminated and believed to be threats and murderers. The comfortable fit of assimilation or integration in the mainstream cannot occur for the South Asian Muslims after 9/11 and they should oscillate among the strategies to survive (Bhatia and Ram, "Theorizing Identity" 148). Therefore, Naz's acculturation is a continuous process.

Naz utilizes separation as one of his strategies in the acculturation process in face of distress. According to Berry, sometimes acculturation experiences create conflicts which cannot be solved and results in the withdrawal (separation) and marginalization of the immigrants ("Immigration" 12). At the police station when Naz is arrested for killing Andrea, under pressures of the Police to confess to plead guilty, he says: "I want to go home." Home does not mean only a place to live in, a house, but a concept carrying with many connotations such as a feeling of belonging to a group of people, to a family and friends as well as traditions. Although he distances himself from his Pakistani culture by assimilation, he seeks a shelter like home and moves toward the same culture by adopting separation.

In the end, Naz who cannot overcome the conflicts occurred, resorts to marginalization. According to Berry, "marginalization is often associated with major heritage culture loss and appearance of a number of dysfunctional and deviant behaviors (such as delinquency)" ("Acculturation" 708). Minorities in this case are rejected and discriminated and show their irritation towards the members of the larger society (Berry, "Immigration" 29). Naz has no disciplines to follow either as a Pakistani or an American individual. After the trial, he realizes that he can not be an American citizen. Naz not only stops trying to become assimilated, but also he detaches himself from his own family who were almost convinced that he killed Andrea. Thus, he is alienated from American culture as well as his own Pakistani roots. This exclusion is depicted in the last scene in which he takes drugs alone at the beach. Spending time in prison with convicted felons, he turns into an addict and someone who is likely to be tempted into a life of crime.

## **Conclusion**

This study on the miniseries *The Night Of* illustrates how stereotyping is part of

everyday experience of Pakistani Muslim immigrants in the United States in the post 9/11 era. The Khans who has immigrated from Pakistan to America encounter harassments and stereotypes by the institutions of the mainstream (education, media, police, and judicial system) due to the Pakistan's association with terrorism. It is shown how such stereotypes thrust Naz into being charged guilty for killing Andrea. Moreover, by discussing the contradictory values of the society of settlement (United States) and society of origin (Pakistan), the cultural and the intergenerational conflicts created for the immigrants are discussed. Thus, trying to fulfill norms at two opposite poles, Pakistani values and American culture, the Khans experience acculturative stress.

In order to survive the anxiety of acculturation, the Khans use acculturation strategies. Naz's parents try to integrate both American and Pakistani cultures; however, it is impossible because after 9/11, the mainstream does not accept their Pakistani background and associates them with terrorism. Thus, hoping for integration, Naz's parents adopt separation by having the least interaction with American society and watching Pakistani movies at home. Although being targeted as terrorist and enemy of the United States in the post 9/11 era, Naz tries different strategies to fit and assimilate at school, in society, and among friends. The series shows how Naz stripped himself off his Pakistani traditions and instead melted into the other way of life overtly and recklessly by drinking alcohol, consuming drugs, and having sex with a stranger. Yet, as it is shown vividly during Andrea's trial, he cannot get away from his Pakistani background and the stereotypes against him as a threat to the nation. Naz also oscillates when his assimilation does not work. Firstly, he utilizes separation and then marginalization from both cultures when his own parents do not believe his innocence. Hence, having criminal record and no direction to obey, he becomes an addict and a potential delinquent.

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