



EXPLORING HOMI K. BHABHA’S HYBRIDITY IN THE PAKISTANI MOVIE  
“KHUDA KAY LIYE”: A POSTCOLONIAL DISCOURSE

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Abstract

This paper is conducted in order to examine the influence of multiplicity of cultures which led the characters to undergo hybridity. In this regard, the researcher has opted the concept of hybridity formulated by Homi K. Bhabha in his renowned work ‘The Location of Culture’. This research revolves around a Pakistani movie Khuda Kay Liye by Shoaib Mansoor. This movie was released in 2007. This study shows that even after a long time of colonial rule of British our generations are still influenced by the western cultures and lifestyles. This provides a significant analysis of the movie where the leading characters are scrutinized by the researcher. For instance, Mansoor undergoes hybridity due to his affection for the more liberal and Western lifestyle while retaining his cultural values and norms at some instances. This hybrid identity brings tensions in his life and thus intensified global conflicts. Sarmad’s passion for music is lost between his searches for spiritual achievements and liberalism. Mary carrying a British culture along with her is captured by the extremism in Pakistan. The shifts in the lives of these characters in not in terms of geography only, rather it displaces their identities making them hybrid individuals who are neither entirely western nor eastern. The study presents a heart wrenching picture of the lives of hybrid individuals who are captured by the external forces for their beliefs either domestically or globally.

**Key Words:** Hybridity, Post-Colonialism, Khuda Kay Liye, Lollywood

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## INTRODUCTION

The mastery of Pakistani cinema can be evaluated by looking into the historical excellence of its predecessors. Lollywood is the term which is used to refer the movies of Pakistani film makers. Bilal argues that during the 1970s and 1980s, an average of 100 films was being released by Pakistani film makers. As it was the peak time for Pakistani film industry, so the number of cinemas reached to 1300. This witnesses a rich legacy of Pakistani Film Industry. However, there have been many issues in-between which ruined the charm of Pakistani cinema. During the first two decades of 21<sup>st</sup> century, there has been a significant decline in the world of cinemas. It was the time when movies *Khuda Kay Liye* and *Bol* emerged to pave the ways for Pakistani cinema.

The Pakistani film industry addresses a diverse range of genres and themes. It has a great number of blockbuster movies which scrutinize social, political and global issues. One of them is *Khuda Kay Liye*. The cinemas displayed this masterpiece in 2007. The writer, Shoaib Mansoor, had written the storyline in an intriguing and thrilling manner. The movie revolves around three lead characters who are first cousins. Sarmad and Mansoor are two brothers and Mary is their paternal cousin. Both these brothers reside in Lahore, Pakistan, and they have keen interest in music. The story takes another direction when Sarmad gets influence of an Islamic scholar, Maulana Tahiri. Maulana convinces Sarmad that his involvement in music is strictly prohibited in Islam. Thereupon, he transforms himself into a Jihadist. The change appears in both his actions and appearance. However, Mary lives in England with his father, Hussain, and his girlfriend. Mary is in a relationship with his British classmate, Dave. Hussain is strictly against Mary's relationship and plan of marriage with a British boy. Although Mary was born and raised as a British girl, but still his father wants her to embrace traditional values of Muslim family. Therefore, he takes Mary to Pakistan without letting her know his intentions. In Pakistan, he made Mary marry Sarmad, his younger nephew who had been captured by Taliban leader. Sarmad marries Mary in order to save their generations from being indulged in British culture which is interpreted as appropriate by his uncle and Maulana. In Lahore, it was not possible for them to bound Mary against her will. Therefore, they take her to Waziristan and marry her forcefully.

On the other hand, Mansoor goes to US in order to pursue his passion for music. There, he gets involved with a girl named Jennie. Initially, he refuses the marriage proposal of Jennie as their marriage would result a hybrid and confused generation. Later on, he accepts and marries Jennie. Things take a twist after 9/11 and US agencies arrest Mansoor for being guilty of 9/11 attacks. After a series of events both the brothers return to Lahore, and lived with their parents while continuing their affection for music. Though Mary was rescued by Dave and British officials, but she returns to Waziristan with her daughter and opens a school for educating girls.

In 1954, Shoaib Mansoor, a renowned figure was born who has marked significant contributions in the world of entertainment industry. He is well-known writer, film maker and director. His contributions in the entertainment industry cover both the television since 1976. The first television show led by him was *Jharnay* which aired on PTV. He is not behind anyone when it comes to the domain of music. The widely acknowledged patriotic song, *Dil Dil Pakistan*, was written and composed by him in 1987. Besides the credit of many blockbuster dramas of Pakistan television industry goes to him. In international world, he got recognition due to a number of masterpieces which includes *Ankahi* (1982), *Fifty Fifty* (1980) and *Alpha Bravo Charlie* (1998). He was attributed as a successful film maker after the victorious releases of *Khuda Kay Liye* (2007) and *Bol* (2011). *Khuda Kay Liye* (2007) was a massive success for him for which he has received *Silver Pyramid Award* from the Cairo International Film Festival for 2007. Moreover, he has also captured the prestigious award, *Sitara-e-Imtiaz* in 2008. His journey does not end here. In 2017, another storyline of Mansoor hit the cinemas nationwide which was entitled *Verna*. Currently, Masoor has worked on his another exciting project which is *Aasmaan Bolay Ga*.

Post colonialism is a literary theory in the discourse of colonial societies. It refers to the fiction and non-fiction of the countries which were once under the influence of colonial powers (Umair & Lawan, 2024). There are many theories of postcolonial studies. Some of the widely acknowledged theories and essays including *Black Skin, White Mask* by Frantz Fanon, *Orientalism* by Edward Said, *The Location of Culture* by Homi K Bhabha and *Can a Subaltern Speak?* by Gayatri Spivak. The researcher has opted for the Homi K Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*. Umar and Lawan (2024) recalls the contribution of Bhabha in analyzing postcolonial literature. In 'The Location of Culture', Bhabha has formulated four key elements in a post-colonial discourse which are mimicry, hybridity, ambivalence and the third space. However, this particular research is based on the element of hybridity in the Pakistani movie *Khuda Kay Liye* produced by Shoaib Mansoor.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To analyze the hybridity in the Pakistani movie *Khuda Kay Liye* produced by Shoaib Mansoor.
- To critically analyze the impact of hybridity of cultures and religions in the Pakistani movie *Khuda Kay Liye* produced by Shoaib Mansoor.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do characters in the Pakistani movie *Khuda Kay Liye* portray hybridity?
2. What is the role of hybridity in exhibiting tension in the plot of the Pakistani movie *Khuda Kay Liye* produced by Shoaib Mansoor?

## RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

The research is significant as it uncovers the different cultures and influence of these cultures on the characters of the movie. It enables the readers to understand the state of confusion of characters with the help data analysis. This paper provides a comprehension of several hybrid characters and how this hybridity affects the events of the plot.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Many researches have been conducted on the several movies for the purpose of highlighting themes and genre of cinema. Nonetheless, a few researches are based on the compare and contrast patterns and to explore the relationship between fiction and cinema by organizing comparative studies. A few movies examine the post-colonial impact on the colonizers. These people who were colonized often portray characteristics of hybridity and ambivalence which results them to find out their third space. Naveed (2015) investigates the Pakistani Identities in the non-Western cinema after 9/11 attacks. This research is based on the two notable postcolonial discourses such as *Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *Khuda Kay Liye*. This novel and movie, respectively, explores the damage caused to the Pakistani identity post 9/11. It reflects how westerns view Pakistani Muslims and their identity is targeted often due to their appearance. In *Reluctant Fundamentalist*, Changez is considered as a terrorist due to his appearance, particularly, his beard. On the contrary, Mansoor faces challenges after 9/11 due to being a Muslim in America. This shows how these attacks have shaped the narratives of western world regarding the identities Pakistanis.

Zaheer et al (2024) conducted a similar research which focuses on both the *Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid and the film *Khuda Kay Liye* by Shoaib Mansoor. This research provides a significant understanding of marginalization and identity crises and the ramifications of 9/11. This study describes how the characters face marginalization at different levels such as cultural, religious and international. Changez of Hamid's storyline is often interpreted as a terrorist due to his beard. Similarly, Mansoor was marginalized after 9/11 in US for having a Muslim name and identity. On the other hand, Sarmad and Mary are captured by the religious extremism in Pakistan

Areqi (2017) has conducted a research where he studied hybridity from two different perspectives. The term 'hybridity' has its roots with a plant or animal which was the outcome of either two species or parents. However, hybridity refers to the confusion, instable mindset, double consciousness, ambiguity and third space from the perspective of post colonialism (Kon, 2024). Hybridity is an element of postcolonial studies which presents the lives and mindsets of the characters as unhappy and discontent. Apart from this, this researcher has also used references from the Holy Quran where he delineates the hybridization and associates his notion with the Islamic perspective. Islamic perspective views hybridity as a deception, hypocrisy, insincerity and hesitance.

Karmi and Salar (2024) scrutinizes hybridity and cultural duality in the character of Dr. Aziz written by E.M Foster. This paper navigates the loss of culture among Indians after the entrance of British colonizers. Dr. Aziz is influenced by the English culture, language and lifestyle. He adopts English culture and lifestyle which results in a hybrid personality. There is duality in the behavior of Dr. Aziz. Sometimes, he displays his courteous attitude towards English people by arranging trip for them, however, at other instances, he refuses their friendships. This is evident that he is a hybrid individual who has lost his origin between two cultures.

Sibtain et al. (2021) unfolds the themes of diasporic identities and identity crisis in the movie *Khuda Kay Liye*. These issues related to identity are evaluated through the Pakistani Muslims who are residing in Chicago and London. This research aims to focus on the identities of different characters. Some of the characters retain their native identity while others carry their diasporic identity such as Sheikh and Hussain. Similarly, Sarmad remains confused between liberalism and fundamentalism.

Aforementioned literature review suggests that there is a diverse range of researches on the element of hybridity and identity crisis of diasporic identities in the postcolonial literature either in the genre of novel or movie. Moreover, there are a few researches which have analyzed the both the genres in a comparative manner. This Pakistani movie has been analyzed by some researchers as they scrutinized identity crisis and other issues displayed in the movie. However, this paper aims to analyze the hybridity among the main characters of *Khuda Kay Liye* by Shoaib Mansoor.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher has opted for qualitative research methodology for this research. The primary purpose of this research is to shed light on the hybridity of characters. This is a consequence of multiple cultural and religious beliefs both at domestic level and international level. This research has selected a Pakistani movie *Khuda Kay Liye* which is written by a well-known Pakistani filmmaker, Shoaib Mansoor. This paper has applied the notion of Bhabha's hybridity in the post-colonial discourse. For this purpose, the researcher has critically analyzed the movie and its dialogues. Hence, the technique of textual analysis has been used in this paper in order to analyze the intended elements in the movie employing close reading strategy.

## DATA ANALYSIS

The movie has multiple elements which are rooted in postcolonial discourse; however, this research is entirely focused on the hybridity of cultures, religious beliefs and ideologies, global perspectives and identities. There are three lead characters of this movie which include Mansoor, Sarmad and Mary. All these characters are found hybrid in their own ways and circumstances.

Mansoor is a young man who resides in Lahore with his family. His love for music showcases his liberalism. Furthermore, he switches to United States to pursue his higher education in music. In Chicago, he meets a girl named Jennie. During her first conversation with that English girl, he reflects his association with his traditional customs and values.

Jennie: Can I buy you a drink?

Mansoor: No, you can't

Jennie: Why?



Mansoor: Liquor

Jennie: Can you have a juice or something?

Mansoor: Sure, but I'll pay.

Jennie: Is it about money?

Mansoor: It's not about money, See, in my country; women don't pay when there is a man involved. (Scene: 59:21 - 59:31)

This scene shows that Mansoor is captured between Eastern and Western cultures and values. On one side, he tries to settle down himself into the western culture and tradition. He leaves his home country in order to learn music in a more modernized and liberal societies like America. The western lifestyle and exposure of a new culture seems more appealing to her, but there are instances in the movie where Mansoor displays his affection and attachment towards his cultural and religious values.

**Mansoor:** It's not the religion, it's the culture. Look Jennie, the fact maybe that I have more feelings for you than you have for me but I don't say them. Because there is no point. We are two different people from two very different cultures.

**Jennie:** So what? Mixing of two different would come up in a beautiful new culture.

Mansoor: I know you stopped drinking, you've quit smoking because of me and who knows tomorrow you might cover your legs but this chain of compromises just goes on and on and on and one day you'll get sick of me.

**Jennie:** And what if I don't?

**Mansoor:** And what about the kids? What would be their names; Muslim names or Christian names? What culture would they belong to and most important what faith would they follow: Christian faith or Muslim faith? (Scene: 1:23:43 – 1:23:38)

The aforementioned scene reflects the cultural and religious tensions Mansoor have for his generation if he marries a Christian girl. He is confused whether his children would follow Islam or Christianity.

**American Officer:** O God! protect me and bless me with success and bless me with strength to overcome the non-Muslims

**Mansoor:** Sir, I'm sure my mother wouldn't know about it. She must have got it from a religious man.

**American Officer:** Who could possibly be working for Al-Qaida? (Scene: 1:39:19 – 1:39:53)

This scene shows that how the eastern values are targeted in the western society. The hybridity of Mansoor's beliefs caused him to be captured by American officials. The 'Taweez' he was wearing had some numbers including 9 and 11 and the Arabic written on that has a translation which evinces hatred towards non-Muslims. He has liberal ideologies but wearing such accessories represents his cultural and religious values and traditions. This hybridity leads him to have a traumatic time in United States where the US officials tortured him badly. Eventually, he returns to Pakistan and portrayed as sitting on a wheelchair which is a symbol of his struggle to overcome the traumas of the hybrid personality he had been since a long ago.

Apart from Mansoor, Sarmad and Mansoor are also hybrid characters. The character of Sarmad remains hybrid till the end of the movie. He is confused between the liberalism and fundamentalism. He is stuck between the spiritual voyage and artistic passion. His meetings with Moulana Tahiri draw tensions in his life. Though he starts to follow extremist ideology, but he remains discontent throughout. He quits music and embarks on the journey of so-called Jihad. However, he never gathered the courage to kill Muslims in the name of religion. He marries Mary for the sake of religion but the way he never imposed his power over her show his liberalism unless Moulana insisted him to do something worth to prove his manhood. By the end of movie, Mary is rescued by the British officials while Sarmad and Mansoor go back to their home in Lahore. Sarmad continues to offer is prayers and maintains his beard along with his love for music.

On the other hand, Mary who is a representative of Western culture and lifestyle further adds hybridity in the movie. She was born and raised as a British in English culture where there is no discrimination between genders. Her marriage to Sarmad made her encounter with new religious faiths and cultural values where women have no agency and autonomy. Mary and her transformation delineate that how mixing of two different cultures can blur the true identity of an individual. In this hybridity, she ventured to find her third space as she moves back to Waziristan after being rescued by British officials.

Additionally, the character of Hussain who is the father of Mary lives in London for so many years. He is a Muslim who has lost his Islamic beliefs in the British culture and westernized lifestyle. It is shown in the movie that he has relationships with multiple British women in England. However, he wants her daughter to marry a Muslim boy and practice traditional cultural and religious values.

**Sheikh:** *Kuch haya kro Hussain, naam Rasul Allah (S.A.W) kay nawasay ka aur harkatayn Abu Jehal say bhe ghatiya* (Scene: 6:05 - 6:12)

## CONCLUSION

This qualitative research is conducted on the Pakistani movie '*Khuda Kay Liye*' depicts the hybridity and its ramifications in the lives of various characters. Bhabha's hybridity blur the true identity of the individuals, so happened in the movie. This study finds the complexities of mixing of different culture either domestically or internationally. The involvement of the characters of this movie into multiple cultures keeps them confused and hybrid which fuels tensions in their lives. Furthermore, this post-colonial paper examines that how confusion created due to hybridity leads towards third space as happened in the case of Mary. However, Sarmad undergoes a drastic shift from liberalism to fundamentalism. Meanwhile, Mansoor is stuck between his western and eastern viewpoint. For him, western lifestyle and culture is appealing but he attempts to value his own traditions as well.

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