

## HYBRID IDENTITY AND THE SELECTED DIASPORIC WORK: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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### ABSTRACT

*The present study discusses the selected South Asian diasporic work in the relation to the notion of hybrid identity. Migrants leave homeland and join host land for better life and economic improvement. This shift from home to foreign land brings several obstacles among which crisis of identity is major one. Moreover, in host land diasporic community also faces segregation in terms of workplace environment and other social aspects of life and it further make them shattered and consequently this phenomenon leads them towards hybrid identity. This qualitative study employs theoretical concept of hybridity, a postcolonial concept, in the analysis of the selected text. The study concludes that diasporic community carry with it the burden of their native culture and the nostalgic memory and go through the crisis of identity in foreign land which make them hybrid.*

**Keywords:** Identity, hybridity, South Asian diaspora fiction, culture, homeland, host-land.

### INTRODUCTION

Diasporic community faces identity related issues in the host land due to a number of factors. Among these include ill treatment, cultural shocks and home sickness. Migrants often live between home and exile and hence get entangled between two worlds. Culture is one of the integral and fundamental source of one's identity. It comprises language, dress, socio-ethnic values and belief system. Hybridity is a construct that defines identity construction processes at people that brighten up in the same time of more cultural reference systems, such as migrants. It is about a binary or multiple code that is held on further, although involves the dissolving in many forms. In the field of social sciences the term of "hybridity" constitutes together with the term of "diversity" a central category of social reorganization with an appropriate behavior towards heterogeneity. Common language describes "hybridity" as a form of mixture, combination, overlap or interbreeding. As typical elements of "hybrid" identity the following characteristics are mentioned: multiple cultural backgrounds, experience exchange between self and external assignment.

Qazi, et. al. (2020), analyze *Home Fire* in term of globalization which resulted in cultural transformation in diasporic content. In globalization there are no boundaries of space and distance. The people from underdeveloped countries became victims of globalization in different respects. Third world countries lost their culture, and which resulted in cultural trauma. The first world countries become stronger in every walk of life; they impose their culture on weaker countries. Globalization is a

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trick that third world nation adopt their brand and forget own culture. Steger's perspective on culture and globalization is used as theoretical framework. According to Steger when people globalized the transmission of cultures take place. It is easy to get introduced by new cultures. Globalization gives some similarities and difference. Western culture penetrate through this aspect for example, Macdonaldization is a form of imposing western culture upon different eastern culture. People avoid and specially youth healthy food and prepare fast food like Macdonald is in reality the business of western people through which they earn a lot from all over the world. Media also plays important role in globalization. Culture is also shaped by language. Globalization results in fluid identity and cultural transmission.

Media and technology have their advantages as well as disadvantages in globalization. Analysis of work shows that media urge western cultural values on different cultural identities. In this novel media play a vital role in plotting against Islam and Muslims. Language also places an important part in transmitting the culture but in *Home Fire*, the characters did not know about their native language and land so they are influenced by western culture and purpose of globalization is to make English as lingua Franca and their culture as dominant one.

Saeed, et al. (2020) describe *Home Fire* with the help of cultural Hegemony and through class systems hierarchies in a multicultural society. Cultural Hegemony is defined through characters in novel, there is clash between superiority of one social class over other. Eurocentric concept gives birth to cultural hegemony, which is depicted in this novel. Cultural superiority of Britain in this work creates conflicts between dominant group and weaker group. When global circumstances took place, people move from one place to other they experience culture of other people. In the result monoculture converted into multiculturalism and transnationalism. Lower and middle class marginalized by dominant class in diverse cultural society. Hegemony is present in cultural and political levels in *Home Fire*. Muslims culture is considered inferior for example Hijab is considered as hurdle in the way of progress according to western culture, but in reality it is not true. Politically elite class Karamat exploits Isma and Aneeka in this novel, he did not help them when their brother's matter took place. Antonio Gramsci's cultural Hegemony and Carl Marx upper class and lower class concepts are employed in theoretical framework. The sufferings of lower, middle class by dominant class is highlight in multicultural society. Hegemony is spread in British society. Lower class is exploited by upper class in the novel. The concept of bourgeoisie and proletariat is presented by families of Karamat and Pasha. In whole novel the dominant class tries to suppress the other weaker class just to enjoy personal gain. Some characters resists this dominance for example Aneeka and Pervaiz who face terrible consequence in form of death. Research shows the imbalance relation of powerful group and weaker group through lens of theory of Marxism which results the Hegemonic effect in diverse cultural society.

Channa, et al. (2020) analyze *Home Fire* in perspective of exploring Muslims Diasporic identities. Theoretical framework is Stuart Hall's essay "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" (1996), according to this Hall's approach Pasha Family get confused related to their past, these people wants to connect with their past identity but they also connected to Britain and they have to play in this sense, is extremely racial and Islamophobic, here power is Britain. According to circumstances Isma became loyal towards British and she did everything to please British government, but when there was created an issue related to his brother the government show very cold attitude towards this matter and did not help Isma's family. Muslims are not accepted in Europe whole heartedly, even diasporic people risk their identity in very dangerous way. They are not accepted in a proper way. Diaspora is the one of the main concern of present Post-Colonial studies, it is the spread of people by their own will or by different forces. Due to this culture and identity change in diasporic people. In diaspora, Hall define people whose identities are not presented as single because they define two types of identities, one is 'essence' these diasporic people want to connect to their past which they unconsciously embrace that is 'imaginary reunification with past'. In Diaspora people come up with two origin and in second they want recognition in the dominant or new culture. Application of Hall's theory of cultural identity and Diaspora shows in *Home Fire* that different characters Isma, Aneeka and Pervaiz, the Pasha Family

exhibits their identities at one level to unite with the past, on the other level they wish to set in dominant culture.

Isma's turban for covering her head and Aneeka's head covering shows their connection with past, the culture of their origin, they also part of play of power and they have to adopt dominant culture to show their loyalties towards Britain. But after all these efforts diasporic people face extreme racial and Islamophobic attitude of British community. Hall's perceptions are firm and the diasporic identities are in phase of constant transformation, they are not assimilated in dominant culture.

Ali, et al. (2020), examine selected novels of Mohsin Hamid and Kamila Shamsie by cultural diversity as perpetuation of Americanization. Cultural hybridity widened in global world. It effects the identity of people. Migrant's wants to flourish by taking influence from their roots but they also adopt new routes. Homi K. Bhabha favors the idea of hybridity because when people cross boundaries according to Bhabha they have to adopt new culture for settlement. In *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *Burnt Shadows* the concept of cultural hybridity is inspected. Hybridity is a very important concept in Post-Colonial theory. There are different theorists in Post-colonial literature for example Homi K. Bhabha (1994) who tells that it is essential to know and adopt new culture to live in that society. On the other hand Aijaz Ahmed (1994) considered cultural hybridity as a tool of dominant culture to legitimize their culture. Primitive people work strict to their roots. When talked about stable identity it is observed that people who were attached to their roots in past had their stable identity because in past people did not travel to other countries but in present time people have travel abroad due to different reasons so they adopt culture of new country in this way their identity becomes fluid. Aijaz Ahmed (1999) a Post-Colonial theorist contradicts, he studies culture from materialistic point of view and said that cultural difference produced by gender, cast, ethnicity and class. There are different cultures present in the world these are not present in pure form. No culture is considered as low in status. It is important to give equal value to different cultures and not considered other underdeveloped nation's cultures as inferior we have to respect all cultures of all ethnic groups.

## **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

The two novels, *An American Brat* by Bapsi Sidhwa and *Brick Lane* by Monica Ali explore the subject of hybrid identities through the theme of migration and the consequences of the diasporic experiences which is the most notable topic in the contemporary postcolonial, postmodern and diasporic literature. Diaspora is a journey towards self-realization, self-recognition, self-knowledge and self-definition as the writers develop their characters through different phases of struggle which are helpful in their identity development which is affected by the culture of the settled lands and results in hybridity. To explore the notions of hybrid identities, the focus of the paper will be on the diasporic features presented in the novels through the experiences of diaspora characters. Tambunan, et al. (2020) study *Home Fire* and *Exit West* in viewpoint of Rethinking Home and identity of Muslim Diaspora. After 9/11 which arises the 'war on terror' and as a result Muslim states collapse. Which creates concepts of Homely and unhomely, how Muslims diasporic create their identities and meaning of home and the selected work. After 9/11 attack British authority need anti-immigrant policies and show hostility and prejudices against Muslims radical and Islamophobic discourses also spread which effects identities of Muslims in Britain. Shamsie gives a different view of Muslim women in her work, character of Isma is modern as well as religious, she was modernized woman, she wears turban which shows her Islamic side, on the other hand she takes procedure for her hair which is modern hair style of western society. Western people considered veil and hijab as oppression but character in novel considered it their freedom. Isma is portrayed as hybrid character in novel her identity is in transformation. Both novel explains unhomeliness in terms of home, when in *Home Fire* Isma defend unhomely London as her home and on the other hand, Mohsin Hamid represent uncertainties of asylum, in the meaning of home in *Exit West*. In both novels identity issues are highlighted and both works portrayed unhomeliness as the meaning of home for Muslims protagonists.

Gul, et al. (2020) study *Home Fire* and *Three Daughters Of Eve* as stereotyping Muslims women's identity through hijab in west. Hijab is considered as symbol of religious extremism by western people they considered it as sign of oppression and obstacle in progress of Muslim women. France

banned hijab. European showed intolerance towards hijab. They thought it is an obstacle in the progress of Muslim women, but this thought is purely a stereotypical presentation. Muslim women with head covering shun out this stereotype and showed their freedom and success in the society. Hijab is just like a piece of cloth and it does not stop progress of female. Victor Turner's Liminality and Homi K. Bhabha's cultural hybridity is used as theoretical framework. In these selected works Isma, Aneeka and Mona all female protagonists wore hijab but at the same time they are doing their activities in society and also they are hybrid and modern because they follow at the same time Muslim religion and western liberal norms. European nations becomes hostile towards hijab, they considered it as a symbol of suppression and submission they considered it backward. In *Home Fire* and *Three Daughters of Eve* both dispel negative remark and attitude against hijab. Both Mona and Aneeka are being migrant and do modern practices according to British culture and side by side with their hijab. The hijab itself is not culprit but how people think about it that create different ideas for example Islamophobia, cultural racism and intolerance toward cultural diversity, which resulted in hatred toward hijab.

Maheen Aamir, (2019), analyzes *Home Fire* on the basis of othering, points out that in diasporic situation Muslims are treated as others and highlight the issues of homelessness, identity crises, racism in Shamsie literary work. Western people, show binaries for themselves and for Muslims, for example self they used for themselves and the binary of other for the people of third world nation. Muslims are considered as unwanted and denounced. Western people perceived themselves that they are tolerant toward multiculturalism but in reality they did not bear another culture, example is present in form of Muslims, whom they are considered inferior, uncivilized and other. Post-colonial theoretical lens is used in which different critics are mentioned for example Foucault who advocates power and knowledge stance. Western people are strong and get knowledge so they spread the culture and value as superior and Muslim diasporic people's culture as other. Hall (2001) also agreed with Foucault's thinking and tells that due to power western legitimize their values as superior. Said also explained that European and American do not describe East in true picture. They had stereotypical attitude toward underdeveloped countries and diasporic people. They have biased behavior towards the Arab-Islamic peoples and their cultures. European considered themselves as masculine, intelligent and developed. Whereas non-Europeans were presented as voiceless, doubtful and unintellectual. They divide other into two, one is Exotic other and second is Demonic other who presented as uncivilized, corrupt and greedy. In *Home Fire* Pasha family is considered as other due to their relation to Islam, as Isma and Aneeka did not harm anyone but they also suffer.

Shamsie in *Home Fire* unrolled the constant othering and prejudice of Muslim diaspora in west. In Britain where Muslims have been labeled as 'others'. It shows Islamophobia of U.S towards Muslims. Muslim diasporic people face racism, homelessness and identity crises, which is result of the superiority complex of west and also they have power, so they can do whatever they want. The western create their hegemony all over the world.

Tambunan, et, al. (2017) analyze *Home Fire* in different dimensions such as issues of identity, immigration and Islamophobia. These aspects which are identity, immigration and Islamophobia examined through main three protagonists. One of the protagonist is Isma who adopts modernism with Muslimness, She wears Hijab and she also takes care of her hair with modern products, she use modern hair procedures, she was inspired by western modern women hair style and their hair product. On the other hand Pervaiz, Aneeka and Isma Speak fluent English for their communication, but they maintain their Pakistani element by using Urdu language while in their conversation. Shamsie criticized that radical Muslim as group are incapable to adopt with modernity. The literary articles which I have studied provide a basis to find out the concept of cultural hybridity, mimicry and identity issue in *Home Fire*. It elaborates with Homi Bhabha's concepts of cultural hybridity, borders, and home and identity issues, and it also use the concept of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* In the work "*Can the Subaltern Speak?*" women are suffered, because no one try to hear their opinion. They impose the rules over women, which are harmful for them. They do not decide anything by their own will for themselves. They considers as other and marginalized. In the same way no one hears Aneeka and she is also treated as other and marginalized by both countries and people. The selected

work has similarities with theses above mention works of Homi Bhabha and Spivak. The work explores new dimensions.

Every character is culturally hybrid in this novel. But this discussion is especially about Aneeka's cultural hybridity. Who adopts it as a way to cope with her problem. Because his brother was trapped by some person and he was not a terrorist, he is innocent, the following quotation from the text shows this phenomenon. "Istanbul police have said the deadman was not carrying any weapons at the time of death". (Shamsie, 2017, p.142). When Parvaiz was shot, he did not carry any instruments of killing for example guns and bombs, which shows his unharmed intentions. When his father died he was 12 years old. And with time he has a wish to know about his father. He said that he also introduced you to people who know about the heroic deeds of your father. When he joins him and goes with him. He sees violence which is not allowed in Islam, so at that point, he wanted to escape from that place and he contacts Aneeka and tells everything. So that Aneeka helps him to return home. When this person knows that Parvaiz runs away, this organization killed Parvaiz. He is not part of any terrorist party, just he is tricked by that person, which ends up in the form of his death. Aneeka does everything for her brother but she also faces tragedy. Aneeka goes to Pakistan for her brother's dead body to bring back him home, but in her home country, she also faced the worst and most miserable behavior of her relatives. They also not considered them as their people, they considered British Muslims as others.

"First your brother uses us as a cover to join some psycho killers this country can be a dumping ground for its unwanted corpses".(Shamsie, 2017, p.154). The discussion of this quotation is about Parvaiz because in the beginning he makes fool of everyone and he fabricates a story to run away to Syria with Farooq, he said that he got a job in a music company in Pakistan, but he was lying, he did not find any job, so that's the reason his cousin said Aneeka that your brother created a story to join some psycho killers. And also criticize that your country considered Pakistan a dustbin for throwing unwanted carcasses. This shows that cultural hybrid people face difficulty in both cultures they considered others in both countries their identity is not clear in both countries. In Pakistan her relatives also do not welcome Aneeka they criticized her brother. "For a moment they are two lovers in a park, under an ancient tree, Sun-dappled, beautiful, and at peace". (Shamsie, 2017, p.188). This quotation shows the tragic scene of the death of Aneeka in a park in Karachi. Eamonn comes to Karachi and goes to meet Aneeka in the park, one person comes and ties an explosive belt around his waist, Aneeka and Eamonn both are together, all people in the park shatter and ran away, but Aneeka stays there because she is exercising her protest, she wants her brother back in the UK. But she faced her death. She adopt cultural hybridity but it proves a failure, because of her fixed identity of her, she belonged to Muslim background, so the British government does not trust her, they were biased against Muslims and considered them terrorists. Here if we talk about Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak who is a post-colonial theorist she describes in her work *Can the Subaltern Speak?* about the fixed identity of female characters. That they cannot speak about their selves. In this work she describes the binary of center and marginal, western considered themselves as center and migrated people as marginalized, they do not want to hear their opinions. They considered them inferior. Spivak describes Subaltern as the people who belong to third world countries, in the present case as Aneeka originally belongs to Pakistan. They cannot speak for their benefit. In the same way, Aneeka is also unheard of by British officials. In this work *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Spivak discusses a norm of sati in the Hindu religion in which when the husband died, the wife is also burnt alive with their husband, same way when Parvaiz was murdered, Aneeka desires justice and wants to bring her brother's carcass in London. But she also died with her brother in that park which shows the Subaltern condition of Aneeka because no one hears.

If officials permit Aneeka to bring her brother back, she does not lose her life. So it is proven that cultural hybridity is not succeeded in this work. Spivak concept of Subaltern is still present in the migrated people. They are not wholeheartedly accepted in both cultures and they face tragedies. Spivak gives another example in her work that of Bhubaneswari who attempt suicide because she did not accept to take part in an event, so as a protest she committed suicide. Her family portrayed it as a result

of a failure in a love affair. The family did not explain the real incident. In the same way, Westerners construct the truth according to their wish. The same situation is suited in the case of Parvaiz, who is innocent and wanted to come back home, and Aneeka who just desires a respectful funeral of her late brother, but Western constructs a story that they both are terrorists and did not hear them, in the same way as suicide victim is not portrayed in So in the end it is concluded that cultural hybridity is not succeed in the present work because of the fixed Subaltern identity of third-world nation migrants. Due to not understanding the point of view of Aneeka she losses her life, she is subaltern and muted in front of the Western, her speaking is nothing in front of the Western because they considered them as the center and third-world nation's people as marginalized.

## CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the analyzed texts demonstrate hybrid identity of characters. In the selected work every character for example Aneeka, Isma, Karamat, and Eamonn all are culturally hybrid, they have their own culture, norms, and dresses as Muslims but with the same time they also follow the western culture, dresses, and norms, which is portrayed by author in this work. Aneeka also adopts western's culture, but she suffered because she is considered as other and doubtful for dominant people, it is observed in analysis and discussion. So, in the end it is cleared that in some characters the concept of cultural hybridity is succeed for example in case of Karamat, he gains position which he wants as a Home Secretary in London parliament. But in case of Aneeka the concept of adopting cultural hybridity is not succeeded, she has a relationship with Eamonn just to bring back her brother in which she is not gain any positive result. However, this study is focusing on three or four characters, in which Aneeka is the main protagonist. This research work is limited to specific perspective of cultural hybridity, identity, home, and border, but there are number of different lenses through which this work would be observed for example different characters may examine from psycho analysis approach to find out the complexity of the characters in a different way.

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