

## ANALYZING CULTURAL HYBRIDITY IN *HOME FIRE*: A POST-COLONIAL PERSPECTIVE

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### ABSTRACT

*Cultural hybridity is an integral part of migrants' lives who cross borders and as a result they follow new routes, side by side they connect with their roots. When people migrated due to different reasons, these people also face exploitation and biased behavior of their masters or dominant nations. With the passage of time they stand for their right and succeed somehow in achieving them. In this research work Homi Bhabha's cultural hybridity is examined. Which is present in his book The Location of Culture. In this selected work two Muslim families migrated to Britain. And in U.S their new generation face problem of identity, home, and cultural hybridity. In diaspora people face different types of problems when they settle into a new country. In new country these people and the new generation would not welcome in positive way they considered them as outsiders and because living in foreign country when they go back to their home country their own people also not enthusiastic towards them due to cultural mixing of that specific foreign country. These people often marginalized and face so many problems in consequence. Aneeka is portray as modern and culturally hybrid character who also considered other in Britain and in Pakistan as well. It is realized when she was struggling for her dead brother, she wanted him to get back home. In this study cultural hybridity stance of Homi Bhabha and the concept of Can the Subaltern Speak? By Gayatri Spivak is applied as theoretical lens. The qualitative approach is used in this research, in which text is analyzed deeply to dig out the concepts of cultural hybridity, home, border, and mimicry in the work Home Fire.*

**Keywords:** Cultural hybridity, Home, Border, Identity, Mimicry, Diaspora.

### INTRODUCTION

When we talked about cultural hybridity, mimicry, home, borders, and identity issues, all these terms are products of diaspora. And diaspora is connected with the British. Diaspora is the migration of people from one land to another. In post colonialism when colonized people get their freedom from colonizers, in some situations colonizers and dominant nations take prisoners of that colonized nation as their servants, they use their labor for their benefit but in return they exploit them. In the present research, the work *Home Fire* also depicts the biased behavior of the dominant U.S. over minority people. Britain influences Asian countries up till now after the independence of these nations. In the present scenario Asian people also migrated to dominant European countries for different purposes for example for employment, education, and after getting married.

The people who went to Western countries for employment, get jobs and earn but they do not get jobs according to their qualifications because in west eastern education is considered inferior and lacking

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behind, so educated youth also are doing different types of jobs such as drivers, take away, and waiters, etc. they are not treated equally and they are exploited. When migration takes place whatever the reason behind it, this creates some issues of identity and cultural hybridity, which are the result of this traveling across countries. And when people settle in a foreign nation their new generation become dual national and in this generation some become author and poets, same is the case with Kamila Shamsie, she is also a dual nation author and she writes about diasporic families in her work. If one talked about the purity of the culture, it is also mixed, now in the present time Europeans are considered as white and black Americans.

Wars are also a reason for migration, when after the end of the Second World War people traveled to Europe due to various reasons, these people enlisted for service from the Government to manage the lack of labor, and they gave their services in different fields like health sector and transportation services. Some people arrived to study, and when they get education side by side they follow the culture, language, and costumes of that nation which resulted in hybridity of culture, which further creates complexities in the lives of diasporic people. Some people migrate or they want to run away from the different conditions of the country. For example, if we take the example of Pakistan, in our country political and economic circumstances are not suitable for success. So people migrated to foreign countries to improve the life standard for themselves and their families. Another reason for migration is that people follow their family members who are residing in foreign countries. So as a result in Britain, there is a variety of different nationalities living. Diaspora is a term that simply explains that migrated people live with one another in a foreign country and these people also have a connection to their home country, they have the memory of their traditions and customs. (McLeod, 1965.).

These people are living in a host country but side by side they have memories of their native country. Diaspora communities are complex because they have emotion and feelings related to their past, the new generation of these people are different from the older but the new generation also has a connection to their roots. Different critics, sociologist, and Anthropologists, for example, Hanif Kureishi, Homi K Bhabha, Avtar Brah, and many more explains that diaspora is not a simple concept and idea, it is filled with complexities and mysteries. In the diaspora, people are not without troubles and complications. These people in foreign countries faced intolerance, prejudice, and biased behavior, they make fun of the cultural and religious norms of diasporic people. The work *Home Fire* also depicts this picture of the intolerant and unequal behavior of the British toward the diasporic Muslim family that is Pasha Family, they show contempt and disrespect towards the dressing of Muslim girls, who used to cover their heads. For the people who are living in Eastern countries, life in a foreign country is a dream and the perfect place for them, on the other hand, the immigrant people who lived in the U.S, face difficulties, so this dream to live in a foreign country by Eastern is an illusion because in reality migrated people face biased and unjust behavior in Britain. The idea of Home is also discussed by several postcolonial critics. Home is a very crucial and important place, it gives us residence and identity in this world. It is our root form where we have our basis and foundation.

It gives us safety, reliability, strength, and solace. But Home is not present for migrant people. Salman Rushdie talked in one of his essays about imaginary homes because migrant people are displaced and their homes are not present in full form, they have fragmented form. These critics of post-colonialism describe that there is no return to native homes because their memories are in pieces and fragmented form. In the same way in the present study of *Home Fire*, when protagonist Aneeka went back to Pakistan, after the death of her brother Parvaiz, she wanted him back to the U.S. in a respected way. But when she went to her home country at that stage her relatives did not respect her and cooperate with her, in Pakistan, she is considered a British national, and instead to help her, they taunt her related to her brother's deed. In Britain, she is considered a Muslim-born Pakistani descent and they also do not provide her justice. So it is clear that for diasporic people Home is an imaginary place, and they lived in a third space.

### **Statement of Problem**

In diasporic families, the new generation face different types of challenges in their life, when they spend their life in foreign countries they undergo with two cultures one is the culture of host country and second is the culture of their parents that is the home country culture. So when people migrate from one place to another as a result their young generation adopts culture of host country which create cultural hybridity,

mimicry and identity issues in them. They mimic host culture dresses, customs and language but as a result they would not be accepted in both countries in a positive way.

### **Objectives of Research**

To examine the portrayal of cultural hybridity by the novelist in the selected novel.

### **Research Questions**

How does the novelist portray cultural hybridity in the selected novel?

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Diasporic Trauma**

Abdul Kadir Unal (2022) describes *Home Fire* in terms of Diasporic Trauma. The main purpose of the novel is to highlight conflict of diasporic identity which pinpoints the protagonist to adopted British or Pakistani moral values and identities. Through fragmented narrative technique the trauma of Pasha Family is represented. Trauma theory by Sigmund Freud is used as a theoretical framework. We can find Trauma Theory element in literary piece by looking at the different literary devices present in literature for example fragmented narrative voice, haunting ghosts, repetition and allusions from past etc. Personal trauma and shared trauma are different characters face loss of traditional values, death of dear members and feel hollow. Characters in *Home Fire* travel from Wembley to Istanbul and Karachi as well as Syria and US which creates above-mentioned diasporic traumas. Pasha Family members are also examples of modern migration, Isma studies abroad and in airport she faces investigation, which is also a trauma for her, although she is loyal towards Britain but they did not trust on her. "Grief" is also used by Kamila Shamsie to depict trauma. This results in diasporic trauma. In Post-Colonial work *Home Fire*, trauma is depicted by every main character, Isma while investigation in airport feels stressed and mentally disturbed, Aneeka also faces trauma on hearing news of her brother's death. Emmon bears sadness when he finds out the bad intentions of his father towards Pasha Family. So diasporic trauma reached to its climax in this work of trauma theory applied truly on this work. Characters of this novel experience it in final chapters.

Joshi & Patil (2002) inspect *Burnt Shadows* and *Home Fire* in the viewpoint of identity and history. Identity turns into different shades when people move in several foreign lands, regions and societies. Kamila Shamsie describes that individuals leave their previous locations in selected novels. Hiroka Tanaka the protagonist of *Burnt Shadows* has burnt marks. These marks were in the shape of birds. These marks described her sufferings due to war. These tattoos onto her back given her distinct identity. This happens due to global power dynamics. These birds symbolize her wish for freedom. Tanaka changes her location to another because the circumstances were not suitable for her. The theoretical framework is Homi K. Bhabha's theory of hybridity is used in this work as a theoretical framework. Different theories for examples Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin suggest that hybridity comes in different forms for example linguistic, cultural, political and racial.

Tanka also shows hybridity, when she speaks Urdu, Japanese, English and German in *Burnt Shadows* the characters are also living in multicultural circumstances and they also absorbed British culture. When characters live in multicultural environment their identity becomes fluid. Kamila Shamsie described history informing readers without harming the audience.

Abbasi, et al. (2021) describe orientalism and re-orientalism in *Home Fire* and in *A Passage To India*. The literature produced in colonial and post-colonial time period depicts women as marginalized and submissive beings. Even after colonialism writers portray female characters as voiceless. To highlight this problem the theoretical framework of orientalism and re-orientalism by Edward Said and Lisa Lau is used. In *Home Fire* when at the airport Isma was interrogated, it took two hours for all this process which also shows contempt of western people. They asked again and again for Isma's identity and doubted about her. This shows western notion of othering towards Eastern people. Western people are also biased towards her sense of dressing because of her hijab. In *A Passage To India* Edward Said's another point related to orientalist women is noted, that writers represent women as silent, muted creatures, who never spoke of herself and also unable to represent her emotions and on the other hand white women are shown as literate, independent, intelligent and powerful women.

Female characters represent fragile, weak, shy and stereotyped in colonial as well as in post-colonial literature. These writers present eastern woman marginalized colonial regime because of their oriental perception related to eastern women. And majority of post-colonial writer follow the footsteps of their western masters and portray oriental females as degenerated and morally corrupted beings. It is needed here that women should be represented as strong voices, morally good and constructive beings in the society.

### **Stereotyping Muslim Identity**

Tambunan, et al. (2020) study *Home Fire* and *Exit West* in viewpoint of Rethinking Home and identity of Muslim Diaspora. After 9/11 which arise 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 effect 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 women, she wear 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.

## **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The portrayal of cultural hybridity in selected novel**

*Home Fire* is a contemporary diasporic story that consists of two British Muslim families in England. The first family is known as the name of Pasha, in this family there are a total of five members, Adil Pasha is the father of Isma, Aneeka, and Parvaiz, Isma is the elder sister, Aneeka and Parvaiz are twins. The second family is known by the name of Lone, in this family they are a total of four members, Karamat Lone father of Eamonn Lone, and Emily Lone. Terry Lone is the mother of Eamonn and Emily. Eamonn is a 24-year-old son of Karamat. If we talk about the background of these two families, we came to know that these families are opposite to each other, one is Karamat Lones's family which succeeded due to Karamat's perspective of integration to British, he becomes extremely loyal towards British. And on the other hand in Pasha's family, this family is facing challenges and destruction due to their father whom Britishers consider jihadi. Adil Pasha was the father of Parvaiz, Aneeka, and Isma, for the search for his father and his identity Parvaiz follow the footsteps of his father which causes disastrous results for his family as well for himself. In this work, different characters show hybridity in them, because they are having dual nationalities British and Pakistani. They have their Pakistani roots and also have their British routes, in the form of their cultural adaptation, to sustain in the other nation's land. One by one cultural hybridity in different characters in this work is mentioned in the following study.

Aneeka and Isma both are British-Pakistani girls. These two sisters belong to a Muslim background. They have both nations' traditions and norms in their life. They dressed up in mixed ways, they use half of the Pakistani culture's articles in their dressing and half Western. "Sister's hijabs as proof that British Pakistanis were "caught in the past" the point to their jeans to prove they were "mixed up"" (Shamsie, 2017, p.146). This mentioned quote shows that Isma and Aneeka both cover their heads, follow Islam's teaching, and side by side also wear items from the Western dress code. Which shows their adoption of cultural hybridity. When people went to another nation or culture they follow the rules and cultural values of that culture, and people show sincerity and loyalty to that foreign country, in which they are residing and doing their studies or job. Isma is the elder sister of Aneeka. After the death of their parents, Isma takes care of her younger siblings. When their parents died Aneeka and Parvaiz were both twins and 12 years old. Isma stops her Ph.D. for a short time and she takes care of her young sister and brother.

She earns for them. She loves them and cares for them because it's her responsibility. Isma taught Aneeka about good and bad things just like a mother. Both of them offer prayer and recite Holy Quran but side by side they also absorb the dressing sense, language, and tradition of the host culture, which indicates their hybridity. Bhabha's concept of cultural hybridity is connected with the characters in this work they are offering prayers and reciting Holy Quran which indicates that they are connected with their own culture, and they also adopt dresses and traditions of host culture which shows their interest to the new culture. These are the examples of Homi Bhabha's cultural hybridity.

At the beginning of this work when Isma was checked in by an airport officer and she gets late for her flight at that time, she does not carry her Quran Pak, or family photos, so that the British do not suspect her as an extremist, this is another example which shows hybridity in her character, because she is showing more loyal behavior towards host nation and in result, they again show suspicious attitude towards her. Isma wears a hijab and also uses Western products for her hair care, which indicates a mixture of both cultures. "Fantastic Coffee Companion". (Shamsie, 2017, p.44). After the upbringing of twins Aneeka and Parvaiz. Isma go back to her study life, she was doing her Ph.D. in sociology, but due to the death of her parent, she had to take care of her siblings, and stopped her study. One day in her study routine, she takes coffee, she meets Eamonn, who is the son of Karamat Lone, Isma look at him, and recognized Eamonn as the son of Karamat because Isma has been seen his father earlier in her uncle's photos, these two families are familiar to each other because they have a same Pakistani Muslim background.

Isma and Eamonn developed a relationship and they both often meet in a coffee shop and buy each other a coffee. Isma talks to him about his father, that he abandons them and does different types of work, and also tells him about her mother Zainab, and grandmother. Eamonn also shares his family information with her. In this way,, they both developed a friendly relationship "Can I ask you something?" he said." The turban is that a style or a Muslim thing?" (Shamsie, 2017, p.22). This dialogue is spoken by Eamonn, who asks about the head covering of Isma, that the turban she is wearing is a kind of fashion article or an Islamic obligation. In answer, Isma tells that it is a mixed thing. They both are coming too close to each other. They become informal with each other and share their family histories as well. when we talked about Islamic believes, in Islam relationship between a girl and a boy is prohibited, if they like one another they can join each other by religious norm that is marriage, but on the other hand in Western culture, it is common for a girl and a boy having in a relationship without marriage, so in this case Isma also shows cultural practice of west and have friendship with Eamonn. "Jesus. I mean. Sorry." (Shamsie, 2017, p.22). In this dialogue Eamonn, who instead of praying to Allah Almighty, prays to Jesus, like Christian this shows his cultural hybridity. This is happen because the father of Eamonn is inclined towards the

British most and on the other hand his mother Terry Lone is also Irish American, who tells him little or nothing about Muslim beliefs. So in this situation, Eamonn becomes Hybrid culturally. Eamonn follow culture of host country and he also has a little knowledge of his Muslim beliefs, so he adopts host nation's traditions, the same concept is explained by Bhabha, that people follow the culture of host country as well they have culture of their parents, when they adopt mixed cultural values like Eamonn according to Bhabha these people are culturally hybrid. "Muslim name-"Ayman" become "Eamonn" so that people would know that father had integrated." (Shamsie, 2017 p.18). This quotation indicates that Karamat Lone changed the spelling formation of his son's name, in this way he shows that he is culturally hybrid instead of the Muslim name Ayman he changed it and mixed it because he has an Irish American wife Terry Lone, his Christian wife also shows his loyalties toward British. And his marriage shows that he also adopt both cultures. His son Eamonn is also a biological example of a hybrid generation because he has an Irish American mother and Muslim father, Eamonn is a biologically hybrid character in this work as well as culturally hybrid.

Because he pray to Jesus instead of god, and he also has very little knowledge related to Muslims and their language and culture. He makes relationships with both sisters one by one first with Isma and then after with Aneeka, which is not allowed in the Muslim religion. But because Eamonn also divides between two cultures so this cultural hybridity is the result of that division. Hira Shah is another character, she is the teacher of Isma who also show cultural hybridity. When Isma and Hira talked about Eamonn's relationship with Isma, when due to Karamat Lone, who had unjust behavior towards Muslims, when Isma shows this

point in front of Eamonn, he defend his father and their relationship stopped there. When Isma tells this to Hira Shah, she tells Isma that you have to think about her Hijab again, one reason that Eamonn does not come close to her. The other point she raises is that Quran informs us to enjoy sex, Isma tells her that it has its boundary that for this purpose you must have to get married. On that point, Hira Shah says we use its teachings according to our selection. As Isma is a practicing Muslim as well, she is aware of her Islamic limits. So in this way, Hira Shah, Isma's Ph.D. research teacher shows her point of view differently not religiously. So this also happens because she is also residing in Western culture.

### CONCLUSION

Cultural hybridity, borders, hybridity, home, identity, and otherness, are outcomes of diaspora in post-colonialism. When we talk about diaspora it is a very vast field, it has different types. And it happens due to different reasons. Some people want to achieve a good and better future so they settles in foreign countries, while others want to get an education. When these people migrate they face problems in the form of identity, home, and cultural hybridity, cultural hybridity takes place when people in foreign countries mimic the culture of that country, they are also connected with their roots, in the form of their relation to their relatives and in form of a picture of past. When people cross borders they experience a new type of knowledge of the host country. It is clear in the present study that cultural hybridity is explored in the selective novel. We see the cultural hybridity in different characters in different ways. In the beginning, we see the dressing sense of Isma who wear hijab as well as jeans, it is a kind of mixture of costumes that shows hybridity when it is observed that Isma and Eamonn have friendship its shows relational hybridity, because in Muslims believe it is not allowed to have a male friend. Eamonn also did not know about his Islamic and Muslim beliefs deeply due to his Western mother, although she teach him moral values but not pure Muslim beliefs. Eamonn biologically and culturally is a pure example of hybridity. So Aneeka one of the main characters also shows cultural hybridity. She has a relationship more advanced than her elder sister with Eamonn. She also wears a hijab and offers prayers. She says that she offers prayer because it is a good way to start a day. This remark also shows her cultural hybridity, because as a Muslim, our every deed is for the Allah Almighty. But her beliefs are mixed with Western beliefs which is one reason she suffered. In the novel *Home Fire*, this phenomenon in a very clear. The main focus of this research is on Aneeka and how she suffered. Aneeka is a hybrid character, she transgresses the limit of her beliefs. When she hears the news of her twin's brother's death, she gets crazy and does very immoral act she makes a sexual relationship with Eamonn because he was the son of an influential politician, and he helped her in the procedure to get the corpse of her brother in Britain.

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