

## **Post-Colonialism and its Multidimensional Perspectives: a Comparative Study of Selected Texts from Third World Literary Writers**

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### **Abstract**

This paper aims at highlighting the identity crisis faced by minority in a multicultural society as an implication of Post-Colonialism. The researcher has endeavoured to explore the clash of different cultures, languages, people, and systems of thought in the work of three imminent South Asian writers. The paper comprises on a comparative study of three literary texts i.e *My Son The Fanatic* by Hanif Kureishi, *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini and *Salt and Saffron* by Kamila Shamsie. The study focuses, not only, the effect of multiculturalism on the characters, but also explores its ultimate consequences in the form of ‘diversity’ due to the flow of immigrants, refugees, diaspora and their relations with the new nation-states. Not only colonial regions have been imperialized by the white race, but the impact of European seeds of thought and life style into a native context on the third world oppressed class in order to civilize the them under the thought of White Man’s Burden. Consequently the impression of oppressed is identified in terms of hybrid entitled by postcolonial thinkers. The study finds that multiculturalism, an implication of post colonialism, offers diverse perspectives in literary works of literary writers in the form of diaspora and hybrid characters who are found baffled with their loss of identities and existence in the middle of alienated cultures.

**Key words:** Diaspora, hybridity, immigrants, multiculturalism, otherness

### **Introduction**

Colonialism was basically a clash between cultures, languages, people, and systems of thought. Colonial regions were strongly affected by the white race and they transplanted European seeds of thought and life style into a native ‘context’ in order to civilize the natives. Consequently the impression of colonized natives are identified in terms of ‘Hybrid’ entitled by postcolonial thinker in general and Homi K. Bhabha in particular. T.B Macaulay’s colonial plan for hybrid native is well expressed in famous Minute’ of 1835, a ‘Europeanized natives’ as the creation of, ‘a class of persons, Indian in blood ad colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals, and in intellect.’ A variety of different distinct cultural or ethnic groups within a society turns towards multiculturalism and ultimately resulting in ‘diversity’ due to

the flow of migrants, refugees, diaspora and their relations with new nation-states. Further this hybridized identity of diasporic, half native /half western is planted with new ideologies by erasing the 'roots'. Hybridity and diaspora ultimately leading towards identity crisis,

Hybridity is a mixture or cross of different cultures and races and a hybrid is an embodiment of this ideology. According to Bhabha's point of view, people accept each other's culture. They borrow and exchange values, and further enrich and grow one's self-culture. It is an embodiment of multiculturalism or even cosmopolitanism. On the other hand, in the diaspora literature the characters are placed from one culture to another, for which Jessica Langer (2011) even claimed, "It is impossible to conceptualize post colonialism without recognition and analysis of the diasporic movements that have been inherent to colonization" (Langer 56-57). All these elements i.e Hybridity, diaspora, identity crisis etc are well portrayed under the canopy of multiculturalism.

### Main Body

Hanif Kurieshi is a Pakistani-British writer who rarely visits Pakistan but he acknowledges his ancestor's deep roots in this country. In his short story *My Son The Fanatic*, he introduces a diasporic character Pervaiz who has migrated to England to get a better opportunity to earn his means and fulfil his dreams. We do not find Pervaiz feeling home sickness or pain to be far away from his motherland. Rather he has absorbed the western culture deep inside him. He drinks, eat bacon and even have illicit relationship with call girls. He is of the view that there is no harm in certain activities as now they are abroad and they *have to fit in*. When the story begins, Parvaiz is seen noticing some change in the behaviour of his only child Ali who gradually has started avoiding social activities. On close inspection, that perhaps Ali has become drug addicted, he comes to know that his son has strongly embraced his religious and cultural roots and become a Muslim fundamentalist. The story is based on typical East-West theme. Multiculturalism has ultimately caused hybridity in Parvaiz who has not only left his country but also completely absorbed himself into another culture i.e he drinks, eat bacon, having illicit relationship with call girls. The company of his friends is the same, they all are taxi drivers who are living together and share Ali, who is inclined towards religion by offering prayers five times and keeping fast as a gradual development. He has started throwing away his belongings as he now consider them extravagances like music player, cassettes, CDs, guitar. He has even left his girlfriend. The conflict of cultures and religions is quite evident when Ali confronts his father for being what he is not by adopting the cultures and norms of host country and Parvaiz replied that you're not in the village now and this is England, so we have to fit in.

Ali expresses his grief over the adverse effects of the West in a postcolonial, multicultural country: "All over the world our people are oppressed" (Kureishi 297). He resisted against the 'superior' European versus the 'inferior' non-European, and he feels insecure due to that inferiority complex engendered by the country in which he is living. He gets very aggressive when he talked about jihad. He showed his hatred towards his father's

girlfriend and even retorted with her on a situation about her relationship with his father. Although Parvaiz shows patience while tolerating his son's behaviour since the beginning of the story but by the end, he cannot keep his displeasure and beats his son brutally for confronting him on religious grounds. At the end of the story, Ali poses a question, "So who's the fanatic now?" (Kureishi 298), pin points his father's secular and liberal approach and the defects of a multicultural British society.

Multiculturalism can also be found in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* who is an Afghan-American writer. The plot and events of the novel is set in Afghanistan and America and depicts the two major Afghan ethnical populations, Pashtun and Hazara. Hazaras, being deprived of their native land, were bound to live in social, cultural, and religious mixtures. Pashtuns run the country as power. On the other hand Hazaras, as diasporic ethnicity, are facing inferiority and cultural anxiety and are just common slaves of them. Amir, who is the main character in the story is quite westernized in his values and ideologies. For example, after settling in America he accepts Soraya as his wife, although he is aware of the fact that once Soraya has eloped and slept with another man. But since his childhood we find implication of western culture on him as he has learnt western literature and their perspectives. He reads Victor Hugo, Jules Verne, Mark Twain, Ian Fleming as well as the authors from Afghanistan. Amir's reading materials has greatly influenced him to be more American. As a part of diaspora community, Hassan, Amir and Baba moves from one place to another and ultimately this movement also causes a change of cultural background and more diverse spheres of life. The most effected hybrid character in the novel is Amir who is in between the two cultures and societal norms.

According to Homi Bhabha, by accepting the new changes and absorbing other cultures, a new cultural identity is gained. It means if an individual has to cope himself with some new identity he needs to adapt the new cultures. Bhabha also highlights the importance of mimicry or imitation when the colonized/non-western, imitating the behaviour and norms of the dominant culture. It is 'Other' who imitates the culture, language, habit and attributes of the colonizer (Bhabha 86). Amir is an adaptable boy who has been influenced by American culture in his young age. The activities he performs, clothes he wears and even the books that he reads in his childhood are mostly American ones. It helps to establish his fondness to the US culture. His identity changes from a superior member of ethnic group into a marginalized member of society. Although certain changes seem unpleasant generally. However, Amir has acquired the new texture very easily. Amir does not feel tortured when he cannot meet the people from his past, unlike Baba strongly desire to come back to Afghanistan, on the other hand Amir does not feel such ties with his home land. Amir is able to absorb and mimic the US culture and internalizes it. Therefore, Amir is better in adapting the new cultural identity because he sees life in America valuable than in Afghanistan. Amir is able to adapt to his new identity. He integrates his prior identity to the new identity and actually internalizes it.

Amir is a hybrid character whose personality is a mixture of two cultures—ultimately, gaining a different identity. Bhabha also explains that a hybrid is not only double voiced but also double language and with two individual consciousness (Bhabha 58). (Amir uses two languages i.e. Afghani and American, marrying with Soraya, and his concept of gender equality). On the other hand Baba fails to absorb and accept the new identity of the US culture. Baba lives most part of his life as an Afghan society. He has spent years internalizing his identity as an Afghan. The new identity seen as degradation of Baba's worth. It is shown from

Amir's statements. "For me, America was a place to bury my memories. For Baba, a place to mourn his" (2007: 140). Baba's resistance of American social system and his refusal to learn English language by taking EFL classes shows his inability to be a hybrid.

Kamila Shamsie in *Salt and Saffron* presents a multi web of a variety of cultures through immigrant characters. The female protagonist, Aliya finds herself tangled between the norms of his feudal family and 20<sup>th</sup> century to cope with. Her fluctuated wishes to stay in the native land and at the same time wants to stay out of it, shows her indecisiveness. She lives in 'mortal fear of not-quite- twins', her love for homeland exposes inner conflict which she faces while living abroad. If we have to see how deeply culture is woven in us it can only occur if we are displaced from our own regions and cultures. Aliya, in USA, reacts abruptly to her surrounding as she has no one around who can take care of her or provide her comfort. Her travelling from Karachi (Pakistan) to United States and then back to home has instilled her with a vast and deep ideology into the cultural mixtures and differences. She feels annoyance on her family and relatives who gets snobbish for those who do not have distinguished lineage. But she herself is found herself drawing away from westernized Pakistani whose parents belong to slum area. The title itself displays two different extremes in the society like salt for common class and saffron for elite.

We find multiple characters in the novel who are desperately following the western culture. This illustration has caused a constant fear, to first generation immigrants, who are fearfully anticipating that the next generation is at danger due to their alienation from their cultural roots. The cross cultural differences create space and alienation between the immigrants and the native people due to the fact that South Asian family patterns are closely knit into relationships and ties. Characters like Dadi, Mehr-Dadi and Taimur have passed through the procedure of migration and they are well aware of cross cultural differences as they themselves have emerged as new identities consequently.

Shamsie uses food, clothes and family relations as tools to elaborate Asian culture. She has given aromatic details while giving hints about the craving of the expatriates. Aliya, indiaspora consciousness, assumes that Tamarind sounds like Taimur Hind and shows her sensitivity towards her own cultural perspective. However, some expatriates believe in cultural identity an adopted object rather than an inherited one. Aliya foregrounds this reality

by referring her cousin, Samia who has become a sandwich eater, she loves to eat bread, mayonnaise, mustard, sliced roast beef, and lettuce ...tuna salad etc.

### Results

After the thematic analysis of the selected texts the outcome of multiculturalism can be easily figured out. Either its Parvaiz from *My Son The Fanatic*, Ali from *The Kite Runner* or Aliya from *Slat and Saffron* identity crisis is the topical concern third world literary writers. Bhabha has described such characters as *fringes, as edges and in the middle of spaces* which takes them towards diaspora structure. They are not only double voiced but also having double consciousness.

### Conclusion

To conclude, we can say that multiculturalism offers diverse perspective in literary work of different writers in the form of diaspora and hybrid characters. We find characters in their work baffled, with their loss of identities and existing in the middle of alienated cultures. Scholars and literary critics follow the path of Said, Spivak, and Homi K. Bhabha more, with latest advancement of multiculturalism. The study of world literature and particularly the South Asian literature portrays the cultural factors in the work of literary artist.

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