

A Critical Analysis: Taufiq Rafat's Poems Kitchen, Vulture, and Eidmorning, Through Homi K. Bhabha's Postcolonial Theory

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Abstract

This study revolves around the impact of colonization in the cultural identity of Pakistani culture in the form of three poems, "Kitchen, Vulture, and Eid Morning" written by Taufiq Rafat, with the concept of cultural hybridity, and the "third space" as the theoretic concept of this study. The study outlines that, how the old Pakistani traditions and values have been integrated with the western influences to bring change in cultural identity, which is fluid and hybrid. The paper gives a glimpse of the way the colonial and local cultures have interacted and re-constructed identities and indicates the transforming and dynamic character of the contemporary Pakistani society. Through textual analysis and critically close reading, the qualitative approach, this study exposes an outcome that the cultural identity is not fixed but is forever changing. The Pakistani culture today is related to hybrid identity, which is manifested in the transformed lifestyle, rituals, and traditions of the new generation. According to the outcome of the present research, Pakistani identity has already become a third space of his fluidity that is a combination of traditional and Western impact. This hybrid culture can be found in the poems of Taufiq Rafat, where the contemporary Pakistani society is constantly changing the established cultural boundaries.

Keywords: *Taufiq Rafat, Homi K. Bhabha, cultural hybridity, postcolonial*

INTRODUCTION

This study evaluates the term cultural hybridity, which is the term Homi K. Bhabha uses in his book *The Location of Culture* (1994) to describe the notion of cultural hybridity. The paper also determines the impact of cultural hybridity in the chosen poems by Taufiq Rafat, *Kitchen, Vulture and Eid Morning*, which reveal the influence of colonization on Pakistani culture and brings about mixed culture. According to Bhabha, hybridity does not merely entail the tracing of two cultures, but it is created under a so-called Third Space, in

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which the colonizer and the colonized create a new identity (Rutherford, 1990). In the work of Bhabha, hybridity is used to mean emerging forms of cultures as a result of the colonization process (The Location of Culture, 1994). The hybridity of cultures implies the destruction of the colonial power through the mixing of cultures (H. Sarvat, 2014). It turned out to be a race-mixing discourse during the 18th century. Due to post colonialism, Rafat in her poetry incorporates the elements of hybridity, mimicry, and cultural translation (Mohsin., Jamil, & Hassan, 2015).

It is the Third Space that unites cultural differences into something liquid. In Kitchen, Rafat compares conventional kitchen (wood fire, curry, spices) with the Westernized ones (Chromium, Formica), which results in a hybrid Third Space. In Vulture, the family in the funeral combines the mourning traditions with the contemporary lack of interest; the bedding is borrowed, the dishes are rented, which indicates the intertwined traditions, displaying empty customs instead of sincere ones. This reflects Bhabha's "Third Space" of hybrid identity. In Eid Morning, Rafat contrasts his father's strict traditional Eid rituals with modern relaxation, showing cultural transformation. The father's discipline represents tradition, while the speaker's leniency reflects postcolonial hybridity, where old and new practices merge.

Thus, Rafat's selected poems show themes of cultural mixing, loss of pure culture, adaptation of new culture, and transformation. Kitchen portrays colonial disruption of traditional identity through food and tools; Vulture shows loss of customs under materialism; Eid Morning highlights shifting rituals across generations. Rafat, writing in post-independence era, reflects living effects of imperialism and the hybrid Pakistani identity shaped in Bhabha's "Third Space."

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To analyze the concept of cultural hybridity in the Rafat's selected poems.
- To explore the concept of "third space," in Taufiq Rafat's selected poems.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How does the concept of cultural hybridity show in the Rafat's poems Kitchen, Vulture, and Eid morning?
- How does the concept of "third space" highlights in the Rafat's selected poems?

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The major issue with this research is that the very social and material influences of the colonizer adapted by the colonized or the current postcolonial Pakistan, which is now a mixed culture where people cannot identify or recognize the real identity or culture of an individual. There is limited research on how the poetry of Taufiq Rafat, specifically his poems entitled "Kitchen," "Vulture," and "Eid Morning," reflect the concept of cultural hybridity.

There is a lack of understanding that how Taufiq Rafat's selected poems showcase the disappearance of pure Pakistani customs and values due to the impact of colonization. The researcher is addressing these gaps by explore the themes of Taufiq Rafat's selected poems.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

- The present study helps readers to understand how the cultures or identities mix in today's Pakistani society because of the colonization through Taufiq Rafat's poems "kitchen", "vulture", and "Eid morning".
- This research explores how social customs and material aspects like food and daily life routines, show the blending of cultures in Pakistan. For instance, it examines how traditional Pakistani dishes like curry and vegetables, have been influenced with colonial's fast-foods. It also explores how daily activities, such as festivals or clothing styles, blend due to the colonization.
- The findings help to know the educate future generations that their identities are not fixed but are fluid now. The research also shed light on how the colonizer and colonized culture interact or blend to form a new ambiguous identity of Pakistani society, where we do not identify the real or true culture.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study evaluates the term cultural hybridity, which is the term Homi K. Bhabha uses in his book *The Location of Culture* (1994) to describe the notion of cultural hybridity. The paper also determines the impact of cultural hybridity in the chosen poems by Taufiq Rafat, *Kitchen*, *Vulture* and *Eid Morning*, which reveal the influence of colonization on Pakistani culture and brings about mixed culture. According to Bhabha, hybridity does not merely entail the tracing of two cultures, but it is created under a so-called Third Space, in

which the colonizer and the colonized create a new identity (Rutherford, 1990). In the work of Bhabha, hybridity is used to mean emerging forms of cultures as a result of the colonization process (The Location of Culture, 1994). The hybridity of cultures implies the destruction of the colonial power through the mixing of cultures (H. Sarvat, 2014). It turned out to be a race-mixing discourse during the 18th century. Due to post colonialism, Rafat in her poetry incorporates the elements of hybridity, mimicry, and cultural translation (Mohsin, Jamil, & Hassan, 2015).

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative research design to investigate Homi K. Bhabha's ideas of "cultural hybridity" and "third space" in Taufiq Rafat's poems entitled Kitchen, Vulture, and Eid Morning. Qualitative research is interested in exploring how people create meaning from their experiences as a way of understanding the social reality they are in. Common data collection tools include interviews, diaries, journals, classroom observations, immersions, and open-ended questionnaires. Similarly, qualitative data comes in many forms, such as text data, visual data, and oral histories (Zohrabi, 2013). The current study uses textual and descriptive methods of analysis. Postcolonial theory serves as the framework of this study, focusing on hybridity and third space. Hybridity is defined as cultural interaction creating new identities, while the third space is a conceptual space of transformation (Bhabha, 1994). Data analysis uses textual analysis with critical close reading of Rafat's poems to identify hybridity and third space, interpreting cultural identity and transformation through Bhabha's theoretical lens.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analyze the Cultural Hybridity in the Taufiq Rafat's Poems "Kitchen", "Vulture", and "Eid morning":

In the location of culture (1994) Bhabha attempts to give a holistic as well as universal definition to this concept of hybridity. For Bhabha, “Hybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities, the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal. He reiterates the point by stating that “Colonial Hybridity is not a problem of genealogy or identity between two different cultures. It is that the difference of cultures can no longer be identified or evaluated as objects of epistemological or moral contemplation. However, this concept of the hybridity is in itself a paradox; while Bhabha maintains that Hybridity is dependent upon two fixed and pure cultural localities, he also dismisses the material concept of a pure culture. Bhabha’s hybrid space can be explored, not as a fixed or static construction, but as a fixed or static construction, but as an “interstitial passage” that entertains “difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy”.

In his poem Kitchen, Taufiq Rafat has shown a strong sense of nostalgia about his childhood and the traditional kitchen he used to work with in his home town compared to the modern kitchen. The kitchen was a vibrant and friendly gatherings place in his hometown where family members sat and conversed about important events in life such as births, marriages, and deaths. As opposed to the old kitchen, modern kitchen is said to be clean and sterile, similar to the hospital, and there is, now, no time to talk. This renders it impersonal, cold and not as warm, emotional, and caring as it was in the past. The description by Rafat makes us think about how the citizens of the contemporary urban environment can become estranged regarding the supportive and cohesive community life which exists in rural living. The fact that he constantly concentrates on these aspects, shows that he was close to nature and appreciated the rural life (Rahman, 2015., Tabassum et al., 2020).

Rafat has gone further to discuss in kitchen how these kitchens mirror the greater shifts in lifestyle and values. The old-fashioned rural kitchen with its open space and community flavor represents a less complicated age when the family bonds were fostered through the communal moments. Siblings were attracted to the warm fire and the enticing fragrances and would sit side by side, which would create a natural sense of intimacy and bonding. Meetings were relaxed, and they had time to share the company of one another and talk about things of the day, which established a feeling of togetherness and concern. The contemporary urban kitchen however is an indication of a change towards fast individualistic lifestyles. Currently, people are obsessed with individual success and tend to gulp down food, barely imbibing time to have a proper talk. The cozy slats are substituted with far chairs, the

symbolism of how intimacy has been substituted with the space, both physically and emotionally. The country kitchen, with its welcoming and homely feel, has been replaced by a pragmatic and cold environment, which reflects the influence of the modern world on the family structure and personal relationships. The elements of the comparison of Rafat emphasize the transformation of the surrounding environments into the sign of the change in values, the values of community and connection to the values of efficiency and materialism.

Kitchens were places

We grew up in.

High-roofed, spacious

With the pungency

Of smoke and spices

Chromium and Formica

Have replaced the textured

Homeliness of plaster, teak

Everything is clean, as a hospital (1-6 and 36-40)

Rafat uses the word were in these lines to make a very clear distinction between the past and the present. He contrasts the old-fashioned kitchen of his childhood that was a symbol of love, unity, and peace with the new kitchens that he considers as a sign of isolation, poor relations, and loss of values. Rafat states that we are drawn out of social and moral relationships in the modern kitchen because Western influences divide generations. The mention of spices which initially attracted people to the kitchen is strongly oriented to the eastern cultures since spicy cuisine is one of the major pillars in the eastern cultures. Nevertheless, Rafat adds that the tastes and custom of Pakistani people have evolved over the years, and their food preferences and cultural practices have changed (Mohsin, Jamil, & Hassan, 2015).

These lines highlight the significance of the kitchen in the traditional Pakistani life in terms of emotions. It was not just a kitchen where they cooked but it was the place where the family was together and they made memories and shared their daily experiences. In the lines above Rafat stresses the cultural hub that the kitchen is the home of the family with its warmth and familiarity that were spacious and with the strong scent of smoke and Pakistani spices in cooking. This has a sense of nostalgia and cultural identification, since these factors are explicitly related to the traditional Pakistani life, where family dinners revolved around

cooking. Whereas Rafat explains that contemporary materials such as Chromium and Formica have replaced the warmth and feel of the natural materials such as plaster and teakwood that used to feature in the usual kitchens in the past. Chromium and Formica are industrial, slick and are a way of showing Western influences on design, with prioritizes functionality and cleanliness over the homeliness of traditional materials. This transformation is an indication of the modernization of the traditional Pakistani values coupled with Westernization. The present-day kitchens are so clean that it is almost like a hospital, a place that has come to be identified with a sterile environment instead of being characterized as warm. This image of the effect of colonizers on the homeitude is indicative of the fact that the interior of the homes has been transformed to be less intimate and more sterile, devoid of the emotional attachment of the traditional kitchen.

The surrealist clock,

Where once the eloquent

Grandfather swung,

Clicks forward, stiffly

We are differential

To the pleasures

Of electric toast, and

Take our last gulps standing up (41- 49)

The transformation of the cozy family life of the past to the uninvolved and speedy schedules of the present is demonstrated by Rafat in these lines. The surrealist clock, that used to symbolize unity of the family, now walks like a robot, indicating that the contemporary time is impersonal. The grandfather clock that used to be a visible marker of the occasions of special family life is contrasted with the fast rhythm of the contemporary life, when even breakfast is not enjoyed anymore. References such as electric toast and last gulps standing up are used to show how the convenience and speed have overtaken the significance of comfort of traditional meals. This change shows the influence of western efficiency and technology which has led to hybridity of culture in the Pakistani life whereby the western values are blurring the customary values. Rafat unveils hypocrisy in funerals in vulture, people relate as vultures that only flock to be seen and not to eat. Their short stay with borrowed bedding and shallow grieving- shows a blend of the traditional binding and the modern materialism as an effect of colonialism on the family structure.

***Like Vultures they gather
When someone dies.
Cousins and uncles and aunts
Not seen for years
Are dolefully here
Heads wagging and generating cries
For each newcomer to a house (1-7)***

The researcher also analyzes another poem of Taufiq Rafat which is “Eid morning”, this poem includes in Rafat’s last collection of poems, Half Moon, which was written between “1978 – 1983”. Rafat wrote Eid morning when he was in Lahore on 9th October 1981. Rafat’s Eid Morning is written in a very simple language but with a deep idea. Rafat is well known for depicting Pakistani culture in his poems. The poem, Eid Morning also depicts Pakistani culture and loses of pure values and identities. (Shahzad, 2022).

***Since 6 a.m. the loudspeaker has been blaring
Wisdom and exhorting the faithful to prayer;
And I am duly exhorted, a lifelong habit
Like waking up early or brushing one's teeth
As I get ready I think of all the bygone
Eids. Father, irascible, up since dawn,
Making us bathes and dress on the double,
Than counting heads at the breakfast table,
Missing out never even entered one's head (1-9)***

In the above lines from the poem “Eid morning” talks about the Eid day and mentions the time that is early morning. The poet calls it the best time because in Pakistani religion waking up early in the morning, welcome their fortune and wisdom. He further states that the voices coming from the Mosques is a call of faith and strengthens one’s belief towards the God or religion. The above lines seek to know the readers that the early childhood is the best time to learn the right or bed things. It is necessary to instruct children to wake up early and set your routine here poet wants to convey that this routine in poet’s life set by his father. The poet is talking about the Eid festivals that was spent with his father. His father was an organized man and had set some rules for a special event, he wants every family member’s wake up early and join at the breakfast table not even on Eid festivals only but every day. It

shows that before the colonization, people follow their own norms and religious values affectively, they have actual identity.

*Another eid and father three years' dead
 Now iam the head of the house with grown up sons.
 I shall go to the mosque alone for faith has lost
 Its sting and obedience buried deep
 With the one who could command it.
 Lacking father's purpose, I ve let things slip
 As these his heirs, mumble, and go back to sleep (10-16)*

These lines show that the poet is in the same position when once his father was. Now the poet feels the same responsibility as his father was. He has sons who are grown up and can take decisions. It seems that the poet's sons are not dependent on the poet and are free to choose their ways. In which poet describe that how the time values have been changed and he is going to mosque alone. It shows the new generations are not following the traditional religious values, they lost their root. The new age lives for them and does not listen to their elders. In the last two lines the speaker is saying that he has lost the purpose of his father. His father has a strong religious man and wants to maintain traditional values in his family, whereas the time has been passed new generation do not follow or maintain the old tradition which is their actual identity they forgot and run towards another culture and adapt them in their lives. Here the poet is feeling helpless that he is not able to control and train the new generation or maintain in them their actual values.

EXPLORATION THE CONCEPT "THIRD SPACE," IN TAUFIQ RAFAT'S SELECTED POEMS

The difference of traditions and values come together, interact, and evolve in the appropriately called cultural space of Homi K. Bhabha, termed the Third Space. This is not a fixed space or a straight forward space but a space characterized by complexity, conflict and negotiation. In this in-between space, cultural identities cannot be established forever, but are always re-construed in a process of questioning, mixing and new making of meanings. It is not a physical location but a stage of cultural signs and symbols on which the meanings are re-read and re-fitted. The third space does not thus support purity or hierarchy, making hybrid identities to be formed. It generates new and unpredictable modes of identity that are situated

between the self and the other which are usually both alluring and uncomfortable. The third space to Bhabha is the continued colonial present whereby the legacies of colonialism are still alive in a global world. Cultural encounters are still making new hybrid identities echoing colonial pasts, in addition to the contemporary globalization (Bhandari, 2022). The poem titled *Kitchen* by Taafiq Rafat describes this hybridity. The kitchens were traditionally social and communal, but colonialist changed the domestic life. Rafat is no longer fixed, Pakistani culture has become fluid and blended. The coziness of smoke and spices that goes hand in hand with tradition has been substituted with western modernity that is manifested in chromium and Formica. It is neither a traditional nor a modern kitchen but a third space (between them) in which cultural identity is re-packaged. The poem emphasizes the loss and the possibility, colonial disruption and the possibility of new understandings of home and heritage (Tatham, 2023).

The third space presented by Bhabha is likewise expressed in Rafat when he stipulates the aspect of materialism that shapes the cultural practices. Bhabha underlines that societies need to accept more than one view, instead of being occupied by a single culture (Covarr, 2015). Mourning rituals in the poem by Rafat are hybrid. The short visits of relatives, when bedding is borrowed by neighbors, and crockery is hired, show an amalgamation of old-fashioned duty and new disengagement. They exist in a formal, but not heartfelt form and can be seen as a kind of hybrid identity between old custom and new convenience. It is the third place, where ceremonies are still practiced but in different, non-spiritual forms.

According to Bhabha (1994, p. 12), the third space is a space of intervention a place within the cultural parameters where individuals are able to birth something new. This hybridity as new can be viewed in the way that teenagers create identity. They dispute authority by dressing, listening to music, or acting the way they are trying it out, trying out being whoever they desire to be. Through this, hybridity results in creative forms of self (Covarr, 2015). This is reflected in generational differences in the *Eid Morning* by Rafat. The father is the symbol of rigid adherence to the traditions of the Eid, whereas the young generation is less rigid because of the influence of colonial and Western cultures. His discipline-maintained identity but once he passed, traditions become slack, and the children party in a more casual manner. This is a sign of hybridity, an identity between Pakistani and Western individualism. Similar to the redefining by the teens, the young generation of Rafat modifies the cultural practice to suit the modern world. Rafat depicts the third space in

relationship to Bhabha through the use of the words: kitchen, vulture and Eid Morning: here a fluid, hybrid space is created where identities are formed. Pakistani culture is not fixed; it is dynamic and is in a continuous bargaining between tradition and modernity.

RESULTS

The result of this study shows the colonial influence created cultural hybridity in Pakistan. As traditions are redefined or reshaped by new generations, there is a gradual shift away from strictly Pakistani customs, resulting in a blend of cultural values that incorporate pure and Western influences. This blending often leads to losing traditional practices and creates new, individual ways of experiencing cultural identity. According to the researcher, this study gives the result that culture does not have any fixity or hierarchical approach it is fluid or the possibility of evolving, as per as through the analysis of the poems “Kitchen, Vulture and Eid Morning” shows the hybrid culture of Pakistan, where new generations reshaping the old practices in a worldlier or modern way, it is not purely a one or another but something new which include is “in-between space” which Bhabha says it’s a third space. It shows that Pakistani culture is now in a third space, where no one can identify the real identity or culture of a person.

CONCLUSION

The current study highlights the evolving nature of Pakistani identity, which now exists in a hybrid and liminal space. It illustrates the pure culture of Pakistan before colonization through Rafat’s poems and how it transformed into a blended identity afterward, embodying neither the original nor the colonial but rather something innovative and unique.

It is this changing cultural identity that is the focus of the analysis of the poems of Taufiq Rafat and which is found in what Homi K. Bhabha refers to as the Third Space a space that is neither traditional nor fully Western but a distinct blend of the two. This demonstrates that the culture of the Pakistanis is dynamic and ever-changing and defining the actual identity or culture of an individual becomes challenging.

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