



A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF IDENTITY CRISIS AND CULTURAL ROOTS IN BAPSI SIDHWA'S AN AMERICAN BRAT AND ANITA DESAI'S CRY THE PEACOCK

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Abstract

This study examines the predicament of identification experienced by Dev in *Cry The peacock* and Feroza in *An American Brat*. As immigrant novels from the South Asian diaspora proliferate worldwide, theories on gender and identity primarily view these novels as narratives of moral and psychological development in the main characters. These theories often aim to shed light on the challenging circumstances faced by literary characters who find themselves caught between two distinct situations. Utilizing H.K Bhabha's theory of hybridity as a framework for analysis, this study will employ the ideas of mimicry, ambivalence, and homeliness, which fall under the umbrella of hybridity. These concepts will be used to enhance the comprehension of Feroza's encounters in America and life of Dev in the United Kingdom. Additionally, this study will examine the extent to which individuals bear accountability for their choice to remain in their own country or relocate to another land. The analysis indicates that when individuals are compelled to depart from their homeland in pursuit of better opportunities or as a result of crises, and subsequently establish themselves in a foreign place, the new cultural, economic, and social norms are often reluctant to fully embrace them. Occasionally, individuals face harassment due to their religious beliefs, cultural background, or racial and ethnic identity. It elicits the psychological state of despair in the characters.

Keywords: hybridity; mimicry; ambivalence, homelessness, self-alienation.

Introduction:

This paper will analyze the cultural identities of the Diaspora in both works. Culture is a form of conduct that is passed down from one generation to another. Culture possesses an enduring essence that undergoes transformations over time. The object can be linked to a cannon, and it is, in fact, incomplete. Each nation or country possesses its unique lifestyle and set of moral principles to adhere to. The act of replicating those values or traditions in our lives is referred to as culture. The majority of the research conducted on the works of Bapsi Sidhwa and Anita Desai focuses on the theme of 'trauma' And Identity crisis. Postcolonial novels often address political and cultural issues through the themes of love, desire, and belonging. This is particularly evident in the works of African and Indian subcontinent authors. However, the novels "An American Brat" and "Cry The

Peacock" delve into the ongoing debate around the conflicts experienced by immigrants in America or the UK, namely those related to trans-culturalism, caste, and race.

These two novels explore the concepts of hybridity and diaspora in relation to the protagonists' identity crises, which are repeatedly provoked by their acts. The authors have accurately depicted the reality of compromised individuality and racial bias. We see Feroza and Dev as diaspora characters who is dispersed from their homeland and cultural identity. The first one is their fear in a strange land and the second is the problem of adjustment in a different and completely new environment. The last phase is to shape themselves in Diasporas existence with the large world of politics and national issues.

As individuals, we possess some essential requirements. Based on these demands, we mold our identities in order to establish distinctions. These kind of shapes become integrated into our personality. We inherit these identities from our ancestors and pass them on to the next generation as presenters. The use of language, both spoken and unspoken behavior, the process of socialization, and commonly accepted beliefs are considered taboo in both public and private gatherings. Incorrect usage of concepts or connotations might lead to misunderstandings. People are immigrating to other countries at an accelerated pace, facilitating the continuous spread of language, race, and culture.

Literature Review

This section deals with reviewing some previous studies on the issues of identity, displacement and the analysis of such subjects by using Homi K Bhabha's concept of hybridity and Said's theory of culture and Imperialism. South-Asian writers like Bapsi Sidwa, Anita Dasia, Mohsin Hamid and Kamila Shamsie have put together influence through their writings about identity crisis and cultural differences on the basis of creed, race and religion.

This work, on the other hand, delves deeper into the concept of hybridity as theorists by Homi. K Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (1994) to find out the mimicry, ambivalence, and homeliness in the character of Feroza and Dev. These hybrid elements compel Feroza and Adit to take decision, whether they should leave America/UK or stay in their own country? Bhabha (1994) refers to hybridity as an "in between" or "interstitial" space that gives birth to new signs of identity through a negotiation of differences. (Pp.1-2)

Mimicry originates from the Greek term 'mimesis' and is employed to denote the act of imitation. Aristotle (384-322 BC) employed it in his work, *Poetics*. In 1973, the psychiatrist Jacques Lacan authored an essay titled "The Line and Light" as a part of his book "The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis." In this essay, Lacan elucidated the correlation between imitation and camouflage. Bhabha's concept of imitation was significantly shaped by this work. These elements are seen in the character of Dev. Dev struggles for his identity not finding any similarity between the Indian and the English way of living. He is surprised at the way the English people live silently, "If this were

India...I would by now know all my neighbors even if I had never spoken to them I'd know their taste in music by the sound of their radios..." (56)

He finds it surprising to find English people prefer to live hidden unlike Indians. He is amused by the silent and a sort of invisible living of the British which would happen nowhere in India. Bhabha (1994) defines it as the longing for a transformed, identifiable entity that embodies both similarity and difference, but not entirely. Bhabha argues that culture is composed of conflicting dimensions and perspectives. He further states that the colonial presence is inherently ambiguous, being torn between its portrayal as authentic and authoritative, and its expression as repetition and divergence. According to Alghamdi (2011), one of the significant challenges faced by the post-colonial subject is the relationship between their home and their personality. This connection is widespread and likely has a deep impact. The notion of home is now subject to debate, as it no longer exclusively applies to a certain geographic area and cultural practices. This is due to the emergence of new, mixed, and transitional views. The pages referenced are (Pp12 and 13). Both stories depict the tendency of young individuals

to excessively idolize Western culture and materialism, only to realize that they are ultimately treated as inferior citizens. They not only experienced the loss of their homeland, identity, and money, which was utterly devastating.

Research Methodology

The current study adopts a qualitative methodology. The text employs a comprehensive methodology based on the frameworks established by Said (1993) and Bhabha (1994). These two writers shed insight on the subject of post colonialism. Said (1993) introduces the concept of an occupied nation advocated by settlers, while Bhabha offers his perspective on the displacement of migrants and their residence in other territories. They exert considerable effort to assimilate the culture of the migrated land, but in the process, their own culture and identities become warped. The outcome provides proof that the central theme in diaspora literature is the question of identity, and the main character in the narrative undergoes significant transformations. The novels also emphasize the cultural tragedy around the cultural uniqueness of these folks. They make a sincere effort to adapt to a new society but struggle due to their strong attachment to their native cultural origins, as described by Said (1993).

Theoretical Framework

The present study is grounded on Homi K. Bhabha's overarching concept of cultural discrimination in preference, as well as Edward Said's work on Culture and Imperialism. In his work "The Location of Culture" (1994), Bhabha asserts that cultural distinctions intertwine in a paradoxical manner when time and geography intersect. This intersection gives rise to intricate manifestations of differences and identities, encompassing the past and present, the internal and external, as well as inclusion and exclusion. The perceived omnipotence of a dominating nation's authoritative conduct or culture is not as absolute as it appears. It solely engenders feelings of inferiority in the lives of minority individuals or those who are imitated. It is consistently characterized by anxiety. On the other hand, ambivalence, as mentioned above, essentially refers to a state of mind, social behavior, and cultural conduct that encompasses both good and bad characteristics.

Bhabha elucidates the concept of ambivalence within the context of culture, or culture itself, through deconstructive perspectives. Hybridity refers to the presence of two distinct cultural or traditional backgrounds in an individual. Cultural hybridity encompasses the blending of Eastern and Western civilizations, resulting in the emergence of a distinct identity that arises from the differences between these cultures. However, certain academics also support the favorable elements of hybridity, which result in the emergence of novel cultural forms.

Data Analysis

The narratives of these two novels depict the theological and cultural conflicts that create a distressing and intolerable environment for the afflicted characters. The prevailing social and political turmoil between two nations significantly impacts individuals, leading to the suppression of their aspirations and dreams due to the overwhelming pressure caused by crises. Bhabha defines ambivalence as the occurrence of "slippage," "excess," and "difference" in mimicry (1994, p.122). They are obligated to adhere to the customs of their culture, even if it means making a significant change in their lives. In the United States, it is the arduous procedure of relinquishing and acquiring residences. When the protagonist attempts to assimilate into a different society, they undergo a transformation and become an outsider. As Feroza was processed by an American immigration officer at the airport. Manek, who is Feroza's uncle, asserts his authority over the situation by stating, "Officer, I assure you that she will return either after three months or upon the expiration of her visa." Another incident shows her alien nest when excitement gripped her by seeing the astonishing beauty of America for the first time after getting ease from airport. And it is noticed by Manek in such a way, "Vekh! Vekh! Sher-di-batia!" (see the enlightened beauty of the city)

Inter-faith marriage is not permissible inside the Parsi community. Feroza Ginwalla, the defiant daughter of Cyrus and Zareen, relocates from Lahore to Colorado in order to enhance her circumstances. However, upon her arrival in the United States, she plans to wed David Press, an American of Jewish descent. By examining her character, we are able to gain insight into the Parsi mentality and uncover the presence of fanaticism. According to the historical records and assertions of the Parsi community, it is stated that while they were stationed at the Port of the sub-continent after migrating from Iran, they sought permission to settle in this land. The king of that era offered a glass of milk as evidence of the diverse cultural heritage of this region. The Parsi community responded by blending the sugar lump into the milk, symbolizing their religion's ability to seamlessly integrate into any society due to its inherent sweetness.

She presents realistically the reaction of the Parsi community towards the question of loyalties & Swaraj. The Parsi community also been presented a culturally hybrids in their faiths & mannerism whereas in “Cry The Peacock” The readers are able to perceive the perplexed sense of self and fractured mental state of the expats who found themselves confined in an unfamiliar territory akin to blackbirds. They are regarded as outriders. The state of being alienated and estranged added complexity to their life. The cultural disparity caused significant distress in their lives. Both Adit and Dev, being Indians, have lost their sense of identity. They were displaced from their native land and struggled to establish themselves in the new country. The presence of cultural contradiction is seen in the profound sadness and depression experienced by Adit and Dev. The narrative revolves around their encounter. Dev’s inner mentality was of Indian origin. The life and experiences they endured revealed their real personalities. Initially, Adit had a preference for England, but eventually, he started feeling nostalgic for his hometown. He observed the Indian landscape reflected in the outspread hair across Sarah's shoulders (p-180). Dev initially experienced nostalgia for India but gradually developed a stronger affinity for England. Dev's metamorphosis resembles that of a postcolonial individual. He has both a deep admiration and a strong aversion towards England. He was perplexed by the dilemma of acceptance and rejection. He experienced distress both in terms of his intellectual faculties and his emotional well-being. His cognitive perception and subjective experience are in conflict. He had ambivalent feelings towards London, sometimes experiencing intense dislike and at other times feeling deep affection. "He experiences the complete range of emotions in the love-hate dynamic that exists between the colonialist and the colonized, before ultimately achieving reconciliation," (Sharma 40). During his tour to England, he had a specific objective, but he found himself greatly unsettled by the challenges of everyday living. He harbors social and cultural biases. The source of his pains stemmed from his indecisive mindset, torn between two distinct civilizations. England is an idealized place for him, but he had to sacrifice his own uniqueness to be there. He felt confused when faced with several options. Initially, he experienced the futility of his sojourn in England. Subsequently, he came to comprehend the necessity of engaging in an adventure. He reluctantly visited the countryside. However, this voyage significantly affects his mental state. He was able to discover the enchantment of London while in the countryside. His extended sojourn in the rural area introduced a novel sense of excitement into his life, an excitement that was not derived from exploration but from acknowledgment.

Those locations could evoke his emotions. He was able to liberate his soul in that place. Here, the restorative power of nature could alleviate his ailments. He was captivated by the picturesque landscape of England's rural areas. The change he undergoes is expressed using lyrical language:

Something had happened he remembered it clearly enough - When he sat on the banks of the trout stream in Hampshire... For the first time Dev felt the rapture... that accompanied him back to London, so that he no longer saw it with the eye of a member of a once conquered race, or an apprehensive and short sighted. visitor, but of someone before whom vistas of love, success and joy had opened (229).

Conclusion

The current study seeks to identify the components of hybridism, cultural disparities, and identity turmoil in the novels *An American Brat* and *Cry The Peacock*. The objective of this study is to investigate the elements that contribute to the challenges faced by individuals who undergo cultural transitions. They possess a deep understanding of the actualities of cultural disparities and how these disparities give rise to competition. The geographical and cultural contexts of America and the UK exert a significant influence on the characters' lives, resulting in the emergence of hybrid personalities. Both the writers conclude that the question of identity is an exaggerated reaction which is difficult to understand not only cultural purity but as a process too. The concept of third space and hybridism prove that identity is separated into distinct part which is difficult to solve.

Both of these publications argue that the subject of personality is complex. The characters face significant challenges in their attempts to assimilate; they remain on the periphery of American and British societies as genuine outsiders and distant immigrants. The proposition posits that the dynamic between the colonizer and the colonized engenders enduring effects that are arduous to eradicate. The roles held by Feroza and Dev demonstrate that regardless of their efforts to assimilate into American or British society, they will always be perceived as outsiders. They are individuals who have experienced a significant decline in their values, dignity, self-esteem, and sense of identity, which is very lamentable. Both of these publications argue that the subject of personality is complex. Mimicry, ambivalence and hybridity contradicted their actual and bogus personalities in a ridiculous manner. The characters of the novels can never resolve the issues of identity raised by the writers. They are worthless and alienated in their own country and elsewhere. In fact, they are people without identity who are taken for granted to their inborn identity, and hankering after another that they cannot acquire because of cultural differences and otherness.

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