



RESEARCH PAPER

Hanif Kureishi's "We are Not Jews" in the Perspective of PostColonialism: Hybridity, Othering and Unhomeliness

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ABSTRACT

The article analyzes Hanif Kureishi's short story "We Are Not Jews" through a postcolonial lens, focusing on the key concepts of unhomeliness, Othering, and Hybridity proposed by Homi K. Bhabha. The study demonstrates how colonial ideologies continue to persist, as the main characters struggle with their search for identity and cultural belonging. This struggle leads to a sense of hybridity and unhomeliness. While Bhabha's notion of universal culture suggests positive possibilities, the story highlights the dominance of colonial ideologies, where colonial powers maintain superiority over the former colonized. The characters Azhar, Yvonne, and Azhar's father experience a lack of belonging, which contributes to their hybrid identities and relegates them to the status of "the Other." Despite the end of colonialism, cultural dominance remains, with white individuals treating immigrants as inferior, devoid of identity and culture. The unjust treatment of Azhar's family by Billy further reinforces Bhabha's concepts of unhomeliness, Othering, and hybridity, allowing for a postcolonial interpretation of the story.

KEYWORDS Procolonialism, Bhabha, Kureishi, Unhomeliness, Othering, Hybridity

Introduction

In postmodern times with idea of global culture and identity is popular and urging the different races and cultures to accept and welcome the immigrants at the same time it is observed that in the wake of universal mixing for some people the idea of a stable identity and feeling at home becomes more and more important we see that the former colonial powers simultaneously preach the idea of universal culture and identity and at the same time these former colonial powers want to exercise their dominance in culture and values upon those immigrants who come to the advance countries to get a better future but ultimately here at this point we see that the native people do welcome these formerly colonize people with open arms but still this welcome does not mean that these immigrants will be treated as equal immigrants whose second and third generations are in these countries these in Russian are still it is treated as outsider's among the white people these local white people considered them as settlers who are not equal to them socially economically and culturally the local white treat them as in as like others and themselves as the self the former colonial powers pred themselves as more advance and inculcated in other concept that their culture was a mainly hotspot one which could not stand white or Anglo European culture which is more civilise and sophisticated in fact it is the post on criticism that the notes the idea of colonise and oppressed people by any other Nation mostly wide your PM and the main concern of theoretical framework is to undermine the undermine the contrast and comparison politically socially and psychologically differentiate between the ideology of colonials and colonized people.

The present paper aims at locating the sense of othering hybridity and unhomeliness to Hanif Qureshi as we are not used that depicted story is an illustration of an Anglo-Pakistani boy named Other whose mother is a local English and his father belongs to India that Other the protagonist of the story is facing the dilemma of hybridity at home and at school where his classmates bully him and frequently play pranks on him at home he finds his father and uncle chatting in Urdu and he just gets bits and fragments of their chit-chat his father who is an immigrant wants to be a writer with the advice of try again and better at this he always announces that they would go home this announcement gives Other and his mother who think that why home when they are already home does the whole story of a family facing the post on your dilemma of othering hybridity and unhomeliness.

Postcolonialism serves as an umbrella term and the key concept of theory applied here are Othering, Hybridity and Unhomeliness. These key concepts are presented by different theorists but in modern times these are mostly related to an influential critic of 21st century Homi Bhabha. His most prominent theories are found in his book "The Location of Culture".

Bhabha (1994) in his book, *The Location of Culture* which is a collection of his ideas regarding the post-colonial studies discusses the different key concepts which have widely been acknowledged and which further enable the readers to locate the dilemma of Othering and mixing of Culture. Mixing of Culture which constructs the hybridity, Othering and feeling of unhomeliness even when they are home. These ideas truly depict the working phenomenon of colonial and colonized ideologies which separate between the self and the other. According to Bhabha (1994) split cultural contact which occurs because of migration from one place to another around the globe produces an unstable idea of self. The self or imposed migration is usually to seek a better future and is generally carried out by the former colonized people as an internalized feeling of the sense of better future also denotes the idea that former colonial powers have produced a hodgepodge postcolonial subjects which neither accept the original culture and identity and nor are welcomed and accepted by the advanced countries as fully humans who come to live among them. This tussle on being in between, feeling of hanging between two ideologies and cultures, a continuous psychological movement from uncertain to more uncertainties leads to the post-trauma of cultural as well geographic displacement. A dilemma within which one lives and which is addressed by Homi Bhabha as Unhomeliness. This does not mean that unhomeliness means that one does not have a home rather it is the feeling of being unhomey when even one is in home but not home in one self. In simple and conveying terms, the movement from place to place has made you a psychological and ideological refugee and unhomed self.

Hybridity on the other hand is thought to be a revolving and is always in evolutionary process, this evolving and ongoing process is a fusion of indigenous and that of colonial culture. Possible positive outcome of this hybrid self is that it is in its outlook a positive, productive and evolving concept and ideology which is promoting and advocating the message to the inhabitants all around the globe that compacting world in itself is becoming hybrid. In recent times the concept is related with Homi Bhabha.

Who stresses the fact that colonial powers and colonized subjects are interdependent and should go for transcultural values as Bhabha (1994) in his book *Location of Culture* remarks it is that third space though unrepresentable in itself which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that meaning and symbol of culture have no truer unity or fix it. Bhabha (1994) comes with the opinion that

this third space would be an alien territory which may offer a place for international culture about the protective possibility of third space as (...may reveal that theoretical recognition of the splits space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualizing and international culture.)

Keeping in mind the colonial ideology the colonizers consider themselves as the ideal humans, civilized, sophisticated and showing rationality, the "self" and the people whom they invaded as low as "Others". This ideology of the colonizers is justified by the colonizers in a way that since they are more rational and advanced in education and technology so they have the Divine right to invade the black or savages in the name of help and this Divine right is justified with, "white man's burden ". They have the godly right to teach the others make them appropriate and depriving the others of their pre-colonial culture and ideology. Homi Bhabha in his essays states that with this image of lowers and inferiors from self the colonizers invaded their lands. This ideology of colonial course which makes the colonized as lower in mentality, inferior in race and culture serves as a tool of acquiring the power role.

Literature Review

Postcolonial criticism deals with the dilemma of oppressed people, those who are suffering from the trauma of social, cultural and political inequalities. The present research article aims at analyzing the phenomenon of Othering, hybridity and unhomeliness faced by colonized people, perhaps the most discussed issue in the contemporary writings. Since the present article is related with the works of Hanif Kureishi, the literature review of the article centers around mainly the works of mentioned writer from the postcolonial perspective and to make the present article easier for readers previous researches of the relative theory have been deliberately mentioned.

The Pakistani Diaspora in Hanif Kureishi's Three Short Stories, *We are Not Jews, With Your Tongue Down My Throat* and *My Son the Fanatic* by Ozturk (2020) shows the postcolonial strain of home and unhomeliness where English mother suffers the most from the hands of society and family. Azhar the boy is found in between situation where he does not know clearly about his cultural belonging and for this in between situation he is racially abused at the hands of society. 1 The story shows the inferiority complex of Azhar at hands of his neighbor. In the second story "With Your Tongue Down My Throat" two sisters Nadia and Nina are shown as the East and the West that can never be together and that the ties of sisters are not strong as they belong to two different cultures and ideologies, the only bond they show is their Pakistani father but even this bond is shown so weak. "My Son the Fanatic" shows the adherence of father and son to their respective actual culture, the son discovers his actual self while immigrant father tries to fit in the Western culture by adopting the patterns of his local English fellows. (Ozturk, 2020)

Hammad Mushtaq writes about Othering, Stereotyping And Hybridity In Fiction: *A Postcolonial Analysis of Conrad's Heart Of Darkness (1899) And Coetzee's Waiting For Barbarians (1980)* both the mentioned fictions are replete with the postcolonial concepts, both fictions portray the concept of binaries of colonizers and colonized, starting from the representation of self and other respectively. Both text show that how the colonial looters deprived the natives of their geographical resources in order to satisfy their through the illusion of prosperity and development. This maintenance of self is through the idea natives' representation of others, which serves as a key concept in both fictions. The other concepts in fictions are that of hybridity and stereotyping. (Mushtaq, 2010)

Theater of Identity, *The Buddha of Suburbia* by Radek Glabazna locates the post-colonial concepts of hybridity, identity and subjectivity in the said novel. The essay defines the identity crisis of the protagonist of novel who with the extraordinary skill of mimicry finds his position in mainstream English society and his unconscious attempt against the political and cultural forces of colonialism. This is proved by Radek Glabazna through the conceptual framework of Homi K. Bhabha and Judith Butker. (Glabazna, 2010)

Ali Akbar Moghaddasi Rostami and Farid Parvaneh penned down the Notion of Unhomeliness in Nadine Gordimer's novel *The Pickup*. The mentioned narrative is about story of a couple, an illegal immigrant Abdu and a white woman from a high social class in South Africa named Julie who lost her identity in Abdu's homeland. Julie tried to adapt his husband Abdu's culture, religion and social norms but in vain. The author of the text portrayed the problem of a colonizer and colonized. This study tries to investigate the two wandering and homeless characters through the ideas of in between and unhomeliness in the lens of postcolonial studies. (Moghaddasi Rostami & Parvaneh, 2016)

Ying and others highlighted the notion of Hybridity according to postcolonial studies in Bapsi Sidhwa's *American Brat*. This narrative is about the identity crisis, experienced by the protagonist of the novel, Feroza. The researcher used postcolonial concepts of hybridity, mimicry, ambivalence and unhomeliness. In this research the textual scrutiny of the novel concluded that the protagonist experienced mimicry and ambivalence in United States. She also suffered with unhomeliness in both of her home (Pakistan) and outside home (United States). Hybridity is the most important element in this research because of its impression in Feroza's life. This paper also demonstrated that literature is an authentic medium through which the subjugated are given a voice. (Li, 2016)

Alireza and Rezvaneh have dealt with Bhabha's Notion of Unhomeliness in J. M. Coetzee's *Foe*. This postcolonial reading traces unhomeliness in characters of *Foe* and their cultural identities under the influence of unhomeliness. The main characters of the narrative Susan, Friday and Cruso shift between two cultures and identities. This research proves that *Foe* is an anti-colonial novel in which the author endeavors to portray the ambivalent condition of colonial discourse. As in the aspect of hybridity and unhomeliness, the cultural identity of all the characters was oppressed. This research mirrors Bhabha's (1994) claim that pure cultural identities do not exist rather, they emerged from hybridizing process. (Farahbakhsh & Ranjbar, 2016)

Hybridity of the characters in a short story of Hanif Kureishi, *My Son the Fanatic* is observed by 3 Michelle and Tomi. Researchers' revealed hybridity represented by the main characters Ali and Pervez in the narrative under postcolonialism. This study proves two forms of hybridity. First is mimicry that is represented by the character Parvez in the story and the second is ambivalence represented by his son Ali. Ali was aware of colonial discrimination against culture that is why he resisted the construction but at the same time he was unaware of his own identity. He actually rejected western ideas and was also unable to recognize his ancestral eastern cultural forms. To conclude, the different researches in review from different perspective assert the present articles point of view from the postcolonial study particularly the concept of hybridity, Othering and Unhomeliness in the selected short story "We are not Jews" by Hanif Kureishi.

Material and Methods

The present research article undermines Hanif Kureishis "We Are Not Jews" using the post colonial lens with a special focus on Homi Bhabha's ground breaking ideas

of Othering, hybridity and unhomeliness. The present study explores the implied continuity of Western Colonial mind in a time where colonial powers have shrunk to their actual borders, but still their sense of the "Self" and former colonized still as "Others". According to Bhabha (1994) the idea of othering means to form and regulate the idea of non natives, different and as inferiors. The present study will investigate that how the represented characters are treated as "Others" based on their cultural identity, race and religion. Bhabha (1994) states that, the point between Home and Unhome is an unidentified self in which we may find how the identity of a person is a mixture of familiar and unfamiliar cultural belongings. This aspect of unhomeliness and othering can be justified by the bus journey of Azhar and his mother where the mother advises Azhar "hold onto them tightly", this remark shows that they were not at home even when they have the tickets of the bus. Big Billy and conductor of the bus here represent the representatives of 'the self' who would not let Azhar and his Mother continue their journey peacefully and they are enjoying free ride. This scene proves the unjust treatment of Azhar, who is an outsider and other.

The present study also explores the concept of Hybridity through the mixing and interaction of different cultures and races but this mixing of cultures is not welcomed by the natives. Yvone, the mother is upset about the incident happened in the bus since she has become a hybrid by marrying a Paki, a darkie so she will have to pay the full fare. Her hybrid identity has caused her a consistent fear of being inspected by the bus inspector even when they have bought the tickets. Azhar and Yvone are true examples of hybrid selves who were born and raised in Home, but are declined the safe and stable feelings of being at home.

Data Analysis

Almost all the characters in the selected short story are suffering at the hands of particularly Big Billy and his son little Billy who is a class fellow of Azhar, the protagonist of the story. Yvonne, the mother of Azhar who is a local English, but since she has married a Pakistani Darkie, she also suffers at the hands of native English culture and ideology father of Azhar, shows a lack of mixing with the locals, is an example of unhomeliness and mixed feeling of agony and contempt against the local and the ideological system. Data analysis is based upon the actions and cultural enigma of the mentioned characters which ultimately becomes the Postcolonial manifestation of Othering, hybridity and unhomeliness.

Firstly, the strong elements of Othering can be found in plenty in the story. Mostly related with the feelings and actions of Azhar, who is a school going boy as soon as the story begins Azhar is on a bus with his mother on their way to home, Azhar spotted Big Billy and Little Billy racing to get on the bus and feelings of Azhar at this point are "Azhar closed his eyes and hoped it was moving too rapidly for them to get on" After reading these lines we are not sure that why Azhar hopes about Billy's not getting on, as we are not given any previous background of the boys uneasiness about Billy but this statement clearly shows the fact that Azhar is afraid of them and don't want to face them. Closing the eyes and hoping is a clear strain of the self of Othering, as Azhar is worried about them.

The following incidents of story again trace their relation to the sense of Othering hybridity and unhomeliness. Conductor of the bus is an also a native English, he knows the Bills and let them ride for nothing. Which is a sign of the face that native European shows the same ideology and share it with only their friends, the friends, who are also European. Azhar and his mother have to pay the fare in order to continue the journey, the description of the this payment is even more of a scene of colonial Description of

power, while paying the fare the mother says "please" whispered the mother, making a sign of exasperation." Mother gives the tickets to Azhar with the advice of "hold onto them tightly, in case the inspector gets on" this clearly shows the fact that they are not treated equally and are always afraid of hostile things, while on other hand, the Billys who didn't pay fare, travelling without ticket are not concerned about any inspection. So, this above mentioned situation is a vivid picture of the sense of Othering prevailing among the characters of story, as they are neglected the equality. They are not taken as full humans, they have to say please even after paying for bus, still concerned about the idea of inspector. Situation show the fact as mentioned earlier show the colonial ideology that local white consider themselves as the "self" and the immigrants or nonwhite settlers as "other". This prevailing cultural bias is so strong that even Yvonne the mother, who is a local but her fault is that she has married a Paki, a Darkie, so she must pay the price and now she has also become a half breed, a hybrid, she is not pure now, thus she is also considered and treated as "other". She is becoming the example of hybridity and unhomeliness in her own home when she asks Azhar that this should not be in the notice of his father, as his father always end up with the idea of going home, a thought which shatters the feeling of Yvonne, she becomes anxious and worried that as to why go home, when they are already home. This is the working of the in between feeling which marks the Postcolonial concept of unhomeliness, a situation where the subject is caught in the enigma of in between and is not able to locate the idea of home or the feeling of at home.

As the story moves we see that Azhar's dejection and sense of unhomeliness is increasing more and more. He is being bullied by the Billys and other classmates who frequently play prank on him, his dejection and exhausted behavior is noticed by her mother after return from school "He looked as if he'd been flung into a hedge and rolled in a puddle, he confessed the abuse, Little Billy in particular. This situation shows boys inability to meet the fact that he is not a local rather he is settler, other in society whom society is not ready to accept as equal or a sophisticated, civilized human like them. Yvonne, the mother takes the arm of boy and asks him to reply Little Billy common as muck. But even this counter attack couldn't help the boy as the vocabulary of boy falls short of words and he had to listen more derogatory remarks who says this time "but we aren't as common as a slut who marries a Darkie 'monkey, monkey". These remarks by Billy and other classmates are strengthening the idea of present article that characters are working under the Postcolonial concept of unhomeliness, Othering and hybridity. Here the concept of Bhabha (1994) that hybridity is an evolving process, which may come with the productive results but in situation is not a productive and positive one rather his sense of hybridity is getting strong and strong as his ability of mixing with locals is shattering and he meets only abuse and sense of inferiority. Azhar's origin becomes a confusion for him as his mother is a local white and Pakistani father, his unaccepted identity reinforces increase his feelings of unhomeliness and othering, that he is not equal, he is not at home and he is not pure local.

Still in bus, mother and son continuously bullied by Billy's, they tend to seek some help from the passengers who are on the bus too, "The few other passengers, sitting like statues, were unaware or unconcerned". General behavior of locals is though not hostile, but not a positive or helping one too. They seem to be unaware about the situation on bus which is another sign of imposing the fact that it is alright that "self" is doing right to the "other". They are not concerned with the miserable plight of Yvonne and Azhar, because they are not among themselves.

Homi Bhabha talks about the third space, an alien territory, which may offer a place for international culture. Here we see that there is no third space, there is only the representation of "self and other" Azhar is being given information about his hybrid

origin. He is told that he is some other who does not belong here. This is his hybridity and in particular and in general sense also the being the hybrid character of his mother, who by marrying a Darkie has polluted the sophisticated land. Billy's remark "Thing is.... There is a smell on this bus. They are not pure like them, the very sight of them among the whites is offensive one. They are not human, their smelly bodies are polluting the civilized colonial land and thus they should be confined to their flats where they live in bulks and always eating "Curry and Rice." The strongest elements of Othering are found here that they smell and in their flats they live in large numbers, like the primitive Orientals or barbarians living in caves and holes omitting smell. The incomplete humans, savages and barbarians.

The selected short story depicts Azhar's conversation with his best friend whose name is not mentioned but she tells Azhar that her family had just migrated, on asking the question that why they had to move, her best friend tells Azhar the fact that they were not allowed to go to Cape Town painfully she added that there people with skin were not kind enough to permit black or brown people to go to the areas where white were living. This reference to the apartheid regime serves an example for Azhar that white consider the black people as inferior or less humans but he is too young to understand this concept. A clear and vivid allusion by Hanif Kureishi to show the colonial ideology in his writing perhaps we can understand that since Hanif Kureishi was also a man with hybrid origin, a Pakistan father and English mother, so these elements trace back to the writer's life as well.

Protagonist in the selected short story is as innocent as he cannot understand that as to why his father on different occasions states that "they were going "home" to Pakistan." At this point the mother would greatly be disturbed. She would thought that why to go home when she is already home. Here at this point the colonial ideology again strikes the pathetic family, they are home no doubt but ideologically they are not home in themselves, it is the sense of unhomeliness which urges to move home. Here we see the idea of unhomeliness by Homi Bhabha, a tussle of hanging between two ideologies, a psychological movement from uncertain to more uncertainties and situations may worse than present. A dilemma in which one lives for a long period is known as "unhomeliness" by Homi Bhabha.

The colonial oppression of family does not end only with the exploitation of mother and son only. It is affecting the life of father as well, and father of Azhar who had moved from India to England in search of a better and safe future is still unable to get that. He had been working in a packing factory which was quite a tough job which invoked his anger and usurped his health. He wants to be a writer, he even is studying a course "How to Be a Published Author" but all of efforts go in vain, as all his writings are rejected by different editors. At his continuous failure as a published writer he would burst into Urdu, cursing the English, convinced, were barring him "this shows his unhomeliness at the language. He is unable to use right words in right place. His hybridity is causing him this pain. Unhomeliness here is mixed with unhomeliness as he thinks himself good at writing but actually his works are not according to the standard that of good English author. At one side he is trying to be a writer, and on the other hand he curses the editors who reject his pieces of writing. He is caught in the dilemma of in between situation, a hybridity, where he does not know who actually he is. He is the victim hybridity. Here Bhabha's (1994) concept of interdependency and transcultural area is at work where a hybrid culture should be promoted but father is being remind of his incompetency about writing thus he becomes the victim of Othering and unhomeliness.

At the end we find the boy and mother reach home after being the victim of colonial ideology at the hands of society, but even after reaching the home the sense and feeling of otherness and unhomeliness are not gone. We see that Azhar notices her mother does not kiss his father as usual because she is feeling post trauma of their endeavor. Mother is not home in herself. She is perplexed at what happened with her and son that may go on for the boy and for them. The situation in home is more unhomely and hybrid where soon after entering the house, father calls Azhar gives him beer mixed with lemonade but chatting with other family members in Urdu, a mixed situation causing hybridity to Azhar. Azhar who is unable to grasp what they chat. They use some English words as well but Azhar is at pains to understand what they talk about, he only gets pieces and fragments of their chat, they shout loudly saying out_ out on a cricket match commentary, jumping and leaping in a way that English people never do. Thus his feelings of Othering and unhomeliness do not stop even in home. Azhar, a hybrid in home, feeling unhomeliness and sense of Othering even when he is home with father and uncles. "Azhar was accustomed to being with his family while grasping only fragments what they said. Endeavored to decipher.... Whirling, all the while, in incomprehension".

Conclusion

Perhaps the biggest problem in the present world with immigrants is that they are not sure about their identity, they are continuously in search of their self and sense of cultural and political belonging. The selected short story "We are Not Jews" by Hanif Kureishi is a true description of the Postcolonial dilemma. Nonwhite characters in the story are facing the ideological deprivation at hands of colonial ideology. Those who left their homes and moved to Europe never find themselves at home. They are always considered as hybrid victims who seek their true identity and thus become the rolling Stones between their pre immigration culture and identity and trying to be fit in the present colonial conditions. All their efforts to be become one with the English or "self" are futile. They always hang in between and result is a confused and hodgepodge generation which is left without identity, home and deprive of pure culture. Although there are no more colonial powers at work but still the trace of colonial ideology and superior selves is still at work in the world. Present article proves it keeping in view the Postcolonial concepts as given by Homi K. Bhabha, all the characters of the selected short story are in quest of true identity. They are not home, and their earnest attempt to mix with the white people makes them hybrid, the people without any past ideology and without any present stable and sound culture and ideology.

Recommendations

Since Bhabha's concept of "unhomeliness, Othering and Hybridity " is at work it also creates space for researchers to explore the ideas of working of Louis Althusser's concept of Ideological State Apparatuses where a seemingly just and fair system of ideological institutions support and reinforces a hidden superstructure and paves the foundations for ruling class to rule the working or relate lower class. Further the present paper may also prove helpful to peep into the major concepts of fears and defenses mechanism under the psychoanalytic approach propounded by Jacques Lacan.

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