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تمثيل الهوية والتعددية الثقافية في الأدب الإنجليزي ما بعد الاستعمار

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The Representation of Identity and Hybridity in Postcolonial English Literature

معلومات الباحث

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ملخص البحث

يقدّم الأدب الإنجليزي ما بعد الاستعمار تحليلاً معمقًا لكيفية تشكّل الهويات وتحوّلها من خلال التفاعل الثقافي، والعنف، والآثار المستمرة للإرث الاستعماري. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف تمثيل الهوية والهجنة في مجموعة من الأعمال الأدبية المكتوبة باللغة الإنجليزية بعد عام ١٩٧٠، مع تضمين عمل فيكتوري واحد لغرض المقارنة. وبالاستناد إلى أفكار فرانز فانون، وهو مي بهابها، وستيوارت هال، وآخرين، تبحث الدراسة في كيفية معالجة السرديات ما بعد الاستعمار لقضايا التاريخ الوطني، وتجارب الشتات، وتداخل اللغات.

من خلال التحليل النوعي، تكشف النتائج عن مظاهر واضحة للهجنة تتمثل في تداخل اللغات، وتبديل الأنظمة اللغوية، وتوظيف الأساليب الميتاسردية، وتحويل الأطر الزمانية والمكانية. وتشير النتائج إلى أن الكتّاب ما بعد الاستعمار يجمعون بين نقد الفئات التي أرستها القوى الاستعمارية وإعادة تشكيلها، مما يؤدي إلى إنتاج هويات هجينة تعزّز الإحساس بالانتماء وتزعزع المفاهيم الجوهرانية للثقافة.

وتقدّم الدراسة نموذجًا نظريًا متعدد الطبقات يدمج بين الخلفية التاريخية، والتبادل الثقافي، والفاعلية الإنسانية، لتوفير إطار متكامل لدراسة عملية تشكّل الهوية. وتخلص إلى أن الأدب ما بعد الاستعمار يبرز الطبيعة المتحوّلة والمتنازع عليها للهوية، ويؤكد على الأهمية التربوية لتدريس مفهوم الهجنة كمنظور نقدي، ويدعو إلى إجراء المزيد من الدراسات المقارنة التي تتناول لغات ووسائط مختلفة.

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The Title

The Representation of Identity and Hybridity in Postcolonial English Literature

Abstract

Postcolonial English literature provides profound examinations of how identities are created and altered via cultural interaction, violence, and the persistent effects of colonial legacies. This study looks at how identity and hybridity are shown in a group of English-language literature released after 1970, as well as one Victorian piece for comparison. Using ideas from Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhabha, Stuart Hall, and others, the research looks at how postcolonial tales deal with national histories, diasporic experiences, and mixing languages. A qualitative examination finds signs of hybridity in things like mixing languages, altering codes, using metafictional tactics, and changing chronotopes. The results indicate that postcolonial writers simultaneously criticize and rearrange the categories established by colonial power, creating hybrid identities that support belonging while undermining essentialist conceptions of culture. The article suggests a multi-layered theoretical model that combines historical background, cultural interchange, and human agency to provide a unified framework for studying the many aspects of how identity is formed. It comes to the conclusion that postcolonial literature highlights the fluid and disputed character of identity, stresses the educational importance of teaching hybridity as a critical lens, and urges for further study comparing different languages and media.

Yousif Khorsheed Saeed & Assist. Lect. Mohammed Mahmood Hussein
Spectral Testimony and Erasure in Palestinian Literature: Haunting in Adania Shibli's Minor Detail and
Ibtisam Azem's The Book of Disappearance

1. Introduction

Identity and hybridity are fundamental topics in postcolonial literary studies. Frantz Fanon posited that the violent clash between colonizer and colonized led to land dispossession and divided identities, a phenomenon he termed "colonial alienation," necessitating rectification via decolonizing resistance (Fanon, 1963). Homi Bhabha asserts that colonial discourse is inherently unstable, generating a "Third Space" in which cultural negotiation produces hybrid forms that surpass binary distinctions (Bhabha, 1994). Stuart Hall asserts that cultural identity is not a static essence but a "point of suture" expressed via history and representation (Hall, 1990).

While the study on postcolonial identity is substantial, significant gaps persist. First, critical work often examines identity and hybridity as distinct concepts, overlooking their interdependent nature as articulated in Bhabha's (1994) work . Second, comparative studies across diverse postcolonial geographies remain limited, with much research focusing on single regions, which overlooks common strategies . Third, the Victorian origins of identity formation are rarely contrasted with postcolonial narratives, despite shared themes of class, ambition, and self-construction (Hassan, 2025) . This study addresses these gaps by asking: In what ways do these books illustrate identity as influenced by colonial legacies, diasporic journeys, and cultural amalgamation? What narrative and linguistic techniques do they use to depict hybridity? And how do these depictions relate to larger theoretical discussions concerning postcolonial subjectivity?

This study analyzes the portrayal of identity and hybridity in six English-language novels: Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981), Jamaica Kincaid's *Annie John* (1985), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Paradise* (1994), Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* (2000), and Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1861). The collection encompasses diverse colonial and postcolonial settings, including South Asia, the Caribbean, West and East Africa, and metropolitan Britain, using a Victorian comparator to highlight continuities and disruptions in identity representations.

Postcolonial literature serves as a unique platform for examining these disputes, since narrative fiction may articulate intricate processes of identification in manners that historical or sociological discourse may not. For instance, the novels in this study's corpus articulate these intricate processes: *Midnight's Children* confronts national memory and erasure, *Annie John* interrogates colonial education and belonging, and *White Teeth* explores diasporic homecoming in a metropolitan setting . They often use hybrid linguistic forms—integrating colonial languages with indigenous tongues, dialects, and slang—to emphasize the instability of identity. They also use non-linear chronology, polyphonic narrative, and metafictional self-reflexivity to show how postcolonial subjects may be in many different places at once. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin note that the relationship between language and power in postcolonial writing is a fundamental criticism of Eurocentric ideas about literature (Ashcroft et al., 2002). To read these works closely is to see how authors use art to think about identity.

To address these inquiries, the study synthesizes Hall's dynamic identity model with Bhabha's hybridity theory, augmented by Mbembé's perspectives on temporality and Appiah's considerations about the prefix "post," so creating a multifaceted theoretical framework.
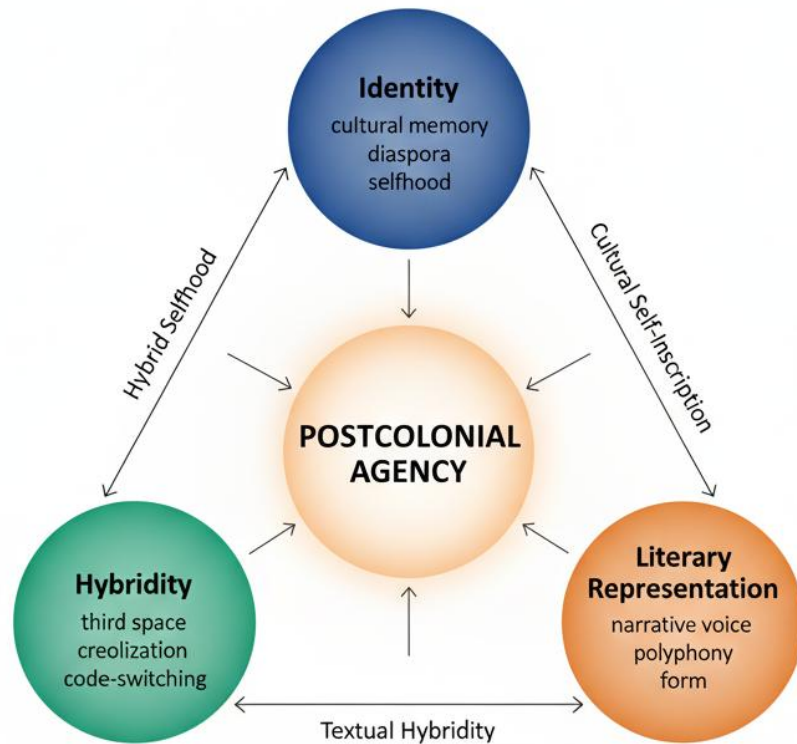
Figure 1: Conceptual intersection among identity, hybridity and representation.

There are three main contributions of this study. First, it connects discussions about identity and hybridity by showing how they rely on one other across a wide range of texts. Second, it broadens the geographical dimensions of postcolonial analysis by contrasting South Asian, Caribbean, African, and British texts with a Victorian book. Third, it suggests a multi-layered theoretical model that links historical background, cultural interchange, and personal agency, providing a means to examine the complexity of identity development. By emphasizing the continuities between colonial and postcolonial representations of selfhood, the article encourages more comparative research across historical and geographical dimensions.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theories of postcolonial identity

In addition to the foundational thinkers (Fanon, 1963; Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 1990), thinkers such as Gayatri Spivak and Edward Said emphasized the epistemic violence inherent in imperial representation and the need of reclaiming subaltern voices. Achille Mbembé has lately emphasized the temporal aspects of the postcolony, asserting that subjectivity is influenced by complex histories of dominance and a present characterized by postponed emancipation (Mbembé, 2001) .

The development of postcolonial identities is understood as a multifaceted process influenced by historical violence, displacement, memory, and cultural negotiation. Fanon, in the framework of anti-colonial struggle, emphasizes the psychological ramifications of

Yousif Khorsheed Saeed & Assist. Lect. Mohammed Mahmood Hussein
Spectral Testimony and Erasure in Palestinian Literature: Haunting in Adania Shibli's Minor Detail and
Ibtisam Azem's The Book of Disappearance

colonization: the colonized individual internalizes the colonizer's perspective, leading to alienation and self-fracture that can only be addressed via violent praxis (Fanon, 1963). His study established the groundwork for further examinations of the influence of race and colonialism on topic development.Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2002) build on Fanon by showing how language may be a source of conflict in writing after colonialism. They assert that the amalgamation of the colonial language and its development via idiom, rhythm, and syntax becomes a kind of resistance that defines identity and promotes hybridity. Achille Mbembé (2001) has recently emphasized the temporality of the postcolony, contending that colonial time is not only supplanted by postcolonial time but persists in shaping the present via what he refers to as the "postcolony's entanglements." This comprehension underscores the need of reevaluating and reinterpreting history via the perspective of postcolonial subjectivity.

Hall (1990) characterizes cultural identity as a position rather than a fixed essence. He distinguishes between two conceptualizations of identity: a static collective "one true self" inside a shared culture, and a dynamic view of identity as always developing, influenced by variety and representation. Hall asserts that diasporic identities are formed via tales of displacement and sustained by creative pursuits. These identities emerge from "the shared experience of a long and discontinuous journey," but they remain perpetually subject to change (Hall, 1990). This idea fits with the themes in a number of postcolonial novels, as characters deal with the differences between their home country and the host country, as well as the differences between memory and modernity.

Besides these key philosophers, certain scholars have looked into identity in certain settings. Azada-Palacios (2022), for instance, examines the methods used by postcolonial institutions to teach language and culture, facilitating pupils' comprehension of their national identity and diverse origins. Yeung (2021) investigates the evolution of local identity during Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement, asserting that protest spaces function as platforms for community identification that challenge state narratives. These studies illustrate that identity formation functions as both a micro-level process of self-articulation and a macro-level process shaped by institutions, surroundings, and historical events. Yeung's (2021) examination of Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement illustrates the construction of identity via micro-level interactions in protest settings, while challenging macro-level state narratives. Azada-Palacios (2022) investigates the influence of post-colonial educational curriculum on the language preferences of pupils at a macro level. They also say that meeting new people, whether it's at school, a demonstration, or with a group of individuals who have relocated away from their native country, is constantly changing who you are.

2.2 Hybridity and the "Third Space"

Hybridity has emerged as a prevalent idea in postcolonial literature and cultural studies, including several meanings and critical dimensions. Bhabha (1994) use the word to delineate the cultural manifestations that emerge in the interstices between the colonizer and the colonized. He contends that colonial authority is compromised by its inherent ambiguity,

leading to the emergence of a "Third Space" characterized by mixed identities. In this context, imitation and translation provide both subversive and assimilative opportunities. Hybridity involves the amalgamation of colonial components and their evolution into new organisms.

Young (2016) and other critics have studied how hybridity has altered over time, connecting it to racial ideas from the 1800s and demonstrating how it has been recontextualized in cultural politics as a beneficial thing. Huddart (2020) delineates the ubiquitous expansion of hybridity discourse across multiple disciplines and advises against its uncritical adulation. He contends that seeing hybridity as an inherently progressive notion may conceal inequitable power relations. Gandhi (2018) also says that celebrating hybridity may hide the pain of colonialism by making it seem like a pleasant mixing instead of a violent one. Young (2016) analyzes its evolution into a positive term, although Huddart (2020) and Gandhi (2018) critique its unexamined use, arguing that it may obscure intrinsic power imbalances.

Later theorists have expanded the concept of hybridity to include not just cultural forms but also geographical and temporal characteristics. Murdoch (2023) presents the idea of "archipelagic thinking," which uses creolization to create a mental model that emphasizes how islands and marine areas are related to each other. He contends that creolization underscores the fluid links of civilizations, transcending the binary classification of colonizer and colonized. Bahri (2017) reassesses the essential importance of hybridity, arguing for its value when seen as a dynamic process rather than a fixed identity. She posits that examining the mechanisms of creolization and cultural translation may elucidate the evolution of hybrid identities. Ponzanesi (2020) examines digital diasporas and the function of online environments in facilitating the dissemination of hybrid cultural forms, correlating digital behaviors with notions of belonging and representation.

Feminist and decolonial viewpoints have also criticized hybridity. Salam (2024) studies the Pakistani online series Churails to illustrate how gendered representations of copying and hybridity may support patriarchal hierarchies if not challenged to critical examination. In her analysis of post-independence Algeria, Salhi (2023) illustrates that hybrid identities often suffer the consequences of colonial conflicts, necessitating a political and cultural revolution for their resolution. In the field of theology, Jones (2022) analyzes the influence of hybridity on Christian identity, proposing that theological syncretism mirrors wider cultural narratives. These criticisms remind us that being mixed isn't always a positive thing; we need to think about it in the right historical and power circumstances.

Yousif Khorsheed Saeed & Assist. Lect. Mohammed Mahmood Hussein
Spectral Testimony and Erasure in Palestinian Literature: Haunting in Adania Shibli's Minor Detail and
Ibtisam Azem's The Book of Disappearance

2.3 Author-focused strands

Close readings of certain writers and works have looked at the ideas of identity and hybridity. Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* has garnered significant scholarly attention for its depiction of India's shift from colonial authority to independence and the Emergency. The main character in the book, Saleem Sinai, represents the country's broken identity, and his voice is a combination of Hindi, Urdu, and English. Das (2020) contends that the book reassesses hybridity by portraying it as a wellspring of creative possibility rather than a manifestation of loss. Boehmer (2018) places Rushdie inside a postcolonial poetics that employs fragmentation and self-reflexivity to challenge nationalist grand narratives.

People have seen Kincaid's *Annie John* as a coming-of-age novel that deals with colonial schooling and the power of mothers. Critics observe that the protagonist's resistance to colonial norms engenders a hybrid subjectivity that integrates indigenous and colonial cultural elements. Wenske (2021) examines chronotopes in Safia Elhillo's poetry to illustrate the interconnection of time and location in the depiction of diaspora; his observations on chronotopic disruptions provide methodologies for interpreting Kincaid's temporal transitions.

In Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, identity is forged through polyphonic narration, with the Biafran conflict refracted through the distinct perspectives of a houseboy, an academic, and an expatriate . The narrative's use of code-switching between English, Igbo, and pidgin further constructs class and ethnic alignments amid the trauma of war. Quayson's (2021) work... provides a lens to read the emotional affect of this hybrid narrative form. Transitioning from West to East Africa, Gurnah's *Paradise* employs narrative fragmentation and linguistic interplay (Swahili-Arabic) to mirror the fractured subjectivity of its protagonist... . Moving to the metropolitan center, Smith's *White Teeth* uses diasporic polyphony and satiric comedy to explore multigenerational hybridity in London. As Güven and Aldemir (2025) argue, the novel's linguistic and cultural blending portrays diaspora as both a site of potentiality and a locus of racism.

Victorian literature, however seldom examined in conjunction with postcolonial writings, provides significant insights into the genealogy of identity conceptions. Furthermore, academic discourse often overlooks the influence of the Victorian canon on postcolonial depictions of class and identity . Recent studies on Charles Dickens indicate that he used dress and reading not only as emblems of class, but as instruments for constructing identity and either imposing or opposing societal norms (Hassan, 2025). These results encourage comparative assessments that examine how postcolonial authors use and reinterpret Victorian tropes to express their identities. In the same way, reading habits and schools in colonial times worked as tools of power. In Kazuo Ishiguro's fictitious boarding school, "Hailsham... functions as a hegemonic institution... depriving the students of their freedom and privacy" (Ismat, 2025). While Ishiguro is outside the present corpus, this example illustrates a critical concept relevant to this study: how institutional spaces, such as the colonial school in Kincaid's *Annie John*, operate to shape and contest subjectivities .

This research juxtaposes *Great Expectations* with postcolonial literature to examine the persistence of class-based identity markers and their reconfiguration within colonial settings. Dickens's main character, Pip, struggles with humiliation and moving up in the world, which foreshadows problems of imitation and desire among colonial subjects.

To help with the analysis, Table 1 shows how major theorists are related to their ideas, how they relate to identity and hybridity, and how they are used in this research. This matrix emphasizes the interdisciplinary character of the theoretical framework.

Table 1: Summary of Key Theorists, Concepts, and Analytical Application

Theorist	Concept	Relevance	Use in Analysis
Frantz Fanon	Colonial alienation	Psychological and cultural effects of colonization	Analyzes characters' decolonizing struggles
Stuart Hall	Diaspora identity	Identity as fluid and negotiated	Frames diaspora and belonging in texts
Homi Bhabha	Third Space & Hybridity	Intercultural negotiation and hybrid forms	Interprets hybrid narratives and language
Robert Young	Cultural translation	Hybridity as translation across cultures	Examines intertextual and linguistic translation
Leela Gandhi	Postcolonial theory	Synthesizes postcolonial debates and ethics	Provides conceptual vocabulary for analysis
Adlai Murdoch	Archipelagic thinking	Highlights interconnectedness across islands	Illuminates linguistic blending and transoceanic links
Achille Mbembé	Postcolony & temporality	Explores temporality and fragmented subjectivity	Shapes analysis of time and agency in narratives
Kwame Appiah	Post- vs post-	Questions periodization and modernity	Encourages reflexive criticism of "post" labels
Ato Quayson	Genre & affect	Connects genre forms to colonial histories	Guides analysis of narrative strategies and emotions

3. Theoretical Framework

This research integrates Hall's dynamic identity model with Bhabha's theory of the Third Space and hybridity to examine the depiction of identity and hybridity across the corpus. Hall (1990) posits that cultural identities are situational and contextual, emerging from processes of articulation rather than possessing a static essence. This paradigm emphasizes the importance of history, language, and representation in identity development. Bhabha (1994) characterizes the Third Space as a transitory domain where civilizations intersect and create new meanings. In this perspective, hybridity goes beyond just mixing two identities; it is a new idea that challenges existing binaries. By merging Hall and Bhabha, we might understand identity formation as a dynamic negotiation occurring within hybrid situations.

This paradigm builds on Mbembé's (2001) study of time and subjectivity. Mbembé asserts that the postcolony is characterized by many temporalities—colonial time, nationalist time, and global time—that are interconnected and shape the present. Subjectivity is marked by

Yousif Khorsheed Saeed & Assist. Lect. Mohammed Mahmood Hussein
Spectral Testimony and Erasure in Palestinian Literature: Haunting in Adania Shibli's Minor Detail and
Ibtisam Azem's The Book of Disappearance

temporal disjunctions and a continual sense of incompleteness. This comprehension augments Hall's dynamic identity by highlighting the influence of time on identity formation.

Appiah (1991) analyzes the prefix "post" within postcolonial and postmodern contexts, encouraging scholars to reevaluate linear interpretations of historical progression. His inquiry prompts a reflexive approach to periodization. Quayson (2021) emphasizes genre and affect, connecting story frameworks to colonial histories and examining how emotions influence the perception of hybridity.

The suggested layered theoretical model consists of three interrelated strata: historical backdrop, cultural interaction, and human agency, as visualized in Figure 2. This framework connects these theorists logically: Hall (1990) and Bhabha (1994) provide the core mechanism (identity as articulation within a Third Space) . Mbembé (2001) adds the crucial dimension of temporality, explaining *how* the colonial past persists in these negotiations . Appiah (1991) and Quayson (2021) provide critical texture, prompting a reflexive stance on historical periodization and an analysis of affective and generic forms .

At the bottom is historical backdrop, which includes colonial history, nationalism movements, and economic institutions that affect how people develop their identities. Cultural interaction, which includes adopting words from other languages, intertextuality, creolization, and digital connectedness, is above it. Finally, individual agency is the subjective process of negotiating identity, which includes memory, imagination, and resistance. The arrows between layers show how things change over time: historical conditions affect cultural exchanges, which in turn affect individual agency; people also reinterpret history and modify cultural exchanges . By placing research inside this layered framework, the study **avoids** the reduction of identity to a single area, instead emphasizing structural and the interaction of influences. subjective

Figure 2: Layered theoretical model linking historical context, cultural exchange and individual agency.

4. Methodology

4.1 Corpus selection

The corpus consists of six books written in English. Five of these are by postcolonial writers and were published after 1970: Midnight's Children, Annie John, Half of a Yellow Sun, Paradise, and White Teeth. These pieces come from several places, including South Asia, the Caribbean, West and East Africa, and Britain. They are largely regarded as important works of postcolonial literature. They were chosen because they clearly deal with issues of identity and hybridity via their story structure, language, and themes. Each work has people that deal with the effects of colonialism and living in a different country, which makes them good for comparing.

The justification for this specific corpus rests on maximizing theoretical and geographical diversity within a manageable scope. *Midnight's Children* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* were chosen as seminal representations of national-allegorical and ethno-nationalist identity crises, respectively. *Annie John* and *Paradise* offer perspectives from smaller colonial spaces (the Caribbean and East Africa), focusing on education and pre-colonial hybridity. *White Teeth* provides the crucial metropolitan/diasporic counterpoint. Finally, *Great Expectations* was selected as the Victorian comparator due to its foundational thematic exploration of class, mimicry, and self-fashioning, which directly anticipates postcolonial concerns .

The sixth book, *Great Expectations*, is a good example of Victorian literature. It gives us a historical look at class, ambition, and self-making, which lets us see how the way identity is shown has changed over time. Even if official decolonization didn't happen until after Victorian Britain, its social hierarchies and schools influenced the colonial institutions that were sent to the colonies (Loomba, 2015). Including Dickens therefore emphasizes the genealogy of identity development.

4.2 Qualitative textual and intertextual analysis

The research utilizes qualitative textual analysis grounded on intertextual and sociolinguistic frameworks. Textual analysis include meticulous examination of story structure, character development, language selections, and thematic elements. Intertextual analysis looks at how novels use, make fun of, or change older writings, such as religious texts, folktales, and canonical literature. For instance, Midnight's Children refers to both the Mahabharata and Great Expectations, while White Teeth refers to the Bible and colonial history. Intertextuality is essential for comprehending hybridity as it elucidates the manner in which writings occupy many cultural archives.

A coding technique was created to find signs of hybridity. **These markers consist of: (1) Language mixing**, defined as instances where characters switch between English and indigenous languages or dialects within sentences or dialogues; **(2) Code-switching**, or shifts in register or dialect depending on interlocutor or context; **(3) Metafiction**, identified by narrative self-reflexivity that calls attention to the act of writing or storytelling; **(4) Chronotope**, involving representations of time–space relationships, including non-linear time and spatial dislocation (Wenske, 2021); **(5) Polyphony**, or the presence of multiple voices or narrative perspectives that reflect diverse social positions; and **(6) Metaphors of clothing/reading**, where such practices signify identity formation .

Yousif Khorsheed Saeed & Assist. Lect. Mohammed Mahmood Hussein
Spectral Testimony and Erasure in Palestinian Literature: Haunting in Adania Shibli's Minor Detail and
Ibtisam Azem's The Book of Disappearance

Passages were coded manually. Each novel was read closely, and relevant passages were annotated with codes. The coding results were then analyzed to identify patterns and divergences across the corpus. The inclusion of a Victorian novel required adapting the coding scheme to account for class as a marker of identity; clothing and literacy function as proxies for mobility in *Great Expectations* .

Table 2: Corpus overview

Author	Work	Year	Context	Identity/Hybridity Markers
Salman Rushdie	Midnight's Children	1981	Indian independence & partition	Language mixing; magical realism; polyphony
Jamaica Kincaid	Annie John	1985	Colonial education in Antigua	Mother–daughter conflict; creole language; memory
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie	Half of a Yellow Sun	2006	Biafran war & Nigerian post-independence	Multiple perspectives; code-switching; trauma
Abdulrazak Gurnah	Paradise	1994	East African colonial encounters	Narrative fragmentation; Swahili-Arabic interplay
Zadie Smith	White Teeth	2000	Multicultural London	Diaspora voices; slang; intercultural comedy
Charles Dickens	Great Expectations	1861	Victorian class society	Clothing & reading as class/identity tools

5. Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Identity formation: diaspora, belonging, memory and voice

Identity formation in postcolonial literature is profoundly connected to diaspora and a sense of belonging. Saleem Sinai's narrative voice in Midnight's Children represents the country. He was born at midnight on the day India became free, and he thinks that his fate is linked to the fate of the country . His identity is split; he is born to one set of parents but nurtured by another, illustrating the dislocations of Partition. Saleem's narratives intertwine personal history with national mythology, exemplifying Hall's concept that identities are formed via narrative expression rather than immutable essences (Hall, 1990) . The novel's polyphonic structure, which includes the voices of individuals from diverse areas and classes, creates a community identity that doesn't allow any one person to stand out. The usage of several languages and time that isn't straight also shows how mixed Indian identity is after independence (Das, 2020).

Annie John tells the story of a little girl growing up in colonial Antigua. The protagonist's identity is influenced by her connection with her mother and the colonial school system. The educational curriculum gives more weight to British history and literature than to local understanding. Annie goes back and forth between liking colonial authority and being rebellious. Kincaid shows the conflict between colonial identity that was forced on people and their own identity. The novel's emphasis on the mother-daughter relationship illustrates

the intricate aspects of identity, but the protagonist's subsequent journey to England parallels overarching trends in migration. (Hassan, 2025) The fact that Victorian novels use dress and reading as instruments for identity formation is pertinent here: Annie's school uniform is a sign of the strictness of colonial schooling, and her love of reading helps her imagine other worlds.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, identity is shaped throughout conflict. Adichie employs a polyphonic narrative to deconstruct a singular experience of the Biafran war. This narrative strategy moves beyond plot to illustrate Hall's (1990) concept of identity as a 'point of suture', where personal trauma (micro) and national collapse (macro) are articulated together. Igbo identity is affirmed in resistance, yet the war's savagery confuses ideals of purity. This tension is where Quayson's (2021) work on tragedy becomes analytical, clarifying that the novel's emotional impact arises from the irresolvable conflict between the *ideal* of Biafra and the *hybrid, compromised reality* of its subjects. Adichie's use of code-switching is not just descriptive but a performative act of identity, delineating social hierarchies and affective loyalties in a nation fracturing along ethnic lines. Quayson's (2021) examination of tragedy clarifies that the novel's emotional impact arises from the conflict between desire and reality.

Gurnah's *Paradise* tells the story of Yusuf, a young boy who was sold into slavery in East Africa before World War I. People argue over who Yusuf is: he is of African heritage but grew up in an Arab–Swahili commercial circle. His name changes and the languages he speaks show that his loyalties are changing. The book shows that identity is made up of numerous cultural domains instead of originating from one location by using a fractured framework and multiple points of view. The depiction of slavery exemplifies the impact of the colonial economy on subjectivity. The idea of "deferral" in Ismat's (2025) theory, where enslaved people are promised freedom in the future but never get it, is similar to Yusuf's thoughts of escaping. A system that sees him as a pawn decides his destiny, showing how personal desire and systemic limits work together.

The Joneses, the Iqbals, and the Chalfens are three families in London that *White Teeth* follows. In a city with a lot of immigrants, their kids have to deal with problems of ancestry and belonging. Irie Jones has a hard time with her Afro-Caribbean hair and how she sees herself as beautiful. The Iqbal twins, Magid and Millat, have very different views on diaspora: one is scientific rationality and the other is religious fanaticism. Joshua Chalfen goes against his liberal parents . Smith employs sarcasm and comedy to make fun of Britain's shallow tolerance of other cultures. The novel's polyphony, which moves across persons and chronological eras, creates a mosaic of identities that don't fit in. Güven and Aldemir (2025) observe that the book depicts hybridity as both empowering and limiting: people use their diverse roots while also facing bigotry and isolation. The result is that postcolonial individuals continue to experience precarious belonging in Britain.

Lastly, *Great Expectations* gives us a historical perspective. Pip's desire to become a gentleman shows how class mobility was seen in Victorian times and the humiliation that came with it. His effort to hide his past is like colonial mimicry: he changes his clothing, accent, and behavior to blend in with London society. But the new persona he has made for himself is based on a lie: his money doesn't come from Miss Havisham; it comes from the convict Magwitch . The information makes Pip rethink what he believes. Notes that reading has the potential to change things; Pip's study of literature and his training with tutors help him move up in society. But his excursions into rural speech show how unstable a forced

Yousif Khorsheed Saeed & Assist. Lect. Mohammed Mahmood Hussein
Spectral Testimony and Erasure in Palestinian Literature: Haunting in Adania Shibli's Minor Detail and
Ibtisam Azem's The Book of Disappearance

identity may be. The research illustrates how language mediates class and colonial hierarchy by comparing Dickens's linguistic indicators with code-switching in postcolonial works.

5.2 Language as hybridity: creolization, code-switching and intertextuality

Language is a fundamental domain where hybridity is evident. Postcolonial novels often adopt the colonial language, integrating indigenous vocabulary, rhythms, and grammatical structures. Rushdie creates a collage of languages in Midnight's Children by mixing English with Hindustani and other regional languages. This method, which is frequently called "chutnification," mixes languages at the phrase level . Bahri (2017) asserts that this linguistic amalgamation not only enhances taste but also reconstructs the English language, rendering it attuned to Indian contexts. The narrative voice makes fun of colonial official discourse while also having fun with everyday language. This interaction demonstrates Bhabha's (1994) concept of the 'Third Space' in action: the narrative is neither purely English nor purely indigenous, but an innovative hybrid that subverts colonial discourse. This hybridization is a political act of 'writing back' to the empire, as described by Ashcroft et al. (2002) .

Kincaid's writing in Annie John seems easy at first, yet it is full with creole sounds. The narrator uses both conventional English and Antiguan phrases, particularly when telling traditional tales or family conversations. This code-switching shows closeness and resistance: English is the language of school, but creole is the language of feelings. The conflict between languages mirrors the protagonist's uncertain status in colonial society. Wenske's (2021) examination of chronotopes indicates that these transitions result in temporal dislocations, oscillating between colonial modernity and ancestral memory .

In Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, linguistic transitions are a primary tool for characterization and thematic development. Characters transition between English, Igbo, and pidgin . The purpose of this code-switching is to signal social context and political alignment: Odenigbo's insistence on Igbo is a political statement of decolonization, while Olanna's ability to navigate all three demonstrates her social mobility and hybrid position between tradition and modernity. Pidgin is a language that people of all classes can understand. The book also uses Igbo proverbs and songs to keep cultural memory alive and fight against colonial erasure. Ponzanesi (2020) shows how digital diasporas let multilingual expressions spread over the world. The book, which takes place before the internet, hints to digital hybridity by focusing on communication between countries .

Gurnah's *Paradise* uses terms from Swahili, Arabic, and German to show how diverse the Indian Ocean globe is. The story occasionally doesn't translate these expressions, which forces readers to deal with language diversity. Murdoch's (2023) archipelagic thought highlights networks of interchange across oceanic areas, where languages blend like currents. The hybrid nature here is less about blending two languages and more about working in a multilingual environment. Yusuf's identity is shaped by how well (or poorly) he can speak various languages .

White Teeth loves the lingo spoken by immigrants in London. Bangladeshi, Jamaican, Irish, and Pakistani slang mix with Cockney and standard English. Smith employs linguistic play to ridicule the concept of a pure national language. Young (2016) contends that hybridity encompasses translation; *White Teeth* exemplifies this via the continual language negotiation among characters . The book also alludes to a variety of works, such as the FutureMouse scientific project and Jamaican dancehall songs, adding levels of intertextuality. Huggan

(2013) argues that this intertextuality situates postcolonial novels within global consumption networks .

In *Great Expectations*, language serves as an indicator of social position and ambition. Pip's diligent learning of London customs and his avoidance of dialect are like how colonial subjects tried to learn the colonizer's language. Ali (2025) asserts that reading has transformative potential; Pip's engagement with literature and his education via tutors facilitate his social mobility . However, his lapses into rural vernacular expose the fragility of imposed identity. The research illustrates how language mediates class and colonial hierarchy by comparing Dickens's linguistic indicators with code-switching in postcolonial works.

5.3 Narrative strategies: polyphony, fragmentation and metafiction

Postcolonial novels often use narrative techniques that mirror the fragmented reality of postcolonial nations. This technique, most famously theorized by Mikhail Bakhtin (1984), is central to the postcolonial project as it dismantles the single, authoritative voice of the colonizer. Polyphony, or the existence of numerous voices, allows writers to show different points of view and question single stories. Saleem often stops telling his story in Midnight's Children to let his forefathers, neighbors, and political people speak. This noise is a reflection of India's diversity and shows that no one voice can tell the whole narrative of the country . Boehmer (2018) contends that these storytelling methods embody a postcolonial poetics that challenges linearity and authority.

Half of a Yellow Sun also switches between chapters with Ugwu, Olanna, and Richard. This rotation fosters empathy across socioeconomic and racial boundaries while emphasizing divergent views of events. The novel's polyphony undermines nationalist rhetoric by emphasizing personal experiences.

Another popular method is to break things apart. Rushdie's book has digressions, digressions inside digressions, and sudden jumps in time. This fracture illustrates the disconnected temporality of the postcolony as articulated by Mbembé (2001) . Paradise is made up of short chapters that are like oral stories. Every episode brings in new characters, which changes the focus of the story. The fragmentation shows how Yusuf doesn't have a fixed identity and how the Indian Ocean landscape is always changing . Fragmentation also appears in Annie John, where the narrator recounts key episodes from her childhood without a clear chronology. This pattern reflects the nonlinear characteristics of memory, corresponding with Wenske's (2021) chronotope study .

Metafictional techniques draw attention to the act of storytelling. Saleem often remarks on his own story, saying he's sorry for going off on tangents and admitting that things don't always make sense. He emphasizes that history is produced and manipulated . Smith uses self-referentiality in a similar way in White Teeth, where he makes fun of the idea of a unified multicultural story by putting in authorial asides. Quayson (2021) connects this kind of metafiction to the genre's capacity to criticize its own colonial past. In Half of a Yellow Sun, a British writer named Richard tries to publish a book on the war. His inability to publish it and Ugwu's later appropriation of his title underscore concerns of authorship and voice. So, metafiction becomes a way to question who has the authority to narrate the tale .

Comparing these strategies with Great Expectations reveals both continuity and innovation. Dickens utilizes a first-person retrospective narrative that makes it clear that the narrator and

Yousif Khorsheed Saeed & Assist. Lect. Mohammed Mahmood Hussein
Spectral Testimony and Erasure in Palestinian Literature: Haunting in Adania Shibli's Minor Detail and
Ibtisam Azem's The Book of Disappearance

the character are not the same person. Pip sometimes talks to the reader, which suggests that the story is made up. The story, on the other hand, stays linear and focuses on the main character. Postcolonial novels, on the other hand, use fragmentation and polyphony as formal ways to show hybridity. They refuse to resolve conflicts neatly, reflecting the unresolved tensions of postcolonial societies. The relationship between form and content shows that to show dual identities, you have to play with narrative rules .

5.4 Cultural and political stakes: power, education, institutions and media ecologies

Postcolonial identities are formed within particular cultural and political settings influenced by institutions such as educational systems, religious organizations, and media environments. Colonial education institutions operated as ideological instruments that instilled colonial beliefs. **This reflects the concept of** schools as ideological state apparatuses where pupils are "told and not told," which means that information is limited to keep people in line . In Annie John, the Anglican school pushes British history and literature while ignoring local tales. The main character's revolt, which includes painting nasty remarks on blackboards and skipping class, shows that they don't agree with this ideological system . Paradise has similar patterns, where Yusuf's lack of knowledge keeps him from moving up in society, which is a sign of colonial hierarchy.

In Half of a Yellow Sun, the university is very important. Odenigbo sees the university as a place where radical ideas may be formed and postcolonial identity can be built . However, the novel critiques the profound fragility and detachment of this intellectual space. But the conflict shows how fragile these places are; the institution is closed, and intellectuals are targeted. Lo (2023) examines higher education governance in Hong Kong and contends that hybridity may be deliberately used by authorities to depoliticize colleges. The institution's failure is reflected in the ideological conflicts of the Biafran leadership, which Lo's (2023) work on hybridity in governance helps to illuminate: the Biafran state, in its attempt to create a 'pure' identity, becomes as rigid and controlling as the colonial one it replaced. The characters' belief in ultimate triumph acts as a type of "deferral" (Ismat, 2025) that sustains obedience but masks the institution's inability to reconcile its ideology with the hybrid reality of the war .

Religion serves as an additional locus for the construction of hybrid identity. In *White Teeth*, the Iqbal twins become entangled with extreme Islamists who want to keep their identity pure and don't want to mix with other cultures. But they are recruited using contemporary media, which shows how complicated the relationship between tradition and technology is . Jones (2022) explores Christian hybridity and argues that religious identities typically integrate features from many traditions. *White Teeth* illustrates how young individuals negotiate secular and religious influences, revealing that hybridity may produce new types of fundamentalism alongside syncretism .

Media ecologies, including newspapers, radio, and digital networks, facilitate the mediation of identity. Ponzanesi (2020) contends that digital diasporas provide virtual environments in which hybrid identities may be expressed and challenged. Only Smith's book takes place in the early years of the digital era, but the others hint to what the media would be like . Saleem Sinai's tale is like the first blog: he uses typewriters to compose his story and tells it in parts. His typos and mistakes in spelling become part of the story, showing how memory isn't

faultless . Adichie's use of radio broadcasts and propaganda pamphlets shows how mass media affects how people think. In *Great Expectations*, newspapers convey news of Pip's benefactor and his social elevation, revealing how media can establish and demolish identity.

Gender overlaps with cultural politics. Salam (2024) shows that mixed depictions of gender in South Asian media may either support or go against patriarchal standards. In *Annie John*, the protagonist's violation of gendered norms signifies her rejection of colonial womanhood. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Olanna's intellectual independence goes against patriarchal norms, and the conflict makes gender roles more complicated by putting women in charge. *White Teeth* shows how Irie interacts with her body image and beauty standards, showing how global media pushes racist ideas. These examples demonstrate that hybridity cannot be comprehended apart from gender and sexuality.

These texts together illustrate that identity and hybridity extend beyond cultural and language boundaries, with significant political ramifications. They necessitate accords with political entities, educational frameworks, religious organizations, and media environments. Hybridity may serve as a site of resistance, enabling characters to maneuver within oppressive structures; nevertheless, it can also be co-opted by these same structures to suppress dissent. Acknowledging ambivalence is   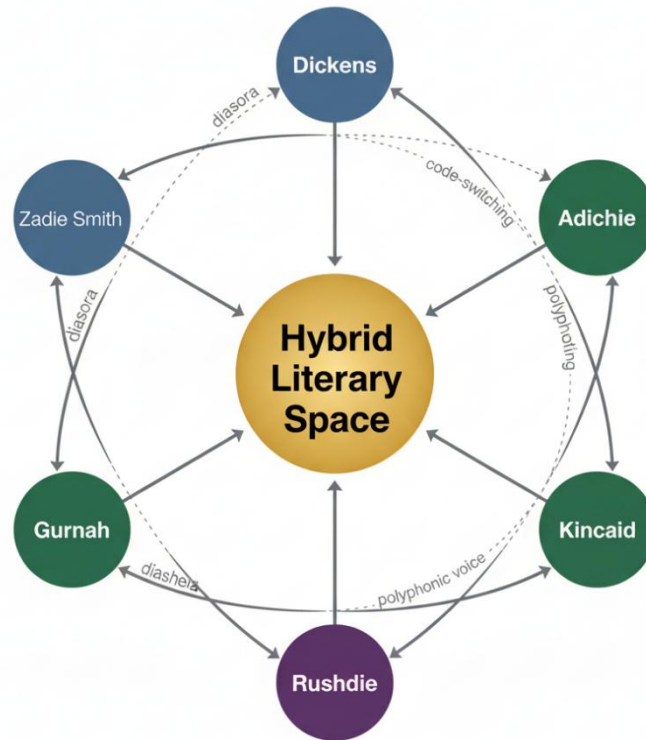   this advanced   essential for research.   postcolonial

Figure 3: Textual Hybridity Map. Nodes represent the six novels in the corpus.

Yousif Khorsheed Saeed & Assist. Lect. Mohammed Mahmood Hussein
Spectral Testimony and Erasure in Palestinian Literature: Haunting in Adania Shibli's Minor Detail and
Ibtisam Azem's The Book of Disappearance

6. Conclusion

This research has analyzed the representation of identity and hybridity in postcolonial English literature via a comparative examination of six novels. The paper has provided a layered theoretical framework that links historical context, cultural exchange, and individual agency by combining Hall's dynamic view of cultural identity with Bhabha's theory of the Third Space and hybridity, and then adding Mbembé's temporality, Appiah's criticism of periodization, and Quayson's focus on genre and affect .

The primary implication of this study's findings is that for these authors, identity is not a pre-existing state but an ongoing narrative act. This implies a political strategy to 'abrogate' the colonial language and 'appropriate' it for new, localized realities (Ashcroft et al., 2002) . Similarly, the narrative tactics of polyphony and fragmentation suggest a formal rejection of the linear, 'civilizing' narrative of the empire. The analysis also reveals the ambivalent nature of hybridity: it is not a simple celebration of mixing, but a politically charged and often painful process of negotiation within existing power structures .

Adding a Victorian comparator has shown how nineteenth-century and postcolonial perceptions of identity are similar and different. Pip's dreams in *Great Expectations* are like the imitation and class worries of those who lived in colonial times. The contrast shows that colonial rhetoric didn't create identity issues; it only made them worse and spread them over the world. The study also shows linkages between Victorian and postcolonial literatures that haven't been looked into enough, which calls for further investigation .

The results have consequences for teaching. When students learn about postcolonial literature via the prism of hybridity, they may perceive more than just the simple differences between colonizers and colonized. It encourages people to learn about other languages and try out new ways of telling stories. However, teachers also need to talk about the power relations that come with hybridity so that they don't tell stories that celebrate colonial atrocities .

This study's primary contribution is twofold: first, the development of the layered theoretical model (Figure 2) that synthesizes historical context, cultural exchange, and agency, providing a replicable framework for comparative analysis . Second, the juxtaposition of the Victorian comparator (*Great Expectations*) with the postcolonial corpus demonstrates a genealogical link between class-based self-fashioning and colonial mimicry, bridging a common gap between nineteenth-century and postcolonial studies .

The study is, however, subject to limitations. The corpus, while geographically diverse, is limited to six novels and excludes other genres (e.g., poetry, drama) and non-Anglophone literature. Future researchers may add non-Anglophone texts, diasporic digital stories, or genres like graphic novels and movies to the corpus. In postcolonial settings, researchers may also look at how climate change and environmental disasters affect identity and hybridity.

This study adds to existing discussions in postcolonial studies by arguing that identity and hybridity are interrelated, relational, and politically charged. The layered theoretical model and the comparative technique are useful for looking at a wide variety of literature. In the end, postcolonial literature reminds us that identity is not a goal but a journey that involves negotiating across time, geography, and culture.

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Yousif Khorsheed Saeed & Assist. Lect. Mohammed Mahmood Hussein
Spectral Testimony and Erasure in Palestinian Literature: Haunting in Adania Shibli's Minor Detail and
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