

ADVANCE SOCIAL SCIENCE ARCHIVE JOURNAL
Available Online: https://assajournal.com
Vol. 5 No. 01 Jan-Mar 2026.Page#.3055-3076
Print ISSN: 3006-2497 Online ISSN: 3006-2500
Platform & Workflow by: Open Journal Systems
https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19696849

Hybridity as a Dynamic Process of Identity Negotiation in Contemporary Pakistani English Fiction

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Abstract
In this study, hybridity is not viewed as a static cultural phenomenon but rather as an ongoing, dynamic phenomenon of identity negotiation in modern Pakistani English fiction. The study focuses on the novels Exist West (2017) by Mohsin Hamid, Home Fire (2017) by Kamila Shamsie, and Red Birds (2018) by Mohammed Hanif to explore the processes through which identities are negotiated and renegotiated amid experiences of displacement, violent politics, and global power imbalances. Contrasting with conventional postcolonial approaches to hybridity, in which hybridity is seen as a static 'third space' (Bhabha, 1994), hybridity in this study is understood as a process influenced by linguistic accommodation, spatial displacement, and psychological change. As seen in the results, identity in Exist West is presented as adaptive and changeable in circumstances of displacement, whereas Home Fire is presented as a process of identity formation that is problematic and institutionally defined by both surveillance and belonging. Meanwhile, Red Birds portrays identity as fragmented due to circumstances of warfare and the collapse of knowledge. In both cases, identity formation is portrayed as a continuous process of negotiation in response to movement and globalized power relations. By combining concepts of hybridity in the work of Homi K. Bhabha with identity process theory (Hall, 1996) and mobility studies (Appadurai, 1996), this analysis contributes to modern postcolonial literary theory through the reconceptualization of Pakistani English literature.

Keywords: Hybridity, Identity Negotiation, Pakistani English Fiction, Postcolonial Literature, Migration, Third Space, Processual Identity

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Postcolonial literature today tends to examine the issue of identity not as something static and essential but rather as an ever shifting process. Identity cannot be defined by fixed concepts such as nationhood, culture, and origin in a world characterized by rapid migration, geopolitical tensions, connectivity via digital technologies, and even global surveillance systems. Instead, identity becomes an outcome of processes that take place in the course of movement, contact, and translation between various contexts that increasingly cross established borders.

For postcolonial theorists, the term hybridity is typically used to refer to the state of being in between. The most influential conceptualization of this notion was presented by Homi K. Bhabha in 1994, who described hybridity as a 'third space' where the colonial oppositions of East versus West, colonizer versus colonized, tradition versus modernity, and self-versus other become

destabilized. According to Bhabha, any cultural meaning can only emerge as an outcome of interaction, translation, and negotiation because nothing comes out of pure and absolute origins. Nevertheless, an important drawback in the majority of the existing critical discourse on the topic is that hybridity is considered mainly as either a spatial or conceptual phenomenon instead of being recognized as an ongoing process that produces and reconstructs identity. According to Kraidy (2019), in the framework of postcolonial criticism, hybridity is used as a descriptive tool, which results in 'conceptual sedimentation,' as defined by Mitchell (2020). Such a static interpretation of the term is inadequate for exploring the identity in contemporary Pakistani English literature, wherein identity is neither found 'inbetween' different cultural contexts but is constantly shaped through movement, displacement, and sociopolitical change.

The paradigm shift from hybridity as a condition to hybridity as a process is congruent with the overall trends within cultural studies and postcolonial theory. According to Hall (1996), who pioneered the study of cultural identity, identity is 'a production, which is never complete, always in process' (p. 222). Likewise, Gilroy (1993) conceptualizes the formation of the Black Atlantic cultural identity as not just a product, but rather a process of movement and negotiation. This processual approach allows us to rethink hybridity as a dynamic, ongoing process.

1.2 Pakistani English Fiction as a Site of Identity Negotiation

The recent emergence of Pakistani English fiction presents a unique opportunity for exploring hybridity as a practice of negotiating identities through dynamic processes. The history of Pakistani English literature, characterized by the presence of colonial influence, postcolonial nation state building, religious identity politics, and contemporary global instability, is progressively transcending its national boundaries to incorporate global affiliations (Kanwal, 2015; Munos, 2020). Despite being a comparatively newer genre than Indian English literature, Pakistani English literature has produced several literary works addressing the themes of migration, displacement, identity, and belonging.

There has been a spectacular rise in the production of Pakistani English literature in the last two decades, during which Pakistani English writers like Mohsin Hamid, Kamila Shamsie, Mohammed Hanif, Nadeem Aslam, and H.M. Naqvi have become well-known on the global literary stage. According to Butt, Rahman, and Jahan (2024), the use of hybridity by these writers goes beyond being a mere topic of discussion; rather, they adopt hybridity as a narrative technique to question the intersections of culture, religion, language, and modernity.

Unlike the past postcolonial literature, Pakistani English fiction in the present age stands out with regard to its focus on contemporary global reality after the event of 9/11. Terror war, growing Islamophobia, surveillance, and bordering practices among others have changed the very conditions through which Pakistani diasporic and transnational identity can be shaped (Aurangzeb & Saeed, 2025). Pakistani writers have reacted to these new dynamics and produced stories that reflect the negotiation of identities under these circumstances.

This identity is not a fully accomplished hybrid identity but one whose construction is influenced by external factors such as immigration regime, state surveillance, the economy of war, ideological belongingness, and asymmetrical global power relations. These different novels include the use of diverse narrative techniques that are appropriate for reflecting the processual nature of identity in the context of negotiation. These narratives are magical realism, classical intertextuality, and satire, respectively.

Magic realism is employed in *Exist West* in terms of magical doors which help migrants move across the globe instantly. As Ali (2023) observes, Hamid's novel creates 'migration futurism' an aesthetic which highlights mobility as the defining condition for identity formation today. *Home Fire* is a reinvention of Antigone by Sophocles into a modern setting involving British Pakistanis

which helps to explore Muslim diasporic identity in terms of surveillance, state power, and conflicting loyalties (Rana, 2022). *Red Birds* uses necropolitical satire for critiquing neo-imperialism in Muslim countries while presenting fractured identity (Ahmad & Hussain, 2023).

1.3 Problem Statement

While there is a large body of research into hybridity in the field of postcolonial literature, much of the extant literature considers hybridity as an either static or spatial entity rather than a dynamic process. This oversight has led to a partial understanding of the actual formation and evolution of identities in modernday narratives, especially those concerned with identity in highly mobile, displaced, and globally unequal contexts.

Regarding Pakistani English literature specifically, scholars have tended to examine the theme of resistance to neo-imperialism, postcolonial trauma, or cultural hybridity as a completed state rather than a work in progress. There is comparatively little emphasis on the way identities themselves negotiate processes, especially when such negotiations are concerned with migration, displacement, temporal dislocation, and global hierarchies of power. In the words of Khan, Ali, and Rehman (2024), 'the processual dimension of hybridity how identities are actively negotiated across time and space remains under theorized in Pakistani literary criticism' (p. 158). Moreover, the analysis of how various narrative techniques construct the identity construction process in several contemporary narratives is rarely carried out. The prevailing trend in academic research is based on the study of particular authors or their individual novels, leading to fragmented knowledge regarding the multiplicity of techniques used by Pakistani English fiction writers for representing the processes of identity negotiation. Clearly, there is a need for the development of a comparative approach that would enable the analysis not only of the features of hybrid identities but also of the processes involved in their transformation.

Such an approach is suggested by the present research paper, which aims to move away from considering hybridity as a static feature of identity construction towards exploring hybridity as a continuous process of identity negotiation. This research paper will investigate the representation of such processes in three contemporary novels utilizing different narrative techniques.

1.3 Research Objectives

These are the research objectives that guide this study:

1. To analyze hybridity as a process in which identity construction takes place in certain selected Pakistani English novels, transcending beyond the static nature of the concept to its process oriented nature.
2. To investigate the process in which identity formation occurs through language, space, and psychology in various contexts and displacement conditions.
3. To analyze how the structure of narrative such as magical realism, intertextuality, and satire influences identity formation.
4. To reconsider the notion of postcolonial identity through a process oriented theoretical approach that combines Bhabha's hybridity and identity process theory.

1.5 Research Questions

The research aims to answer the following questions:

1. How is hybridity portrayed as a fluid identity formation process in Mohsin Hamid's '*Exist West*,' Kamila Shamsie's '*Home Fire*,' and Mohammed Hanif's '*Red Birds*'?
2. In what ways do characters negotiate their identities in relation to changing spatiotemporal and social settings?
3. What is the significance of narrative techniques (magical realism, classical intertextuality, and satire) in constructing identity formation?

4. How is postcolonial identity portrayed as a continuous process rather than a final product of cultural identity?

1.4 Significance of the Study

In terms of postcolonial literary theory, there are at least two major contributions that can be attributed to this paper. The first contribution is methodological since it presents the reconceptualization of hybridity as a process rather than a condition. Therefore, it enriches theoretical possibilities for employing the notion of hybridity beyond its use in spatial metaphors to the temporal and processual context.

The second important contribution of this paper to Pakistani English literary studies lies in its comparative analysis of the three major novels written in contemporary Pakistan. Instead of examining each novel separately, the author focuses on patterns, distinctions, and unique features that can be traced through the analysis of identity formation as process in contemporary Pakistani fiction.

Thirdly, this study contributes to our knowledge of how literature speaks to and interacts with the wider context of the world, including migration, displacement, surveillance, and cultural instability. Through its engagement with contemporary theories of mobility, identity, and power, the study shows that postcolonial literary studies remain relevant in explaining the cultural and political dynamics of the 21st century.

Fourthly, from the perspective of methodology, the study shows that process based close reading can be used to examine the creation of identity in literary texts. Unlike categorizing fixed themes, identity transformation through narrative paths provides a useful way of examining identity construction in other postcolonial literary works.

1.7 Scope and Delimitations

The study is centered only on three current Pakistani English novels that have been published from 2017 to 2018. The selected texts are purposively chosen due to their involvement in migration, displacement, and negotiation of identities through their various narrative approaches. This research paper does not cover all Pakistani English novels comprehensively; however, it offers a comparative study that demonstrates different combinations of hybridity as process.

The study limits itself to the analysis of texts alone, and no empirical techniques such as reader response research or interviews with authors are utilized. The scope of the study is confined to literary representation and narrative techniques and excludes sociological or ethnographical aspects of the creation of identities. Post-colonialism and identity process theories are the main sources of theoretical knowledge, but other theories are also taken into account.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Hybridity as Process: Reinterpreting Bhabha

The theory of hybridity and the third space articulated by Homi K. Bhabha (1994) can be said to form a fundamental part of postcolonial discourse; nevertheless, the theoretical possibilities of the concept in terms of processual identity remain untapped. By articulating the idea of hybridity, Bhabha seeks to subvert essentialist definitions of culture and identity and posit the view that all cultural meanings come into existence through negotiation and translation. However, it would be a mistake to understand the third space simply as a spatial area of culture but rather as an interstitial space where the conditions of cultural definition become subject to questioning.

As Young (2019) points out, it seems that there is confusion regarding the nature of Bhabha's definition of the term. According to Bhabha, 'the production of meaning requires that the two places be mobilized in the passage through a Third Space, which represents both the general

conditions of language and the specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot 'know'' (Bhabha, 1994, p. 53). Clearly, this passage focuses more on 'mobilization,' 'passage,' and 'performative strategy.'

This paper builds upon the theoretical work of Bhabha and emphasizes the process aspects implied in his writings. The concept of hybridity, viewed as a process rather than a state, includes the process of negotiation taking place on several planes: linguistic, spatial, temporal, and psychological. In contrast to the attainment of a stable identity status, people living in the postcolonial world or crossing national boundaries do not develop a fixed hybrid identity but constantly negotiate their identities in response to the changes of circumstances, engaging in practices of adaptation and translation. As Papastergiadis (2018) argues, 'hybridity is not a destination but a journey, not a solution but an ongoing negotiation' (p. 112).

The present research offers a reinterpretation of Bhabha's ideas that addresses one of the main criticisms directed at the theory of hybridity. According to Acheraïou (2011), 'hybridity in Bhabha's formulation sometimes appears as a purely discursive phenomenon, detached from the material conditions of colonial and postcolonial existence' (p. 78). In focusing on the process of hybridity viewed as an interaction embedded in particular conditions of the material world, the paper responds to this criticism while maintaining Bhabha's perspective of cultural encounter as a dynamic process.

2.2 Identity as Becoming: Stuart Hall's Processual Model

The theoretical insights of Stuart Hall (1996) regarding cultural identities are extremely important in the reconceptualization of hybridity as process. In rejecting the notion of identity as either an essence or a unification of the self, Hall proposes that identity should rather be understood as 'a production, which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation' (p. 222). Through such a definition of identity, we can see that it does not represent anything that exists within the self, but is produced constantly.

According to Hall, there is a distinction between 'identity as being' and 'identity as becoming.' The former pertains to the concept of identity that is based on origins, tradition, and essence, which Hall defines as the 'oneness' at the base of all other differences. On the contrary, the latter acknowledges the fact that identities are not unified but rather fragmented and fractured in late modern societies; 'never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions' (Hall, 1996, p. 224).

This dichotomy of being versus becoming is fundamental to the rethinking of hybridity in the current research. Postcolonial literature and theory have often assumed hybridity to be a state of being a state of mixedness that, once realized, defines the identity of the subject. In contrast, a process model of hybridity assumes that hybridity is a form of becoming a continuous and unending act of identity creation that takes place in response to new situations.

The importance of the discursive construction of identities in the work of Stuart Hall also finds its place in the present research, since literature itself can be viewed as a medium for such discourse. According to Hall, 'identities are produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices' (1996, p. 225). Literary works are one of those sites where identities are constructed, debated, and transformed through narration.

2.3 Mobility and Fluid Identity: Appadurai and Global Flows

In addition to the theories mentioned above, Arjun Appadurai's (1996) theory of globalization and cultural flows offers another important theoretical perspective that needs to be explored while negotiating identity in contemporary Pakistani English fiction. Appadurai claims that contemporary globalization should be understood in terms of disjunctive flows in five different dimensions, namely ethnoscapes (people flows), technoscapes (technology flows),

financescapes (capital flows), mediascapes (image flows and narrative flows), and ideoscapes (ideology flows). Such flows lead to a new configuration in the process of identity negotiation which can no longer be studied using nation, culture, or community centered models.

The idea of the ethnoscape plays a crucial role in Appadurai's theory. According to Appadurai, the flow of people across national boundaries whether due to voluntary migration, displacement, or refuge seeking results in what he calls 'diasporic public spheres,' where identities are negotiated through various locations at once. This produces a new form of identity politics that is 'no longer territorial but one linked to flows, networks, and imaginings' (Appadurai, 1996, p. 158).

The importance of flows in comprehending the notion of hybridity in process cannot be overstated. Instead of focusing on location as the key determinant of identity (even if this is an intermediary third space), Appadurai's theory leads us to look at movement and transformation. Identity under conditions of global flows is something which does not stand still, something which perpetually transforms itself based on reconfigured associations of people, representations, technologies, and ideological positions.

Finally, the focus of this research on the imagination as a social practice is indebted to Appadurai's theorizations. According to Appadurai, 'imagination has become an organized field of social practices, a form of work (both in the sense of labor and of culturally organized practice), and a form of negotiation between sites of agency and globally defined fields of possibility' (1996, p. 69). Literary fiction provides one particularly valuable arena in which to investigate such a form of imagination.

2.4 Negotiation, Performance, and Everyday Identity

The idea of negotiation, central to this study's new formulation of hybridity, is inspired by theories on the subject derived from cultural studies and post-colonialism. As stated by de Certeau (1984), negotiation refers to how people use and manipulate constraints and resources to negotiate their existence in everyday life amidst power structures, oppression, and opportunities. Unlike the tendency either to submit or revolt against dominant powers, people continually negotiate through processes of adaptation and appropriation to make sense of their world and produce an identity.

While the idea of negotiation as everyday practice resonates with the theory of performativity advanced by Butler (1990, 1993), there are key differences between both. Butler explains the process of performance as one that produces identities while simultaneously constraining subjectivities. Performances are mandatory but at the same time allow room for resistance, subversion, and redefinition of categories. Though aware of Butler's insights on the subject, this study highlights the aspect of conscious and strategic aspects of negotiation that Butler's framework downplays.

The dramaturgical analysis of identity by Goffman (1959), while formulated in an alternative theoretical perspective, is a valuable tool for examining the process of identity negotiation in literature. The dramaturgical analysis of social interactions as performances, whereby individuals control their impressions, maneuver through front and back stages, and modify performances based on the audience, offers a framework to study the identity negotiation process among characters in Pakistani English literature.

In recent years, these ideas have been applied to postcolonial and transnational settings. Joseph (2018) introduces the term 'strategic hybridity' to explain how people in diasporic settings utilize various cultural elements purposefully to deal with dual membership. Likewise, Vertovec (2019) posits that modern migrations lead to 'superdiverse' environments that necessitate continuous

identity negotiation along multiple dimensions such as linguistic competence, religious orientation, ethnic background, legal status, and transnational allegiance.

2.5 The Psychological Dimension: Identity, Memory, and Temporality

In the processual approach to hybridity elaborated in this study, there is also an engagement with psychological aspects of identity formation, building on insights from contemporary postcolonial psychology and theories of memory. For instance, Hook's (2025) revised psychoanalytic theory based on Fanon's writings demonstrates that colonial and postcolonial identity formation is fraught with many psychological negotiations, such as the process of internalizing other people's perceptions of oneself, ambivalent feelings towards oneself and one's environment, and defense mechanisms.

For displaced and diasporic subjects, memory becomes an indispensable part of negotiating identity. The notion of 'postmemory' proposed by Hirsch (2012) refers to the situation when members of succeeding generations carry in their minds memories of displacement or other traumatic experiences of which they were not directly participants. In Pakistani English literature, characters often engage in navigating between memories of their homeland and the realities of life in diaspora or displacement.

Hybridity of time, as defined in this research, is concerned with the presence of several temporal perspectives in one identity. The characters in modern Pakistani literature face an existence of 'entanglements of times,' which implies that the past, present, and future exist simultaneously and not chronologically. Entanglement of times brings about unique negotiations of identity where individuals negotiate between the past that they originate from and the present that they live in and the future that they hope for.

2.6 Integrating the Theoretical Framework

In theory, the framework used to analyze this study encompasses all of the above perspectives under one analytical perspective. Hybridity will be viewed as a multidimensional process of identity construction that involves language, spatial, temporal, and psychological negotiations. The process of identity negotiation is influenced by the dynamics of global movement of people, images, and ideologies (Appadurai, 1996); however, the act itself is done within the context of local negotiations (de Certeau, 1984). The concept of identity as a performative process of becoming (Hall, 1996) will be taken into consideration as well.

The notion of the third space in this analysis becomes more relevant as a process of continuous negotiation, rather than a stable place for producing a hybrid identity. The point made by Bhabha (1994) regarding the productive nature of cultural encounters should be taken into account; however, here productivity is a process rather than an end result. Also, the materiality of the situation in terms of possible negotiation should be taken into account.

This unified approach offers the appropriate methodologies needed to analyze the workings of hybridity as a dynamic process within contemporary Pakistani English literature. Through the examination of changes in language, space, time, and psychology throughout a narrative's course, the research tracks the making of identity as an ongoing process, never ending but always being created.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Hybridity in Postcolonial Theory: From Condition to Process

There have been many developments in relation to hybridity within postcolonial theory since the conception of hybridity during colonialism. As noted in Robert Young's book Colonial Desire, the definition of hybridity has gone through much development since it was first coined in the context of racial discourse within nineteenth century colonial discourse. For Young, one of the

greatest powers of hybridity is its ability to disrupt pure categories, whether it be racial, cultural, or even national categories.

As pointed out in Bhabha's seminal work, hybridity has been a very important concept within postcolonial studies. According to Kraidy (2019), however, the use of the concept has led to what he refers to as 'conceptual inflation.' More specifically, hybridity began to be applied to a wide variety of phenomena.

In recent times, some studies have specifically considered hybridity as a process rather than as a condition. He (2024) shows, through his study on diasporic fiction in various national settings, that hybridity occurs in language, space, and culture, suggesting that identity negotiations happen simultaneously at different levels. According to He, 'Hybridity is better explained as a verb than a noun a constant negotiation process and not a state of existence' (p. 78). This perspective directly informs the process oriented approach in the current study.

Similarly, Umar and Lawan (2024) posit that hybridity in today's postcolonial contexts represents 'ambivalence and fragmentation instead of synthesis' (p. 112). The key contribution of their work lies in highlighting how identities in postcolonial settings are constructed in terms of conflict and paradoxes rather than by harmonious fusion of elements. In other words, hybridity in the context of post-colonialism does not necessarily mean liberation for individuals, but it can also mean something else.

Mitchell (2020) proposes the concept of 'processual hybridity' as a tool for studying identity in modern migration literature. Analyzing long term case studies of fiction by British Pakistanis, Mitchell claims that hybridity 'becomes a processual loop of negotiation, not a linear process of synthesis' (p. 156). In her study, Mitchell proves that characters in migration stories never attain a fixed hybrid identity but rather are engaged in constant adaptation, struggle, and renegotiation processes.

3.2 Identity Negotiation in Postcolonial Literary Studies

The topic of identity negotiation has gained importance in postcolonial literary criticism, especially with regard to the issues of migration, diaspora, and transnationalism. Identity negotiation theory from social psychology (TingToomey, 2015) has been used by literary critics to analyze the representation of the process of negotiating and constructing identities in fictional texts.

In her work, Kanwal (2015) analyzes identity negotiation in the context of contemporary Pakistani fiction, paying special attention to how identity is constructed in the context of post9/11 experiences of Pakistani subjects and those of Pakistani Diasporas. According to Kanwal, 'the 'war on terror' has created new pressures of identity, requiring Pakistani subjects to negotiate between multiple allegiances to nation, religion, and world citizenship' (p. 45). Her analysis of The Reluctant Fundamentalist by Hamid and Burnt Shadows by Shamsie shows how the characters continuously negotiate their identities under changing political circumstances.

Nazir (2018) applies her approach to the more recent examples of literature by exploring how the modern novels written by Pakistanis in English describe the author's concept of 'precarious belonging' which implies not belonging properly in any place but being linked to a number of places at once. She claims that the modern Pakistani literature 'captures identity as movement rather than location, as process rather than product' (p. 203). Thus, according to her analysis of '*Exist West*' and '*Home Fire*', it is the very form of narratives which captures their identity building process.

Mukhtar & Saeed (2024) discuss re-orientalism in Pakistani Anglophone fiction which suggests that instead of challenging western perceptions, certain texts of today's Pakistan reproduce stereotypes and thus negotiate their identities for a western audience. The importance of their

work lies in addressing the power imbalance involved in such identity negotiations, especially between postcolonial and western audiences. In fact, this analysis is highly important for this research since it can help prevent an overly optimistic interpretation of cultural hybridity as an act of negotiation.

3.3 Pakistani English Fiction: Themes, Trajectories, and Critical Reception

The Pakistani English fiction writing genre has become a substantial subject for literary analysis, especially after the success of internationally recognized authors like Mohsin Hamid, Kamila Shamsie, and Mohammed Hanif. According to the findings of Munos (2020), in her detailed review, the Pakistani English literature has gone from a marginal to a central place in the postcolonial discourse with respect to the issues of terrorism, migration, and diaspora.

According to Munos, early Pakistani English fiction by such writers as Bapsi Sidhwa and Zulfikar Ghose dealt mostly with the topic of national identity formation and the issue of migration during Partition and nation building in a postcolonial context. Nevertheless, as stated by Rahman (2019), modern Pakistani English fiction is characterized by the predominance of transnational and global aspects.

The years following the 9/11 event have been especially significant for Pakistani English fiction. As pointed out by Ahmad (2022), 'Pakistani writers have become vital mediators in helping to articulate the Muslim experience within the era of war on terror; articulating it to an international audience in terms they can understand' (p. 89). Nevertheless, such a mediating role poses certain risks of falling into something that could be labeled as 'terrorism tourism,' meaning the creation of stories that would fit Western images of Pakistan and Muslims.

Indeed, Shamsie herself (2022) has touched upon the issue, stressing the necessity and limitation involved in the portrayal of Pakistani people for foreign readers. The dilemma of representing something authentically and at the same time meeting market demands is yet another facet of hybridity as process.

3.4 The Selected Novels: Critical Context

Hamid's fourth novel, *Exist West* (2017), has been the subject of much critical work. Ali (2023) analyzes the text via 'migration futurism,' noting that rather than serving as means by which to escape material circumstances, the magical doors in the novel actually intensify those same challenges. Specifically, according to Ali, the doors in Hamid's text 'condense rather than eliminate the difficulties of migration, representing border regimes as simultaneously arbitrary and brutally material' (p. 241). This reading is consistent with the current research, with its focus on process as it relates to hybridity.

Another pair of critical works, Shamsie and Ahmed (2022), explore how *Exist West* represents ideas about time and space. According to the authors, 'The simultaneity of displacement and belonging is captured by disrupting linear temporality' (p. 92). Essentially, the authors discuss how characters maintain ties to the places they have left behind and the people they once were while navigating their new surroundings.

Home Fire (2017), Kamila Shamsie's version of Sophocles' Antigone, has been extensively discussed for its dialogue with classical texts and modern politics. In their study, Rana (2022) gives an in-depth look at the intertextuality of *Home Fire*, asserting that Shamsie employs 'classical tragedy to mediate contemporary dilemmas of identity, allegiance, and political power' (p. 72). According to Rana, the tragic elements of *Home Fire* preclude any attempt at conflict resolution since identity dilemmas are inherently unsolvable.

In their discussion of *Home Fire*, Naz and Safdar (2022) take a multicultural and diasporic approach, highlighting that *Home Fire* 'depicts the inability of British multiculturalism to incorporate Muslim identities' (p. 52). Naz and Safdar stress that the characters in *Home Fire* are

faced with multiple conflicting demands from family, community, nation, and state, resulting in identity positions that are fraught with contradictions.

Mohammed Hanif's *Red Birds* (2018), a satirical take on American intervention in Muslim majority spaces, has garnered relatively less critical attention than Hamid's and Shamsie's novels, although it too has inspired much scholarship. Ahmad & Hussain (2023), for instance, explore the 'satirical necropolitics' of the novel the representation of death, dislocation, and devastation through comedy. As they note, 'satire represents extreme forms of violence without any kind of sensationalism or aestheticism, producing critical distance through laughter' (p. 52).

For his part, Khan (2021) explores *Red Birds*' representation of what he calls 'failed hybridity' and the suspension of identity formation in a context of war and occupation. According to Khan, 'identity is represented neither as negotiation nor as a process; rather, identity is shown as suspended and deferred in the face of conditions that render coherent selfhood impossible' (p. 115). Indeed, this analysis forms the foundation of this study's comparative investigation of hybridity in conditions of displacement.

3.5 Research Gaps and Contribution

A number of important gaps emerge from a review of existing literature that the current study aims to address. First, although much theorizing about hybridity has taken place in the context of post-colonialism, very little theorizing has occurred in respect to process of hybridity, especially in terms of literary representation. Second, although much research has been done in the context of Pakistani English fiction, comparative analysis across several texts has yet to occur. Current studies have been limited to either a single author or novel, resulting in fragmentary analysis that does not encompass a comprehensive range of techniques employed by Pakistani fiction in representing identity construction.

Third, the existing literature has failed to link up the concept of hybridity with any other theoretical approach like identity process, mobilities theories, or performance theory.

Fourth, there is no such scholarly concern which considers the particular issue of how different narrative styles affect the depiction of identity negotiations.

The present study attempts to fill this gap by creating a processual theory of hybridity, engaging in comparative analysis of three narratives that make use of different narrative styles, incorporating various theoretical approaches, and considering the issue of the role of narrative style in depicting identity negotiations.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

Firstly, the current body of literature on the subject has not managed to draw parallels between the notion of hybridity and other theories, namely identity process theory, mobilities theories, or performance theory.

Secondly, there is no concern within the field of literature which addresses the specific question of the influence of narrative style on the description of identity negotiation.

This study will attempt to bridge this gap by formulating a processual theory of hybridity and conducting a comparative analysis of three narratives which employ different narrative styles, apply several theories, and discuss the importance of narrative style when describing identity negotiations.

The chosen novels will not be regarded simply as works of fiction, but as discourses where the process of postcolonial identity construction and negotiation takes place. This view is inspired by Hall's (1996) theory that views the role of cultural texts in terms of active producers, rather than passive reflections of identity. In investigating how these novels construct their identity negotiations, the process of discourse analysis will be applied.

4.2 Research Approach: Close Textual Analysis

The methodology predominantly used in this study is close reading, which involves a meticulous examination of the textual features such as language, images, plot, symbols, and voice. Through close textual analysis, one can detect nuances, paradoxes, and ambiguities that are essential to the postcolonial story but are often overlooked through thematic summarization or distance reading.

According to Attridge (2015), close reading is still necessary in literary research since 'it focuses on the specificity of the literary work the specificities of its language, its formal elements, its nuances of meaning rather than regarding it as an example of theoretical statements that precede it' (p. 67). This research utilizes close reading to focus on the specificity of each novel's depiction of identity negotiation.

Some of the close reading techniques used in this research include:

Detailed scrutiny of selected sections: This research does not generalize from whole novels but concentrates on selected sections of text that depict important identity negotiations. These sections are then scrutinized using various techniques that consider the selection of vocabulary, syntax, imagery, and other linguistic elements.

Focus on linguistic and stylistic elements: This method examines the way in which language itself is hybridized through code switching, the use of foreign words, nonstandard English, and other linguistic techniques. It also considers the contribution of stylistic elements, including narration, tense, and point of view.

Interpretation of symbolic/metaphorical meaning: The research takes into account the use of symbolism and metaphors in representing identity formation processes, especially by referring to motifs such as doors/borders/home/movement.

Exploration of narrative techniques and perspective: The study considers narrative techniques that affect identity formation processes such as magical realism, intertextuality, and satire.

4.3 Textual Corpus and Selection Criteria

The current study will consider three recent Pakistani English novels:

- Hamid, M. (2017). *Exist West*. Riverhead Books.
- Shamsie, K. (2017). *Home Fire*. Riverhead Books.
- Hanif, M. (2018). *Red Birds*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

These novels have been chosen using purposive sampling because of their significance to the present research goals and the exploration of issues related to migration, displacement, and identity negotiation. The choice of these novels can be defended on the basis that

Thematic Relevance: All three novels address issues of hybridity, displacement, identity, and how people construct a sense of belonging in different settings.

Contemporary Context: These novels represent the current state of affairs after 9/11 such as migration crisis, wars, Islamophobia, increased surveillance, and neo imperial interventions in global politics. This contemporary setting is what makes the paper different from previous works on Pakistani literature that concentrated on Partition or nation building era.

Diversity in narrative technique: Each of the novels has its unique narrative approach *Exist West* employs magical realism, *Home Fire* makes use of classical intertextuality, while *Red Birds* employs satire and unreliable narrative technique. This helps in analyzing how diverse narrative techniques influence identity negotiation.

Critical significance of the works: The chosen novels have been critically acclaimed due to their immense popularity both among scholars and readers; in fact, they have even been awarded. This makes the novels worthy subjects of research.

Comparability of conditions of displacement: While *Exist West* explores voluntary migration, *Home Fire* examines diasporic identity under Western conditions, and *Red Birds* portrays war driven displacement. This diversity helps analyze the impact of diverse conditions on identity negotiation.

The main sources of data include approximately 2025 selected textual excerpts, seven to nine per book, which have been extracted from several reading sessions. The selected excerpts have been chosen on the basis of the following criteria:

• The richness in linguistic and symbolic dimensions relating to identity formation.
• Significant points in the transformation of identity.
• Contradictions in terms of belongingness and exclusion, past and present, origins, and destinations.
• Unique narrative techniques of each novel.

4.4 Analytical Procedure

The following analysis adheres to a rigorous multistage interpretive approach that ensures thoroughness and coherence. The interpretation of each selected quotation involves the following stages:

Stage 1: Contextual Framing

Each quotation is placed into the context of the narrative to examine its function within the overall plot, character development, and theme building. It involves defining the place of the quotation in the novel and determining its relationship to previous and future events in the story.

Stage 2: Stylistic Features of the Quotation

The examination involves an analysis of the stylistic features, including:

- Lexical means (register, nonstandard language);
- Metaphor and simile;
- Narrative voice and tone;
- Structural devices (repetition, juxtaposition, paradox, etc.)
- Temporal markers and their connection to narrative time.

It allows analyzing how meaning was created using various textual features.

Step 3: Thematic Analysis

Themes associated with issues of hybridity and identity negotiation will be recognized and analyzed in the text, such as:

- Cultural, linguistic, and/or spatial hybridity or in betweenness
- Identity transitions or challenges
- Past/present, origin/destination negotiations
- External pressures such as surveillance, suspicion, or marginalization

Special emphasis is placed on identity as being fluid, fragmented, or negotiated, rather than static or coherent.

Step 4: Mapping of Theory to Text

Findings from the text are then interpreted through the theoretical framework established in section two, by mapping textual details onto concepts like:

- Hybridity and the third space
- Hall's identity as a dynamic process of becoming
- Appadurai's flows, ethnoscapes
- Negotiation as daily practice

The mapping is never mechanical but rather dialogical between text and theory.

Step 5: Comparative Analysis

Finally, comparisons will be made between all three novels in order to identify:

- Similarities and differences in the representation of identity negotiation
- Specific forms of hybridity generated under different circumstances
- The link between narrative and identity construction
- Broader implications about postcolonial identity negotiation

4.5 Validity and Rigor

To guarantee the reliability of the analysis, it involves the following techniques:

Use of close reading: All findings are derived from texts directly, with quotes being used to justify the interpretation. There will be no generalizations based on speculations or assumptions.

Consistency in theoretical use: The theory is applied consistently to the three novels for comparative purposes.

Consideration of counterevidence: In the process of analysis, consideration is given to those sections that go against or deviate from patterns identified in other parts of the novels.

Comparisons: Comparison among the three novels will prevent drawing conclusions from one single novel, and patterns will become visible.

Methodology clarity: The process of analysis is made clear to enable evaluation of the interpretations derived from it.

4.6 Ethical Considerations and Limitations

Since the study is conducted completely using literary works, there is no involvement of human subjects, and consequently, there is no need for ethical clearance for this research. Nevertheless, the research is conducted in keeping with the highest standards of academic integrity through proper citations, honest interpretation of sources, and inclusion of other possible interpretations.

There are several weaknesses in this research project. Firstly, limiting the analysis to only three novels may prove to be restrictive since it would not be an exhaustive investigation of Pakistani English fiction. Secondly, the interpretative nature of the study implies that there can be multiple interpretations of the work, but the study neither suggests exhaustive interpretations nor makes any claim to the same effect. In addition, by focusing solely on textual analysis, the study fails to include reader response theory and socio-empirical aspects of identity formation in consideration.

5 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Linguistic Negotiation: Language as Site of Identity Formation

Linguistic negotiation as a crucial element in identity construction can be seen as a common feature shared by all three novels under discussion. Unlike many other authors who consider language as just a means of communicating, both authors in question explore language as an element of identity construction through negotiation. The authors employ several linguistic techniques in order to illustrate their characters' negotiations between the various linguistic codes, languages, and forms of expression.

The phenomenon of linguistic hybridity in the novel by Mohsin Hamid is revealed through the technique that can be defined as translational narration when the author provides translation between different linguistic worlds, being neither in one nor the other. The apparently simple and clear writing style of Hamid is full of hidden hints of linguistic negotiation between different languages and cultures. The narrator who claims that people in new locations begin to speak ‘not entirely their own’ language performs double function. Linguistically, it means acquisition of a new language and accent; however, symbolically, it illustrates the change in identity because of displacement (Hamid, 2017, p. 87).

According to Ali (2023), the style of narration of Hamid’s novel shows what can be referred to as migratory syntax, that is, sentences which have features of various languages but are coherent

at the same time? It is apparent in those instances when English syntax has features of Urdu or Punjabi. This can be observed in the example 'the past clinging to them even as they moved forward', in which the peculiar verb 'clinging' implies the resistance of the past to English language temporality (Hamid, 2017, p. 112). In their analysis, Shamsie and Ahmed (2022) state that the described strategy of writing 'performs hybridity rather than merely describing it' (p. 96).

As opposed to The Reluctant Fundamentalist, *Home Fire* utilizes another approach to language, which uses linguistic register change to represent identity negotiations under pressure. In particular, the narrator uses four different voices, which belong to Isma, Parvaiz, Aneeka, and Eamonn. Each character uses a different linguistic register in accordance with his/her position in British Pakistani society.

Equally important is the use of Arabic terms related to religion in the novel. Phrases like 'inshallah,' 'haram,' and 'jihad' are not translated, as the author refuses to domesticate Muslim culture within an English, secular context. According to Naz and Safdar (2022), this technique 'rejects the process of translating Islam into Western categories and insists on their untranslatability' (p. 56). The refusal to translate these phrases contributes to linguistic obscurity on behalf of readers who do not understand Arabic.

The novel uses satire as a linguistic device that symbolizes identity fragmentation. Hanif's style of writing can be described in terms of irony, exaggeration, and ambiguity. The use of managerial language to explain an individual's perception of war reflects the absurdity of neoimperialism. As stated by Ahmad and Hussain, 'satire in *Red Birds* works through linguistic displacement by using inappropriate registers for inappropriate objects' (p. 49).

Reported speech plays an especially important role in the portrayal of identity negotiation in the novel. The words of characters are often quoted by unreliable narrators which creates an ambiguity in what exactly has been said and what the true meaning of those words is. Such linguistic ambiguity can be viewed as an embodiment of the 'failed hybridity' (Khan, 2021)a state in which the construction of any identity is impossible due to the wartime context. By complaining about language being 'foreign,' characters speak about the state of 'failed hybridity' when the very language becomes unreliable (Hanif, 2018, p. 134).

5.2 Spatial Negotiation: Borders, Mobility, and the Unstable Self

All three novels portray spatial negotiation as an essential element in identity formation. Nevertheless, there are substantial differences in the way each novel approaches the issue depending on the specific context of spatial displacement.

The doors in *Exist West* are an example of spatial symbolism in relation to the issue of mobility and identity. Unlike reallife border crossing processes, which involve paperwork, surveillance, and possible rejection of the travelers, the magical doors of Hamid's fiction allow for immediate relocation. The magic power of mobility does not resolve the problems of identity negotiation but, on the contrary, makes them even more complicated by adding unexpectedness and abruptness to the experience of displacement. As Ali writes, 'the doors compress the migration process into immediate identity negotiation' (p. 244).

The passage suggests that going through doorways does not result in transformed identities, but rather sets off an endless cycle of transformation. It shows that the past travels along with people as they move from one place to another, where the past no longer fits. In the story, the idea is conveyed by saying that 'the past stuck to them as they progressed into the future,' suggesting that identity is a palimpsest in which old writings are still visible under newer ones (Hamid, 2017, p. 156).

Significantly, however, in *Exist West*, mobility does not appear as an unmitigated good. The migrant camps that the characters stumble across are vast, sprawling places which are becoming increasingly permanent as part of the global regimes which welcome certain people yet exclude others. In the novel's reference to 'how everywhere was becoming like everywhere else,' one sees the process of homogenization brought about by globalization, which complicates stories of hybridization (Hamid, 2017, p. 201). In discussing border regimes, Mezzadra and Neilson (2019) point to the creation of 'differential inclusion' in the current form of mobility.

Space negotiation in *Home Fire* is achieved largely by means of representation of the airport, which appears as a liminal space in various contexts within the narrative. In the context of airports in *Home Fire*, 'identity and belonging must always be interrogated; passports and names can provide evidence that something may be true, but they do not prove anything on their own' (Rana, 2022, p. 76). Thus, at Heathrow, Parvaiz finds out that even his British passport is not enough to allow him to belong and to not arouse suspicions because of his name and appearance (Shamsie, 2017).

In addition to representing border crossing as a negotiation of identity, the novel provides another type of spatial negotiation that of domestic spaces. While Isma's efforts to adhere to Pakistani domestic traditions and succeed professionally reflect the kind of negotiation between the two identities within her, Parvaiz's withdrawal into his room and departure to Syria is an act of rejecting Britishness completely. The negotiation of identity in terms of domestic spaces, in other words, is also important in *Home Fire*.

Red Birds demonstrates spatial negotiation under circumstances in which space itself is uninhabitable due to the existence of war. The space of the refugee camp depicted in the novel is neither origin nor destination; it is a suspended space where identity is never able to settle. According to Khan (2021), 'the camp in *Red Birds* illustrates the negation of spatial negotiation space where the very conditions for forming one's identity have been systematically eradicated' (p. 119).

The treatment of ruins within the novel deserves to be highlighted. The characters of the novel traverse through ruined buildings, defunct military bases, and sites of violent conflicts. Not only do the ruins form the setting of the novel, but they are also active elements that affect identity. When the protagonist states 'we are neither this nor that,' he articulates the failure of spatial categories to establish an identity (Hanif, 2018, p. 167). As distinct from the productive third space described by Bhabha, *Red Birds* depicts what is referred to by Ahmad and Hussain (2023) as 'negative space.'

5.3 Temporal Negotiation: Memory, Present, and Future

Temporal negotiation the negotiation of the relationship between the past, present, and future becomes an important factor in identity development in all three novels.

The phenomenon of temporal negotiation takes the form of the presence of the past in the present in *Exist West*. In the novel, the characters are always carrying their pasts around in the present. However, the past is never something that can be remembered or deliberately forgotten; it is an integral part of the characters' experiences, affecting how they perceive the world around them and respond to different situations (Hamid, 2017). For instance, when Saeed begins praying in a new place, he keeps praying in the same manner as he did in his native land.

In addition, the novel is a reflection of the future orientation component of identity negotiation. Characters think about their future return home, settle somewhere else, continue moving, etc. As noted by Shamsie and Ahmed (2022), 'in *Exist West*, the future is not simply what will happen but a horizon that organizes present experience' (p. 94). In addition, the magical doors that take people to unknown destinations are a symbol of future orientation made tangible.

Home Fire demonstrates temporal negotiation through an intertextual strategy involving classical tragedy. Recasting Sophocles' Antigone, Shamsie introduces an ancient Greek temporal layer to British Pakistani life. The result is temporal layering, wherein characters' actions are imbued with meanings that emerge from another time. For example, when Aneeka defies the state to retrieve her brother's body, she evokes Antigone's defiance of Creon, creating a temporal density impossible for a solely contemporary rendering (Shamsie, 2017). As stated by Rana (2022), 'the intertextuality of the classic allows Shamsie to represent contemporary conflicts as repetitions of ancient motifs while also signaling what is unique about post9/11 reality' (p. 80).

In addition, the concept of memory in the novel is portrayed as contested rather than just persistent. Various characters have differing versions of their pasts, with different versions of the same events serving as tools for negotiating identities. Isma's perception of her father as a terrorist versus Parvaiz's memory of him as an innocent casualty of government violence (Shamsie, 2017) serve as examples. These two memories shape distinct identities, each having its own perspective on life in Britain. In this context, Hirsch (2012), writing on post memory, states that how later generations remember (or are expected to remember) historical trauma plays a pivotal role in shaping their identities.

Temporal negotiations are presented through the use of a nonlinear narrative style in the novel *Red Birds*. This style serves as a tool in representing the temporal fragmentation associated with living in war zones. For example, time is portrayed not as something that progresses, but rather something that remains the same, repeating in endless circles. An instance of this can be observed in the following quote: 'Nothing changes except the names' (Hanif, 2018, p. 203).

The book can also be said to portray something called 'future foreclosure,' which is the lack of any ability to envision the future because of the highly precarious state of things. Unlike the characters in *Exist West* who are actively imagining their futures and taking steps to realize them, the characters in *Red Birds* do not have the capacity to imagine their future selves because it is permanently foreclosed to them.

5.4 Psychological Negotiation: Identity, Affect, and Subjectivity

The psychological aspects of identity negotiation come out strongly in all the three novels, albeit with notable differences depending on the particular context of displacement. In this case, identity negotiation is portrayed by characters not just in terms of adaptation but also internally as transformation, which brings about anxiety, ambivalence, and sometimes trauma.

Identity negotiation from a psychological perspective is depicted in *Exist West* by showing the emotional burden of adaptation. In this regard, one could argue that the characters suffer from 'emotional displacement,' whereby their emotions seem to be at odds with the reality around them. When Saeed and Nadia land in Mykonos, for instance, their sorrow over their homes and families that they have left behind goes hand in hand with their struggle to adapt to their new surroundings (Hamid, 2017).

The dynamics between the two protagonists reflect psychological negotiation as interpersonal. The relationship between Saeed and Nadia varies depending on their different situations and places, sometimes becoming stronger and at other times weaker. The connection between them is not one of stable attachment but of continuous negotiation between two people who evolve over time. As stated by Joseph (2018) in her discussion of 'strategic hybridity,' in cases of intimate relationships where there is migration, identity negotiation is inevitable as partners react differently to changing situations.

Home Fire illustrates psychological negotiation through more explicitly conflicted terms. The characters undergo experiences similar to the ones discussed by Fanon (1952) when he examines

the psychological effects of colonial and postcolonial domination. These include internalizing negative opinions, ambivalence towards both oppressors and oppressed, and creating inflexible identities. Parvaiz's quest for identity through British institutions such as education and the media and later through the Islamic State reflects this search for an established identity that fails each time (Shamsie, 2017).

The novel also embodies what can be called 'surveillance psychology'a mental state in which one feels watched and judged. Parvaiz and Aneeka are among the characters who see themselves as the objects of surveillance by the state and their experiences shape their mentalities accordingly. Being suspected means being suspicious, meaning that external judgment transforms into an internal one. According to Hook's (2025) revision of psychoanalysis proposed by Fanon, being under surveillance creates specific psychological structures, marked by hypervigilance, performance, and fragmentation of personality.

The novel *Red Birds* shows how psychological functioning takes place under extreme conditions when traditional psychological tools are depleted. Characters of the novel face necropolitics as defined by Mbembe (2019) conditions in which normal categories of politics and psychology are suspended because death always hangs over the horizon. The usage of humor in the novel can be considered a special psychological tactic. Laughter in response to objectively terrifying situations cannot mean denial or acceptance but the maintenance of psychological function through absurdist distance (Hanif, 2018).

Furthermore, the novel portrays what may be described as 'narrative psychology' since the act of storytelling is employed to preserve the integrity of one's identity when there are forces that would fragment it. 'Telling stories even when no one listened to them' constitutes what Ahmad and Hussain (2023) refer to as 'narrative resistance,' or the continued production of meaning despite its impossibility (p. 54). Narrative resistance constitutes the very basic requirement for identity construction, which is the constant production of narratives about oneself.

5.5 Comparative Analysis: Three Configurations of Hybridity as Process

The comparative analysis identifies three separate modes of hybridity as process in the selected novels, depending on the varying conditions of displacement and the strategies used by the author in storytelling.

In *Exist West*, we have what can be described as 'adaptive hybridity,' or processes of identity formation involving fluidity and openness in which transformation continues indefinitely. The characters in Hamid's novel adjust to their environment without forgetting who they were before, resulting in an identity that involves layers but not fragmentation. Magical realism allows the expression of adaptation as potential rather than just inevitability, creating room for other possibilities in identity formation. Adaptive hybridity in *Exist West* includes: (1) temporal layering, not replacement; (2) relational negotiation, not solitary identity formation; (3) openness to future transformation, not closure; and (4) preservation of cultural memory without reification.

Home Fire embodies 'conflictual hybridity' identity formation entangled in contradictions and irresolvable pressures. The characters of Shamsie's novel face incompatible allegiances that are not possible to reconcile, and hence the identity formations emerge within the ambivalent context rather than as harmonious synthesis. This is made possible due to the intertextuality framework of the classical tragedy tradition, which allows one to represent the conflicts in question as real and legitimate contradictions for which compromise is not attainable at the cost of losses. Conflictual hybridity in *Home Fire* features the following: Institutional mediation, such as state surveillance and laws; generational struggle over issues of memory and belonging; tragic

nature preventing a happy outcome; and the continued existence of external pressure during identity construction.

Red Birds can be considered an example of 'failed hybridity,' when the context of identity negotiation has been so thoroughly undermined that identity cannot be successfully achieved. Identity for the characters in Hanif's work does not take place within the process of negotiation, but is suspended and made impossible by the conditions surrounding it. The satirical tone allows for this kind of failure to be portrayed without either hopelessness or misguided optimism. Some of the features of failed hybridity in *Red Birds* are: (1) temporal suspension, not advancement; (2) linguistic estrangement and communicative breakdown; (3) the breakdown of spatial distinctions, which would allow for a sense of belonging; and (4) a minimum of resistance via humor.

5.6 Synthesis: Hybridity as Ongoing Process

The results of the comparative analysis further reinforce the main thesis of this study, proving that hybridity within modern Pakistani English fiction functions as a process rather than an end state. Within all three novels, the identity of the characters is never perceived as already accomplished and stable; on the contrary, it is created and constantly negotiated depending on the situation.

The dynamic perception of hybridity presented in the comparative analysis differs from conventional approaches to hybrid identity, which assume that Bhabha's concept of the third space implies a stable identity of the characters that can be achieved in this space. On the contrary, the third space is revealed as a site of constant movement and negotiations.

The three models discussed above, i.e., adaptive, conflictual, and failed hybridity, reflect three distinct possibilities along the spectrum in the context of identity negotiation in certain conditions. Whether hybridity is effective or not in terms of identity construction would depend on several material factors such as mobility, legality, economic power, and social support. While challenging the notion of hybridity's inherent liberation, this discovery does not overlook its potential for producing a fruitful outcome under certain circumstances.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary of Findings

This research aimed at investigating hybridity as an ongoing phenomenon in the context of contemporary Pakistani English fiction using comparative analysis of Mohsin Hamid's *Exist West*, Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*, and Mohammed Hanif's *Red Birds*. The research is based on a theoretical framework that includes notions of hybridity by Homi K. Bhabha, identity as becoming by Stuart Hall, and global flows by Arjun Appadurai, among others. It has shown that hybridity in the analyzed novels occurs as an ongoing process.

The results show that the process of hybridity functions on several planes. On the linguistic plane, the characters negotiate different languages, registers, and styles of communication, where hybridity is expressed in the form of translational narration, codes witching, and satirical displacement. In the spatial realm, the characters traverse the space through borders, camps, airports, and ruins, and their spatial negotiation spans from adaptive movement to suspended spatiality. Temporally, the characters deal with the relationship between the past, present, and future, resulting in temporal layering, generational conflict, or foreclosed futures, based on the circumstances.

The comparative analysis revealed three different types of hybridity as process. In *Exist West*, hybridity is adaptive. It is dynamic, open, and transformative in the context of compulsory yet feasible migration. In *Home Fire*, hybridity is conflictual. It is marked by contradictions, tensions, and unresolvable demands in the context of surveillance and statecraft in diaspora societies. In

Red Birds, hybridity is a failure. It is a failure because the conditions required to negotiate one's identity have become impossible amid warfare and refugee camps.

6.2 Theoretical Contributions

There are many contributions of this study to both postcolonial theory and literary studies. Firstly, it proposes an innovative process based approach towards the phenomenon of hybridity. In doing so, it addresses some critical objections that have been raised against hybridity by making it more analytically powerful for studying postcolonial identities.

Secondly, it shows the importance of incorporating a range of theoretical perspectives in the analysis of literary texts dealing with contemporary identity formation. These theories include postcolonial theory, identity process theory, mobility studies, and performance theory.

Thirdly, the research will also make a contribution to the field of Pakistani English literary studies by comparing and contrasting three contemporary Pakistani novels to identify trends and deviations in the depiction of identity construction. This type of comparative reading goes beyond the conventional mode of textual reading to provide insights into the nature of the interaction between Pakistani fiction and the global context of migration and surveillance.

Finally, the study will prove the need for a close reading of literary texts in order to understand postcolonial literature. It will prove the role of the novel in constructing knowledge about postcolonial subjectivities that cannot be understood merely at the theoretical or thematic level.

6.3 Methodological Reflections

The methodology used in this study the close reading informed by theoretical framework and comparative analysis was successful in analyzing hybridity as a process. Analyzing the changes in identity along with the narrative trajectory as opposed to labeling thematic elements allowed for a focus on the processes involved. The comparative element prevented oversimplification of the issue based on one novel, while also allowing common threads to emerge.

Nevertheless, it is evident that literary analysis alone is insufficient in researching the process of identity formation. Literary texts may be complex and insightful, yet they cannot provide information regarding reality. Therefore, the results obtained in the study of the process of hybridity in the novels under discussion can be taken as a basis for forming assumptions about identity formation in contemporary postcolonial societies.

6.3 Limitations and Future Directions

Firstly, there are certain limitations associated with this research that ought to be considered. For example, the research is limited because the discussion of only three novels does not allow for generalization, although it allows for an intensive study of specific novels. There are various novels written by Pakistani authors in English language such as The Reluctant Fundamentalist by Hamid, Burnt Shadows and Kartography by Shamsie, A Case of Exploding Mangoes by Hanif, as well as other novels by Aslam, H.M. Naqvi, and others, which may be explored through the lens of hybridity as process.

Hybridity as process becomes one particular dimension of the construction of postcolonial identity, but it does not account for others that should not be overlooked, namely trauma, resistance, and belonging, among other factors.

Directions for future research are numerous based on this study. Firstly, increasing the number of novels included in the corpus, beyond those written by Pakistani authors, would allow for testing whether there is a need to identify further configurations of hybridity as process other than adaptive, conflictual, and failed hybridity. Secondly, comparing these novels with other postcolonial novels from India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, or Africa would provide insights into the universality of patterns of hybridity as process in other postcolonial environments. Thirdly, conducting an empirical study on the experiences of individuals regarding their identities through

such novels would help understand the correlation between literary representation and identity formation.

6.4 Final Reflection

As seen in the study, hybridity in contemporary Pakistani English fiction exists as a process of identity negotiation rather than a condition of cultural mixture. By comparing the texts in the study *Exist West*, *Home Fire*, and *Red Birds* it has been proven that in these three books, identity is not something that is statically formed; instead, it becomes constantly reproduced, renegotiated, and reformed through time, space, language, and psychology. As such, it is crucial to see the different configurations that exist within the process of identity adaptive, conflictual, and failed hybridity because they illustrate how the process occurs differently in various situations.

However, the importance of this knowledge goes far beyond literature. Since hybridity is a process and not a condition, the way in which contemporary societies perceive and deal with issues like migration and integration is crucial in addressing them successfully. In other words, as long as there is constant change and development within the construction of identity, it becomes clear why asking for stability in the identity of migrants and minorities produces only conflict and anguish.

The current generation of Pakistani English fiction, this paper argues, does not only present images of hybridity as a process but also provides ideas for reflecting upon what hybridity could imply depending on certain circumstances. In *Exist West*, we observe hybridity as potentiality he continual process of constructing a sense of belonging within multiple contexts. In *Home Fire*, we observe hybridity as a tragedy the competing demands that result in fragmented identities. And in *Red Birds*, we observe hybridity as restriction the moment when the very context within which identities can be constructed fails to exist anymore.

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