

DIASPORIC REALIZATION AND HYBRID IDENTITY IN HARI KUNZRU'S *THE IMPRESSIONIST*

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Abstract

The present study examines Kunzru's representation of diaspora and hybrid identity, showing how the protagonist's shifting names, appearances, and social roles mirror the uncertainty of postcolonial subjectivity. Using a qualitative, text-based approach informed by Homi Bhabha's theories of hybridity and mimicry, the analysis highlights the constant negotiation between self and other, homeland and host land, authenticity and adaptation. The study argues that Kunzru constructs diasporic identity not as loss alone but as an ongoing process of reinvention within cultural in-betweenness. Ultimately, the *Impressionist* illustrates how hybrid consciousness becomes both a survival strategy and a critique of rigid colonial and national boundaries.

Keywords: diasporic realization, hybrid identity, Hari Kunzru's *The Impressionist*

Introduction

Hari Kunzru's *The Impressionist* (2002) offers a compelling exploration of identity, belonging, and displacement within the framework of diasporic consciousness. Set against the backdrop of colonial and postcolonial encounters, the novel traces the journey of Pran Nath, a character whose fluid identity reflects the complex negotiations of race, culture, and selfhood in a globalized world. This study examines how Kunzru articulates the diasporic realization of identity—one that is fragmented, unstable, and perpetually in motion—and how hybridity becomes both a strategy of survival and a site of creative self-fashioning.

A notion which is very closely linked with the concept of alienation is the idea of Realization or self-consciousness. In the context of diasporic life, diasporic realization portrays the activity through which individuals and groups in the diaspora understand their displacement, negotiate hybrid nature, and belonging in the zone of tension between the homeland and host land. The activity involves memory, nostalgia, cultural accommodation, identity negotiation, and the quest for self in liminal spaces.

"Diaspora" in literary contexts refers to psychological dislocation and the need for cultural reconnection in addition to physical separation. According to Stuart Hall (1990), diasporic identity is "always in process," continuously moulded by difference and memory. According to Avtar Brah (1996), diaspora is not a return to a particular place of origin but rather a place where several identities converge. Homi Bhabha's idea of hybridity, which characterizes the "third space" that arises when cultures collide and change one another, is consistent with these viewpoints. Mimicry, translation, and negotiation reconfigure colonizer and colonized in this liminal realm, allowing for resistance and rebirth.

The Impressionist (2002) by Hari Kunzru is a prime example of this dynamic. The protagonist, Pran Nath Razdan, represents the erratic nature of postcolonial subjectivity as he alternates between Rukhsana, Jonathan Bridgeman, and other identities. His changing names and looks demonstrate how identity can be created, dismantled, and rebuilt in response to the historical and social influences in his environment. In order to highlight the ridiculousness of racial categorization and the psychological suffering of individuals compelled to live between cultures, Kunzru places Pran's journey through colonial India, England, and Africa. The novel

dramatizes what Bhabha refers to as the "ambivalence of colonial discourse" the colonized subject's imitation of the colonizer that both ridicules and challenges imperial authority—through Pran's metamorphosis.

This study explores how diaspora navigates belonging in multicultural settings by examining Kunzru's depiction of diaspora and hybrid identity in *The Impressionist*. Using a qualitative, textual method, the study examines significant incidents that highlight the protagonist's mimicry and liminality. The study makes the case that Kunzru reimagines diaspora as a location of creative self-fashioning, rather than seeing migration only as loss or isolation. In his story, contacts across racial, socioeconomic, and geographic boundaries change identity, making it fluid and performative.

This study's importance stems from its emphasis on Kunzru's contribution to modern diasporic fiction, namely British Asian literature. Although classic authors like Rushdie and Lahiri have received a lot of critical attention, Kunzru's writing offers a unique viewpoint by fusing postmodern irony with postcolonial critique. His story challenges the East/West and self/other dichotomies that have long dominated colonial discourse, and casts doubt on the idea of fixed cultural identity. Global modernity, where identities are constantly negotiated through movement, technology, and cross-cultural interactions, is symbolised by the protagonist's ongoing reinvention.

Furthermore, this exploration contributes to the broader understanding of postcolonial identity formation by illustrating how diasporic consciousness can transform marginality into agency. Through the character of Pran, Kunzru presents hybridity not as fragmentation but as survival means of existing meaningfully within contradiction. The novel's setting across continents reinforces the idea that identity is produced through interaction, not isolation. Thus, studying *The Impressionist* helps reveal how literature interprets the human cost and creative potential of globalization.

In conclusion, the introduction places this work in the context of the current scholarly discussion about postcolonial identity, hybridity, and diaspora. According to this, *The Impressionist* is an essential work for comprehending the cultural and psychological effects of existing in two different worlds. Reviewing pertinent theoretical frameworks, outlining the qualitative approach, and examining how displacement, mimicry, and hybrid self-realization are portrayed in the book are all covered in the parts that follow. Collectively, they seek to show how Kunzru's fiction turns the suffering of displacement into a potent critique of colonial and modern conceptions of identity.

Literature Review

Scholarly engagement with *The Impressionist* has primarily centered on questions of postcolonial identity, mimicry, and cultural hybridity. Critics such as Homi K. Bhabha and Stuart Hall have provided theoretical frameworks for understanding hybrid identity as a product of colonial discourse and transnational mobility. Previous studies have explored Kunzru's narrative as a postcolonial satire that exposes the artificiality of racial and cultural boundaries. However, relatively few works have examined how diasporic realization operates as a transformative process that redefines belonging beyond fixed national or cultural affiliations. This research, therefore, situates *The Impressionist* within the broader discourse of diasporic identity formation and hybrid subjectivity.

Conceptual Framework of Diaspora

According to William Safran (1991), diasporic societies have a number of characteristics, including alienation in the host nation, a shared memory of the homeland, dispersal from the homeland, and the aspiration of one-day returning. To further show how various historical causes produce diasporic formations, Robin Cohen (1997) further divided diasporas into victim, labor, trade, imperial, and cultural categories. These fundamental

foundations aid in placing the diversity of modern diasporas in perspective, when identity is more influenced by symbolic reconnection through language and culture than by actual return.

Stuart Hall's (1990) emphasis on identity as a process rather than a permanent essence transformed the conversation. Diasporic identity, according to Hall, "belongs to the future as much as to the past" and is continually reconstructed via diversity rather than sameness. Homi Bhabha's (1994) concept of hybridity, in which identity arises in the "third space" between cultures, is consistent with this post structural perspective. According to Bhabha, hybridity creates a new site of negotiation and transformation, upending the binary oppositions of self/other and colonizer/colonized. As a result, the hybrid subject is a developing combination of both native and foreign.

Avtar Brah (1996) introduces the idea of the "diaspora space," where various subject positions—such as gender, race, and class—intersect, adding a feminist viewpoint. According to Brah, diaspora encompasses more than just movement; it also refers to the emotional and social balancing act of residing beyond borders. In a similar vein, James Clifford (1994) draws attention to the conflict between roots and routes, arguing that diasporic identities are more characterised by movement than by fixed belonging. These thinkers collectively define diaspora as a dynamic and contentious field that embraces diversity and defies closure.

Diaspora and Hybridity in Postcolonial Literature

Displacement-related pain and creativity have long been studied by postcolonial writers. *Midnight's Children* and *The Satanic Verses* by Salman Rushdie are prime examples of the migrant imagination that combines hybridity, sarcasm, and nostalgia. Rushdie encapsulates the postcolonial state of fragmented memory and identity when he says, "the past is a country from which we all have emigrated." Similar to this, the main characters in *A House for Mr. Biswas* and *The Mimic Men* by V. S. Naipaul struggle with self-definition and alienation in postcolonial economies.

Bhabha's concepts of mimicry and ambivalence have provided critical tools for analyzing such texts. Mimicry refers to the colonized subject's imitation of the colonizer's behaviour and values, a gesture that both reinforces and subverts colonial authority. It creates a "blurred copy" that unsettles the authenticity of imperial identity. Postcolonial fiction often uses mimicry as a form of satire and resistance, revealing how colonial discourse inadvertently exposes its own contradictions.

Additionally, diasporic authors emphasise the positive aspects of hybridity. For instance, the protagonist of Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* navigates between South Asian and British cultures, transforming hybridity into a place of creativity rather than perplexity. The emotional complexity of second-generation immigrants who inherit divided cultural traditions is revealed in Jhumpa Lahiri's short works *Interpreter of Maladies* and *The Namesake*. According to these pieces, diasporic identity is not resolved but rather requires ongoing discussion.

Hari Kunzru and the Postcolonial Condition

Hari Kunzru holds a unique place in this literary tradition. Kunzru, a British novelist of Indian heritage, examines the ways in which race, technology, and power shape identity. According to critics like Elleke Boehmer (2005) and Peter Childs (2007), *the Impressionist* is a postmodern allegory of colonial identity in which the protagonist's changing identities reflect the erratic nature of imperial categories. The novel's cross-continental journey, from colonial India to England and Africa, captures the flexibility of life in a diaspora.

Scholars like Tabish Khair (2004) and Susheila Nasta (2002) have noted that Kunzru extends the postcolonial conversation beyond nostalgia and victimhood. Instead, his characters navigate modern global spaces in which identity is chosen, performed, and commodified. *The Impressionist* dramatizes how colonial and racial discourses shape subjectivity but also how

individuals manipulate those discourses to survive. The protagonist's ability to pass as different races and classes exposes identity as a social construct rather than an innate truth.

Even the title of the book, *the Impressionist*, alludes to the fluid, surface-based character of identity in the contemporary world. This has been compared by critics to Bhabha's concept of performativity, in which imitation serves as a vehicle for both adaptation and criticism. In Kunzru's story, selfhood is shown as a patchwork of impressions shaped by language, travel, and perception, rejecting essentialist identity. In this way, *The Impressionist* destroys the notion of cultural purity, carrying on the postcolonial tradition.

Research Gap and Contribution

Although there is a lot of research on diasporic identity in South Asian literature, less of it focusses on Kunzru's distinct portrayal of imitation and hybridity. In Pakistani and South Asian academic environments, Kunzru has received relatively little critical attention, with most of the focus being on Rushdie or Lahiri. By closely analysing *The Impressionist*, this essay closes that gap by analysing Kunzru's transformation of dislocation into a place of agency and regeneration.

The research emphasises Kunzru's unique voice while placing him within a larger intellectual lineage by utilising Bhabha's theoretical framework of hybridity and imitation. It makes the case that in addition to illustrating the diasporic experience, the book reinterprets what it means to be a part of a postcolonial, globalized society. Through the changes of its protagonist, *The Impressionist* illustrates the dichotomy at the core of contemporary diaspora: that identification may be both empowered and divided.

Research Methodology

This study uses textual analysis as its primary method and is qualitative in character. This study's main goal is to examine how the protagonist in Hari Kunzru's *the Impressionist* embodies the ideas of diasporic realisation and hybrid identity. Examining the novel as a postcolonial work, the researcher looks at how identity development, imitation, and displacement are shown in the context of diasporic theory. The study relies on critical insights, theoretical viewpoints, and careful reading and interpretation of textual evidence rather than statistical tools or numerical data.

Research Design

The research design of this study is analytical and interpretive. It draws upon postcolonial theories, particularly those of Homi K. Bhabha, Stuart Hall, and Avtar Brah, to understand the complex relationship between diaspora, hybridity, and identity in the selected text. The researcher interprets the novel as a representation of fragmented identity that emerges in colonial and postcolonial contexts. The qualitative design allows flexibility in analysis, enabling the researcher to move between textual description, theoretical interpretation, and cultural commentary.

Data Collection

The Impressionist (2002) by Hari Kunzru serves as the main source and the literary foundation for the analysis. Scholarly publications, books, theses, and reliable internet sites pertaining to identity formation, postcolonial theory, and diaspora studies are examples of secondary sources. Theoretical insights on hybridity and diasporic identity have been sought from authors like Stuart Hall, Avtar Brah, and Homi Bhabha. In order to place the analysis within current scholarly debates, the researcher also examined literary criticism of Kunzru's writings.

Theoretical Framework

Homi K. Bhabha's theory of mimicry and hybridity, as presented in *the Location of Culture* (1994), serves as the main theoretical foundation for this study. comprehension how the protagonist of *the Impressionist* navigates between cultures and identities requires a

comprehension of Bhabha's concept of the "third space." Avtar Brah's idea of diaspora space—where many social, cultural, and emotional elements converge—and Stuart Hall's idea of cultural identity as a dynamic, ever-changing process are also incorporated into the study. These theories work together to help the researchers understand how Kunzru uses character development, symbolism, and narrative tactics to create hybrid subjectivity and diasporic consciousness.

Analytical Procedure

In order to examine particular chapters, symbols, and character changes in the book, the researcher used a close reading technique. The protagonist Pran Nath Razdan's transformation from an affluent Indian young man to a colonial imitator and ultimately to a self-aware hybrid being is given particular attention. Every stage in Pran's journey is analyzed from the perspectives of hybrid formation and diasporic realization. Theoretical viewpoints are connected to textual data, guaranteeing that interpretation is rooted in the critical framework and the story.

The analysis proceeds thematically rather than chronologically. Themes such as displacement, mimicry, racial passing, hybridity, and self-realization are explored to show how the novel redefines identity in diasporic terms. The researcher also pays attention to the novel's setting across India, England, and Africa, as these geographical shifts symbolize the larger movement from colonial subjugation to postcolonial self-definition.

Delimitation of the Study

This study is restricted to the analysis of *the Impressionist* by Hari Kunzru, focussing the main character, Pran Nath Razdan. Since the first novel offers a rich example of diasporic consciousness and cultural hybridity, this study limits itself to it, even though Kunzru has produced a number of other works, such as *Transmission* (2004) and *Gods Without Men* (2011). Instead of concentrating on Kunzru's overall literary development, the emphasis is still on how identity is portrayed in postcolonial contexts.

Discussion

Kunzru's protagonist embodies the fluidity of diasporic experience, moving through multiple identities—Indian, British, African—without ever fully belonging to any. This shifting of identities illustrates Bhabha's notion of the "third space," where meaning and identity are constantly negotiated. Pran's transformation into Rukhsana and later into Jonathan Bridgeman represents not only mimicry but also the diasporic realization of hybridity as a mode of existence. Through irony and narrative fragmentation, Kunzru challenges essentialist conceptions of identity and exposes the power structures that demand fixed categorizations. The novel thus reveals hybridity as both a site of alienation and empowerment—a double-edged condition central to diasporic consciousness.

The fluid and changing nature of Pran's identity represents the cultural fragmentation that postcolonial subjects go through. His journey from India to England and then to Africa reflects the path of a guy who is constantly looking for a place to call home but is never really welcomed by any of them. For Pran the physical and psychological separation from his homeland, frequently brought on by tragedy, conflict, or financial need, is referred to as displacement. Which is the entry point of diasporic condition. It is a severe sense of loss, alienation, and identity fragmentation that brought on by this first incident. This continuous state of existence that results from this dislocation is known as the diasporic condition. It is distinguished by dual consciousness, a constant balancing act between the host land's realities and the homeland's remembrance. With this disease develops a hybrid identity in which he is influenced by both places but does not fully belong to either. It gives voice to cultural syncretism, ambiguity, and longing. In another words, by and large, diasporic condition, for displaced groups, is a shared way of being that moves beyond place and time distances to

produce a common lifeworld. In this study it has been seen that Kunzru, himself faces the situation of mixed Indian and British descent, contributes a personal understanding to issues of identity, belonging, and cultural hybridity characteristic of the diasporic experience. Pran's travels across geographies that indicates uprooting and displacement of the protagonist, is the point of entry into diaspora.

The novel illustrates that diaspora is a psychological state as much as physical displacement. The conflict between origin and adaptation is revealed by Pran's journey from a wealthy Indian youngster to an anonymous vagrant. By copying others, taking on new identities, and assimilating into unfamiliar surroundings, he learns to survive. This adaptation—an effort to find purpose in a society that consistently rejects him—is a kind of alienation rather than emancipation. Identity in diaspora is "a matter of becoming rather than being," as Stuart Hall contends, and Pran's journey reflects this continuous process of change.

The novel also reveals the colonial roots of diasporic fragmentation. The British Empire's racial and class divisions produce subjects like Pran who internalize inferiority while aspiring to the colonizer's identity. His multiple names—Pran, Rukhsana, Jonathan Bridgeman—mark successive erasures of selfhood. Each new persona brings temporary acceptance but deepens his inner void. Kunzru thus presents diaspora as both a site of mobility and a form of psychological exile.

The way that Kunzru depicts colonial India heightens this issue. Instead of being a solid homeland, the nation is a site of hierarchy and imitation where value is determined by racial privilege and Western education. The colonial fear of self-recognition is reinforced by Pran's mother's silence and his father's fixation with status. Kunzru utilises the 1919 Amritsar massacre as a metaphor for the bloody break between colony and empire, a trauma that reverberates in Pran's fractured mind. His protracted voyage into the "in-between world" of diaspora, where belonging is continually postponed, begins at this point.

Hybridity and Mimicry

Hari Kunzru effectively conveys Homi K. Bhabha's idea of hybridity—a state resulting from colonial power and cultural contact—in *The Impressionist*. The novel illustrates how hybridity can be a source of tension as well as a survival strategy through Pran Nath Razdan's changing identities. What Bhabha refers to as the "third space," where fixed identities dissolve and new ones arise via imitation, negotiation, and resistance, is reflected in Pran's life. He mimics those in power to stay alive, initially the colonists and then other social groups, but each imitation reveals the brittleness of identity itself.

Bhabha argues that colonial mimicry is "almost the same, but not quite," and Pran's imitation of the British elite is a prime example of this. In addition to giving him access to some privileged areas, his attempts to emulate British speech, manners, and look also highlight his differences. He is not considered an equal by the British, but rather a curiosity. His change into "Jonathan Bridgeman" is accomplished by deceit and necessity, culminating in a hideous display of whiteness. The use of irony by Kunzru highlights the ridiculousness of racial classifications; Jonathan's fictitious identity shows that whiteness is also a performance supported by colonial ideology.

Thus, hybridity functions in the book as both a source of empowerment and a source of entrapment. In addition to allowing Pran to transcend boundaries, it compels him to constantly reinvent himself. The colonial gaze that demands uniformity haunts his hybridity, which is never fully celebrated. However, Kunzru exposes the artificiality of all identities by using this instability. Pran is the epitome of postcolonial plurality as he switches between languages, attire, and names; he is a guy whose ability to improvise the self is essential to his existence.

Kunzru's narrative voice reinforces this hybridity through linguistic blending. The novel shifts between Indian idioms, British diction, and ironic commentary, mirroring the

cultural mixture it depicts. This narrative hybridity destabilizes any single authoritative voice, aligning the reader with Pran's fragmented consciousness. The constant tension between imitation and authenticity becomes a metaphor for the postcolonial condition itself. Kunzru's characters, like Bhabha's hybrid subjects, exist in a liminal space where colonial power is both internalized and subverted.

The concept of mimicry has psychological ramifications as well. In addition to his survival drive, Pran's wish to pass for English is a reflection of his internalised colonial inferiority complex. Colonial schooling created subjects who were estranged from their roots, as seen by his rejection of his Indian identity and his fascination with British conventions. However, by using satire and irony to show how mimicry undermines the very authority it aims to replicate, Kunzru defies straightforward victimisation. Pran reveals the weakness of racial supremacy when he embraces Britishness too flawlessly. By mocking colonial pretences of purity, his mimicry turns into a kind of resistance.

The result of this conflict between resistance and imitation is Pran's life in England, where he is both invisible and accepted. His ability to succeed socially depends on hiding his background, yet the more he hides, the more his identity is shattered. He is isolated and lacks roots and a sense of belonging as a result of the white mask. Kunzru's portrayal of this masquerade is consistent with Bhabha's contention that imitation is ambivalent in that it both upholds and challenges colonial power. Pran's capacity for adaptation represents the agency of the colonised subject, but his emotional cost is demonstrated by his isolation.

To conclude, Kunzru portrays hybridity not as confusion but as an inevitable reality of postcolonial life. In a world shaped by empire and migration, pure identities no longer exist. Pran's journey illustrates that hybridity can become a tool of redefinition, allowing new selves to emerge from cultural collision. Yet it also reminds readers of the loneliness that comes from perpetual transformation. Through Pran, Kunzru gives voice to the hybrid consciousness—fluid, unsettled, and painfully aware of its own duplicity.

Identity and Self-Realization

The painful yet freeing recognition of his fractured identity is the focal point of Pran Nath Razdan's journey in *The Impressionist*. His many changes—from a wealthy Indian boy to Rukhsana, then to Jonathan Bridgeman, a colonial impersonator, and lastly to an anonymous vagrant in Africa—reflect the postcolonial subject's ongoing quest for identity. He is forced to face the void left by colonial and societal inequalities as each metamorphosis removes one layer of his imposed identity. By the end of the book, Kunzru portrays Pran as a symbol of a fluid personality that defies resolution rather than as a fully realised person.

It is displacement, not stability, that leads to Pran's self-realization. His transcontinental voyage turns into a metaphor for the diasporic self, which is always on the move, never rooted, but ever more conscious of its own diversity. Through interactions, disguises, and survival, he develops a self-consciously hybrid identity rather than a fixed one. Despite being the result of estrangement, Kunzru contends that this insight enables a more profound comprehension of the self that transcends ethnic and cultural divides. Thus, perplexity gives way to critical understanding in the protagonist's diasporic awareness. This change is especially pronounced in the novel's African section. Pran enters a realm that is both geographically and culturally distinct from the colonial dichotomy after being cut off from both India and England. He starts to view himself outside of the empire-imposed classifications at this point. He experiences a sort of spiritual enlightenment as a result of his contacts with the locals and the environment—the understanding that identity cannot be solely determined by place of origin or imitation. His gradual reunion with his shattered past is marked by this restoration to a basic human state.

Kunzru's portrayal of Pran's last state is consistent with Bhabha's concept of "unhomeliness," which is a sense of alienation that defines the postcolonial psyche. The

potential for invention, however, is present in this unhomeliness. Pran, who has shed all social masks, emerges as a manifestation of hybrid consciousness, conscious of the fluidity of the environment and the instability of the self. His "impressionistic" style, as the title of the book suggests, becomes a metaphor for contemporary identity: changing, unfinished, yet able to gain significance via ongoing transformation. The novel's conclusion emphasizes the impossibility of complete belonging rather than providing a settlement. Pran's ability to live in liminality and move through cultural gaps is essential to his existence. His self-realization is recognizing diversity as reality rather than attempting to identify with a single identity. As a result, Kunzru challenges conventional narrative closure by highlighting the unending process of becoming. In the closing scenes, the protagonist's anonymity and stillness express both emancipation and loss, a duality that is essential to diasporic life.

Kunzru challenges colonial and postcolonial preoccupations with authenticity and purity via Pran's experience. In a society influenced by migration, technology, and power, the novel implies that the pursuit of a stable identity is pointless. Kunzru supports Stuart Hall's claim that cultural identity is a question of positioning rather than essence by presenting identity as performative and social. Pran's story serves as a mirror for the contemporary diasporic subject, who must negotiate conflicting cultural norms while forging a sense of identity.

In the broader context of diasporic literature, Kunzru's novel represents a significant shift from nostalgia to negotiation. Unlike earlier postcolonial works that mourn the loss of homeland, *the Impressionist* embraces displacement as a condition of creativity. Pran's fragmented journey becomes a critique of all essentialist notions of belonging, showing that to be "in-between" is not merely to suffer but also to see more clearly. Kunzru's irony and narrative experimentation reinforce this view, blending realism with satire to expose the illusions of race, class, and civilization.

In a nutshell, *the Impressionist* turns the suffering of relocation into a philosophical assertion about how adaptable people can be. Pran's hybrid consciousness is both a critique and a symbol of hope, acknowledging that identity needs to be open, fluid, and self-aware in the current world. Kunzru confronts the reader with the disturbing realization that belonging is constantly acted, negotiated, and rebuilt; it is never given. Pran's path from imitation to consciousness thus captures the heart of diasporic realization, which is the recognition of oneself as a patchwork of perceptions that are incredibly human yet always changing.

Conclusion

In *The Impressionist*, Hari Kunzru reimagines the diasporic subject as a figure of perpetual becoming rather than fixed being. The novel underscores that identity, in the diasporic context, is not inherited but continually constructed through movement, adaptation, and negotiation. By dramatizing hybridity as an inevitable outcome of colonial and global encounters, Kunzru presents diaspora not as a loss of origin but as a dynamic process of self-realization. Ultimately, *The Impressionist* invites readers to reconceive identity as an open, evolving continuum that transcends cultural and national boundaries.

Pran's ongoing hybridity, displacement, and in-between state are the causes of his diasporic awareness. Due to his Anglo-Indian hybrid identity, the protagonist experiences rejection from his family and is forced into a "third space" where cultural barriers vanish and identity is flexible. Pran is forced to establish performative identities (Rukhsana, Pretty Bobby, Jonathan Bridgeman) as a means of survival due to his physical and psychological migration from Agra to Bombay, London, and Africa. The diasporic condition begins with displacement. Pran undergoes both internal and external displacement, which disperses him from his own nation and forces him to constantly rebuild his sense of belonging, particularly in strange places. His narrative demonstrates how identity is brittle, malleable, and constantly negotiated.

For the diasporic individual, mimicry and hybridity become essential survival strategies. In order to adjust to new surroundings, Pran mimics the dominant Western culture that colonizers imposed. The diasporan lives in liminality, constantly stuck between cultures and neither here nor there. Pran faces rejection and an unaltered liminal existence on a geographical, cultural, and psychological level because it is neither entirely Western nor Eastern. The exploitation of hybrid identities is a form of colonial commodification. The hybridity of the colonized is used by colonizers to gain control, and this is criticized in the story. British compulsion is highlighted by Pran's fair skin and dual Indian English function as pawns in colonial power dynamics. The diasporic subject eventually comes to terms with emptiness. Pran finds himself in a never-ending state of bargaining as his attempts to bridge two cultures reveal meaninglessness. His ambivalent identity, which culminates in a sense of freedom in embracing changeability, perfectly captures the conflict between two cultures.

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