



## TANGENT CULTURAL INTERACTION AND POSTCOLONIAL HYBRID SOCIETAL EDIFICE IN HANIEF KURESHI'S "MY SON THE FANATIC"

Ansa Anwar<sup>1</sup>, Aasma Irshad<sup>2</sup>, Maria Batool<sup>3</sup>, Dr. Hassan Bin Zubair<sup>4\*</sup>

BS English, Department of English, Superior College, Mian Channu, Pakistan<sup>1,2,3</sup>

Head of English Department, Superior College, Mian Channu, Pakistan<sup>4</sup>

| Received: 20.08.2023 | Accepted: 24.08.2023 | Published: 02.09.2023

\*Corresponding author: Dr. Hassan Bin Zubair

Head of English Department, Superior College, Mian Channu (Pakistan)

### Abstract

*This study set out to identify the types of hybridity that arise from postcolonial cultural interaction with colonial formation. The depictions of Parvez and Ali from Hanif Kureshi's short story My Son the Fanatic are hybrids, according to researchers. The Homi K. Bhabha concept of hybridity was used in this study, which followed a post-colonialist strategy. Bhabha's viewpoint (1994), it is the result of a tangential interaction in distinct cultures. In this instance, hybridity is understood to be the result of the dominance of colonial power dynamics which involves not only the merging of cultures but also cultural objects that are situated in social as well as historical space as a result of post-colonialism. Due to its significance in analyzing descriptive text in predetermined literary works, the qualitative descriptive approach was employed in this research. According to the research's findings, there are two different ways that hybridity is represented in this research. First, because of the content creation that was created, mimicry has a character that is ambiguous and contradictory in the context of cultural fidelity. Parvez, an individual in the narrative, serves as a metaphor for mimicry. Second, Ali, his son, represented ambivalence in the story. Ali resisted the construction because he understood how colonialism discriminated against his culture, but he was confused about what identity he should adopt.*

**Keywords:** Culture, Hybridity, Postcolonial, Dominance, Mimicry.

### INTRODUCTION

Postcolonial studies revealed that the so-called "third world" is not a homogeneous region. The locale, the individuals, and the society all contribute to the heterogeneity. Additionally, it demonstrated that there was some opposition from the East to the west. One extremely popular variation is what Spivak refers to as "subaltern" (1990). In short, postcolonial presents a framework for deconstructing the assumptions that have always been formed about the main and most general realities in Western thought. The postcolonial paradigm was created in a stranded way by presenting several actual examples of colonialism's negative effects on physical, political, and cultural spheres (Said 1978). The purpose of postcolonial theory development is to deal with the ongoing impacts of colonization on knowledge, which involves the cultural aspect. A new system of international relations will be realized in the future as a result of postcolonial ideology. To address the direction of colonial and colonial states' cultural evolution, postcolonial theory both asserts and examines key differences between them. (Huntington 2001)

This theory is used to examine the societal traits that emerged, particularly in developing nations or former colonies in the decade following the end of colonialism. According to Budiawan (2010), postcolonial theory is a theory that can be used as a method of analysis to criticize colonialism actions that are still being practiced of oppression which gives rise to racism, unequal relationships of subaltern cultures, power, hybridity or theory of creation is not through propaganda about war and brutality but rather is logically through awareness or ideas. Makaryk viewpoint (2007), the term postcolonial refers to a group of philosophical or different methods that challenge the status of postcolonial and colonial entities. Ratna (2008) comes to the same conclusion as Makaryk that post-colonialism refers to methodologies taken to study various cultural manifestations that take place in Modern Europe's former colonial nations, such as history, economics, politics, literary works, and various other writings. Alternatively, to put it another way, postcolonial is a term or an implement that

examines the economic, cultural, and social connections where postcolonial concerns are represented.

On the other hand, Bhabha (1994) criticized Edward Said and other orientalist concepts' binary opposition paradigm of relations between colonies. While Fanon concentrates on colonial discourse, Said does as well. Both contemplate that the situation between colonized and invaders is incorporated and constant, also diverse and conflicting with each other, while Bhabha's notions claim that neither the invader nor the occupied are autonomous of each other. Between colonized and invaders, in the words of Bhabha in Mashlihatin (2013), there is an "intermediate space" that permits interaction. There is room for opposition in the space between the two.

As a result of the interaction between colonized and invaders in the wide space between these, a hybrid identity is created. In the opinion of Day & Foulcher (2008), the word "hybridity" is used to describe interactions between various cultural forms that can lead to the creation of new identities and cultures, each with its own history and literary forms. Utilizing imitation, the technique of hybridity must be carried out. The term 'mimicry' is a dispersed imitation of colonial identity in an "impure" world of colonialism, reconfigured to fit the unique sense and apprehension of colonialism. Because there was inconsistency in the colonial discussion, the mix of individuality as a result of imitation was not entirely organized or managed by the power of colonialism. According to Bhabha, colonial influence has always been ambivalent, torn between showing itself as genuine and knowledgeable through its articulation, which demonstrates repetition and distinction Mishra (2007).

The narrative of Hanif Kureshi's masterpiece *My Son the Fanatic* portrays the phenomena of hybridity and mimicry. The life of a Pakistani immigrant who resided in England is depicted in this short story. Parvez, a taxi driver, and their father decided to migrate from Pakistan to England to live a decent life. His problematic holy education, which was so demanding that it led to a diverse sense of religious authenticity, was the cause of his traumatic childhood. He worked as a taxi driver for 40 years while living in England and visited brothels. Instead, his son Ali, whom he had wanted would carry on the family's vision of achieving success and riches in England, took a different path. Since Ali became aware of their religious beliefs, he has made an effort to change his behavior and way of thinking. He disagreed with all of his father's practices, which were unreligious and based on eastern culture.

The difference between the two characters' perspectives is what prompted this study's postcolonial analysis. The preparation of colonization does not need to be imperialism as it was during the previous colonial era. The ideas of hybridity, mimicry, and ambivalence discussed above all deal with it. This work is full of cultural identity depictions of hybridity. The main aim is to portray the procedure of hybridity, mimicry, and contradiction in the different characters of the particular text by employing the postcolonial method. Individuality can be determined by the way the people in the story behave and speak.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Although those who assert to be professionals with a postcolonial viewpoint are not able to evade this trap, Gilbert (1997) stated that the 'Postcolonial Theory' came into being between the half of the

20th century which is perceived as a process of deconstruction of binary and dual intellectual frameworks concerning the book by him titled as "Postcolonial Theory: Contexts, Standards, Politics and Governance". The dualist rational paradigm that dominates Western knowledge, particularly in the Eastern concerns, all the time puts the West, the colonizers, oneself, spectators, and the East as an inferior world. The East is occupied; foreigners are treated as commodities.

Easterners are perceived by modern Westerners as being irrational, sentimental, and barbaric (they are sometimes referred to as "Eastern despotic" in politics). A subset of postmodern ideas, the concept of postcolonial theory is a theory of criticism. Postcolonial research demonstrates that the so-called "third world" is not a homogeneous region. The locale, individuals, and society all contribute to the heterogeneity. He also demonstrated that there was some opposition from the East to the West. In summary, post-colonialism offers a structure for destabilizing the fundamental tenets of Western thought, which have consistently asserted that they are the main and most worldwide truths. The postcolonial concept was created in a stranded way by bringing up numerous real examples of colonization's adverse impacts on physical, political, and cultural spheres.

The goal of postcolonial theory development is to address the ongoing impacts of colonization on knowledge, which involves the cultural aspect. A new system of international relations will be realized in the future as a result of postcolonial ideology. A theory known as postcolonial posits and investigates basic distinctions between the colonized nations and colonizing relations in sense of their respective progress. It is used to examine traits of culture that emerged, particularly in developing nations or former colonies during the years following the end of colonization.

## Bhabha's Hybridity Theory

The emergence of different cultures in the area of interaction created possible by colonization is known as hybridity. The stint relates to the blending of two separate classes to produce a third form, known as a hybrid species, just like in horticulture. The concept of hybridity is linked to Bhabha's analysis of the interactions between invaders and colonizers, particularly how they rely on one another and co-create their subjectivities (mimicry and ambivalence). All cultural expressions and systems, according to Bhabha (1994), are created in what he refers to as the "Third Space" of Assertion. Cultural uniqueness evolves in ambiguous and contradictory situations, which Bhabha refers to as the "purity" of an unsustainable cultural order. According to Bhabha, acknowledging the conflicting space of cultural belonging can aid in overcoming the variety of different cultures and acknowledging hybridization power in its locales with different cultures. The cultural power will ultimately lead to superior culture and inferior cultural construction. By introducing the notion that the tradition they bear is higher to the culture of the colonized, they want to construct the thought of colonialism.

## Mimicry Theory

Bhabha's point of view (1984) is, that imitation is a form of culture that gives the colonial subject autonomy and the chance to interact with the dominant power while also participating in it by displaying a subjectivity that mimics the colonizer but is not completely identical. One way the colonized express their perception of the invaders' dominance is through mimicry. People

who have been colonized feel more powerful and in a higher place than other colonized people because they imitate.

## Ambivalence Theory

Young's viewpoint (1995), ambivalence is both a fascination and resistance to a specific thing, individual, or activity. Bhabha even borrowed the phrase from the colonial context, which describes the process of acceptance and denial that indicates the connection between colonizers and the colonized. In this instance, ambivalence refers to the fluctuating state of the connection between collaboration and resistance in the issues of colonialism. As stated by Bhabha (1984), ambivalence demonstrates that the context of colonialism is linked to the oppressed people or instructs simultaneously. According to Bhabha, the colonial discourse's ambiguity had effects on both the invaders and the colonized. This idea has something associated with hybridity. This is a result of the ambivalence of dispersing authority, specifically from a place of supremacy, to allow for hybridization or transformation when dealing with other cultural backgrounds in colonial discourse. If the imitation represents the attitude of accepting the colonialists' superiority as true, the act of opposition signifies the boldness of rejecting the concept. There was a confrontation with all kinds of colonialism, as well as submitting to the notion that the colonizers were superior. It is important to stress that when the term "colonizers" is used in this context, it refers to all forms of colonialism, including racism, and patriarchal systems, and not just the Europeans or Dutch who at the time dominated the Dutch East Indies.

## Previous Studies

Numerous journals published research that dissected Kureishi's masterpiece *My Son the Fanatic*. Let's start with the viewpoint of Rokhman in his journal (2015) titled "British Immigrant's Father and Son: Psychoanalyzing Kureishi's *My Son the Fanatic*". The work applies Sigmund Freud's theory of identification, unconsciousness, and recognition. According to this study, Parvez's dreams are a father's suppressed image of his child.

Rizvi (2015) published a second analysis in the journal of Rokhman named "Irony, Self-identification, and Islam: Denunciation and endorsement in "My Son the Fanatic" by Hanif Kureishi. According to this journal, Rizvi wrote that the masterpiece by Han if Kureishi demonstrates how the western world creates irony, and then drives propaganda against Islam. The conflict and discord between Parvez and Ali as a result of these ideological distinctions are depicted in the story. The post-colonial idea in the short tale is a result of personality issues and ideological transformations found in Islam and Western culture, both of which are extensively discussed in this journal.

Ali (2018) wrote the third journal, named "Identity Crisis" in Kureishi's notable work *My Son the Fanatic*. He wrote that the author's tale depicts an aspect of identity exploration undertaken by Asians in Europe as an extension of the culture of the West. To assimilate into British society, the colonial subject rebuilt all social spheres of customs, habits, patterns of behavior, and language.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To highlight the postcolonial theories in "My Son the Fanatic".
- To explore Bhaba's point of view in Hanif Kureishi's masterpiece titled "My Son the Fanatic".

- To show the identity crisis of immigrants just after World War II.
- To highlight the effects of post-colonialism in "My Son the Fanatic".

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How has Hanif Kureishi portrayed the identity issues faced by the immigrants in colonial societies?
2. How has "My Son the Fanatic" been analyzed from a postcolonial perspective?

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study employed a qualitative methodology. Taylor and Bogdan in Moleong (2001) explore the ways and means as techniques that result in descriptive data in accounting or verbal form of individuals or actions which must be witnessed. Subsequent, to the two phases of the study, the data-collecting step is the first step. According to Faruk (2012), collecting data is a set of methods that is a reinforcement of human senses to gather evidence relevant to the research issue. After focusing on that particular text, the details that will be used in the analysis phase of the process are collected. In the evaluation stage, a qualitative approach is used, and the short story research is done according to post-colonialism. This work is determined by seeking aspects associated with hybridity.

## TEXTUAL ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

It can find violence all over the world as a result of colonization in the history of the subcontinent. In today's world, the system of colonialism and imperialism has not followed much as in previous ages. It creates aggression, physical abuse, violence as well as destruction, which is opposed to the law of humanity. While on the other hand, it still follows many societies of the postcolonial world because it gives a sense of superiority to them. It provides the effect of ex-colonial thought that considers colonized as inferior and the colonizers as superior.

Hanif Kureishi has portrayed the concept of cross-culture and hybridity in his masterpiece titled *My Son the Fanatic*. His main aim is to present the deep effect of colonization on Eastern minds. He has brought two main characters; Parvez and Ali just to fulfill his goal. Parvez belongs to Pakistan and then he moves to England for a decent and better life for his family. There he has been working as a driver. He wants to spend his life according to the European style as he is much inspired by their superior system. His son Ali is totally against European values. Ali prefers Eastern values and he has a firm belief in Islam. An identity clash is found in both characters as Parvez follows Western life while Ali is a religious person and follows his forefathers' values. The question raises in their minds "who are they"?

When two cultures mix, then it gives a formation of a new mixed culture and that is called hybridity. Hybridity is not only the concept of cross-culture, rather it clears the sense that colonizers impose their power through thinking and living style. They allow Eastern people to raise their lifestyle, but according to Western values. They install the idea of successful life and superiority in Eastern minds. Just after the Second World War, many people moved to England as they wanted to make themselves decent. People from many countries migrated to the UK and these

countries were Pakistan, Mexico, Jamaica, India as well as Bangladesh. In the short story, *My Son the Fanatic*, Parvez's family is a true representation of hybridity. It is quoted that: "Parvez has been a taxi driver for twenty years. Half that time he had to work at a firm. Like him. Most of the other drivers are Punjabis. They prefer to work at night, the roads were clearer and many are better" (Kureishi, 1994).

## Mimicry

To imitate something refers to mimicry. This key term is given by Homi K. Bhabha. He installs the idea that colonized mimics colonizers. They follow the liberty, cultural values, traditions, and norms of colonizers just to make themselves sober and decent, just like colonizers. This mimicry identity gives them satisfaction in an "impure colonial environment". The character of Parvez is the perfect example of mimicry, part of Bhabha's theory as he mimics the pattern of European life, but in reality, he belongs to the East. Parvez is disappointed with his own cultural identity because he believes that this lifestyle is not given him a clear identity, full liberation, and a way to a successful life. He thinks that the life he has been spending in Lahore is against his principles. In *My Son The Fanatic*, it is claimed that: "Parvez had grown up in Lahore where all the boys had been taught, Koran. To stop him from falling asleep when he studied, The Maulvi had attached a piece of string to the ceiling and tied it to Parvez hair's, so that if his head fell forward, he would instantly awake" (Kureishi, 1994).

From the above quotation, it is clear that Parvez suffered mental trauma in his childhood when he gave attention to his religion and studied Islam in his homeland, Lahore. The wrong guidance provides him with the wrong paradigm of religion. He considers it a rigid, conservative, and restrictive religion. While, on the other hand, in England, he refuses to follow the system of his own culture, rather he firmly follows Western values. It is clear from the quote: "Ali then reminded Parvez that he had ordered his wife to cook pork sausages, saying to her, You're not in the village now, This is England. We have to fit in". (Kureishi, 1994). This claim of Parvez is shown how he mimics other cultures. He knows that alcohol and pork are strictly forbidden in his religion. Knowing all of that, he wants to take such a type of food. His claim, "You are not in the village now", shows that he consciously consumes these drinks and forgets the rules of his religion. These claims are not shown only the wrong guidance, rather it hits the idea of a hybrid ideology that allows him to follow Western culture if his religion or culture restricts him, but he still does so consciously.

## Ambivalence

Ambivalence is also given by Homi K. Bhabha. This is considered the most important concept in postcolonial literature. It refers to the elements of love and hate, repulsion and attraction, disagreement and agreement, nurturing and exploiting, disliking and liking at the same time in any society. It shows the disturbing affiliation between colonized and colonizers. It is closely associated with the relationship between orientals and Occidentals in the subcontinent. Hanif Kureishi shows ambivalence in his masterpiece *My Son The Fanatic*. The characters of Parvez (father) and Ali (son) are the perfect example of this aspect. The title itself suggests the idea of ambivalence to the readers. Parvez wants to follow Western people, on the other hand, Ali wants to follow Eastern culture. Parvez neglects the rules and regulations of his religion, but Ali leaves Western education just to spend his life

according to the values of his homeland. We can see the elements of liking and disliking, attraction and repulsion, disagreeing and agreeing, and nurturing and exploiting at the same time through both characters. Parvez agrees with Western values, but Ali does not. Parvez likes colonizers, but Ali hates them. Parvez feels attraction towards the Western lifestyle while Ali shows repulsion towards Western culture. It is clearly shown in the original text by Hanif Kureishi: "I feel as if I've lost my son. Parvez told to Bettina. I can't bear to be looked at as if I'm Criminal. I've decided what to do" (Kureishi, 1994).

In this short story, Hanif Kureishi portrays Parvez as an ambitious character. He wants his son to be a perfect gentleman and prepares him according to Western people. He wishes that his son educates well, gets a good job there, gets married happily, and lives a cherished life. But Ali leaves all the ideas of his father. He leaves his degree, music, and white girlfriend and throws his favorite magazines. Ali's attitude vanishes the wishes of Parvez. Parvez's efforts are seen as useless efforts as they do not change his son's life. It is quoted: "What do you mean by make the best of it? Asked the boy 'well'. Said Parvez. For start.... You should enjoy yourself. Yes. Enjoy yourself without hurting others" (Kureishi, 1994).

## Resistance

Ali is considered the most prominent example of resistance. Ali shows resistance to the cultural identity of Western people. He resists his father as well. He leaves all his previous habits like playboy magazine, and his girlfriend, throws his favorite music accessories, and firmly follows his religion. He prays five times a day. He resists the idea of superiority because he does not consider the West superior. His father beats him many times just for the sake of following the West. Till the end of the story, he shows resistance towards the thoughts of his father. He has his religion, cultural values, customs, traditions, and norms and he prefers them. It is clear from the quote by Hanif Kureishi: "The Problem is this, the boy said. He leaned across the table. For the first time that night, his eyes were alive. You are implicated in western civilization.....The western materialist hates u, Ali said. Papa, how can you love something which hates you." (Kureishi, 1994). Ali stocks in a third world as he does not follow the Western living style, while on the other hand, he is in confusion because he does not recognize Eastern values. This resistance is the main conflict between them, father and son.

It is relevant to their conflict: "No! Parvez thought for a moment, But he is growing a beard... To stop him from falling asleep, the Moulvi had tied a string to Parvez's hair and the ceiling so that if his head fell forward he would instantly awake. In a low monotonous voice, the boy explained that Parvez had not lived a good life, he had broken countless laws of the Koran... You know, he said, Now let me out!" (Kureishi, 1994). These dialogues clearly show the changing nature of Ali and how his father feels bad about this change. Ali has grown his beard and this physical change shows his religion. He leaves his previous habits, which are close to Western style, but he strictly forgets them. "You know, he said, Let me out!" is offered by Ali. He just wants freedom of choice which his father does not give him. Above all, he resists his father's thoughts, his previous habits as well as values and brings a clear change in his personality.

## CONCLUSION

To sum up, it is clear that *My Son the Fanatic* is considered a masterpiece by Hanif Kureishi. He portrays the two main characters just to complete his goal. He wants to represent the effects of colonization on the minds of colonized people. The concepts of a postcolonial theory which is given by Homi K. Bhabha like hybridity, mimicry, and ambivalence are seen in this notable short story. The concept of cross-culture refers to hybridity and it is shown through the mix and unclear identity of a Pakistani family who migrated to England. Parvez mimics Western people just for the sake of living a happy and decent life. He migrated to England just for the better life of his family and there he mimics them. After the Second World War, many people migrated to the UK because it is considered that Western people are superior and others are inferior.

In this text, we can see the concept of ambivalence as well. The elements of love and hate, attraction and repulsion, agree and disagree at the same time. Both son and father are closely associated with this term. The father loves Western culture, but the son does not. The father feels attraction towards the West, while his son resists this identity. Ali resists the thoughts of his father. He rejects his previous priorities in his life. He becomes a religious person and wants to spend the rest of his life according to his own culture and religious values. Ali lives his life in a third space as he does not like Western identity, but at the same time, he does not recognize Eastern values.

## REFERENCES

1. Ali, H., & Ahmad, N. (2018). Identity Crisis in Hanif Kureishi's *My Son the Fanatic*. 7(2), 285–291.
2. Arianto, T., & Ambalegin. (2019). Indoctrination Against Women in “The Lowland” by Jhumpa Lahiri. *OKARA: Jurnal Bahasa Dan Sastra*, 12(2), 153–166. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.19105/ojbs.v12i2.1935>.
3. Bhabha, H. K. (1984). Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse. *Discipleship: A Special Issue on Psychoanalysis*, 28, 125–133. <https://doi.org/10.2307/778467>
4. Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. London: Routledge.
5. Budiawan. (2010). *Ambivalensi: PostKolonialisme membedah musik sampai agama di Indoensia*. Yogyakarta: Jalasutra. Print.
6. Day, T., & Foulcher. (2008). *Bahasan Kolonial dalam Sastra Indonesia Modern Catatan Pendahuluan*., Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia. Print.
7. Faruk. (2007). *Belenggu PascaKolonial, Hegemoni dan Resistensi dalam Sastra Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar. Print.
8. Faruk. (2012). *Metode Penelitian Sastra Sebuah Penjelajahan Awal*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar. Print.
9. Gilbert, B. M. (1997). *Postcolonial Theory: Contexts, Practices, Politics*. London: Verso. Print.
10. Huntington, S. P. (2001). *Benturan antar Peradaban*. Yogyakarta: Qalam. Print.
11. Kureishi, H. (1994). *“My Son The Fanatic”*. Boston: The New Yorker. Print.
12. Mashlihatin, A. (2013). *Teori pascakolonialisme homi k. bhabha: ontologi dan epistemologinya*. Print.
13. Mishra, V. (2007). *The Literature of the Indian Diaspora Theorizing the Diasporic Imaginary*. London: Routledge. Print.
14. Moleong, L. J. (2017). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (37th ed.). Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya. Print.
15. Ratna, N. K. (2008). *Postkolonialisme Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar. Print.
16. Rizvi, A. (2015). Berjudul Irony, identity and Islam: rejection and acceptance in hanif kureishi's “My Son the Fanatic.” *International Journal Of English Language, Literature And Translation Studies (IJELR)*, 2(3), 214–217. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.33329/ijelr>
17. Rokhman, M. A. (2015). British Immigrant's Father and Son: Psychoanalysing Kureishi's *My Son The Fanatic*. *Humaniora*, 17(2), 204–211. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.22146/jh.v17i2.846>.
18. Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon. Print.
19. Spivak, G. C. (1990). *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Columbia: Columbia University Press. Print.
20. Young, R. J. C. (1995). *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race*. London and New York: Routledge. Print.