

**THE CULTURAL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION OF PAKISTANI  
MUSLIM DIASPORA AS PORTRAYED IN *BLINDED BY THE LIGHT***

**(2019)**

**A Graduating Paper**

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for Gaining  
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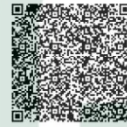
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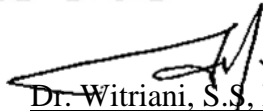
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Atas perhatiannya, kami mengucapkan terima kasih.

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## MOTTO

*“Four things for success: work and pray, think and believe.”*

- *Norman Vincent Peale*

*“If you are not willing to risk the usual you will have to settle for the ordinary.”*

- *Jim Rohn*

*“A girl should be two things: who and what she wants.”*

- *Coco Chanel*

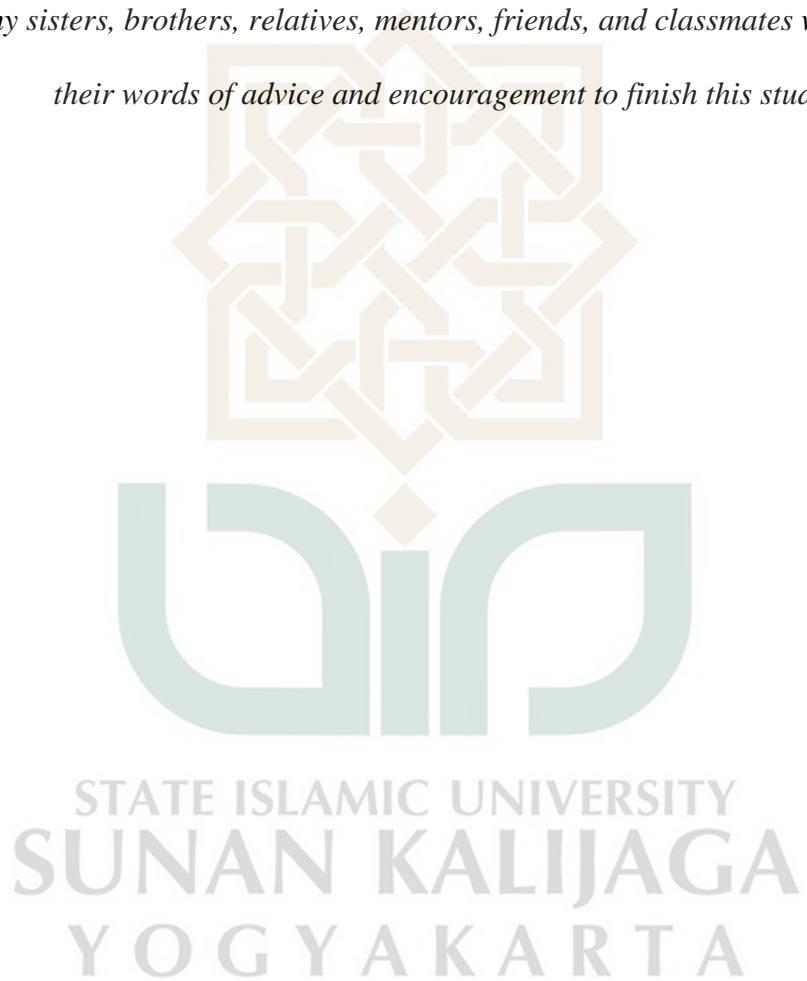


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## DEDICATION

*I dedicate this to my parents, for your constant love and support.*

*To my sisters, brothers, relatives, mentors, friends, and classmates who shared  
their words of advice and encouragement to finish this study.*



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*Assalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb...*

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15. I would like to thank myself, congratulate myself, and give myself a big pat on the back.

The researcher realizes that this graduating paper is far from perfect due to the limited knowledge of the researcher. Therefore, all criticism and suggestions are always needed for the improvement of this paper.

*Wassalamu 'alaikum Wr. Wb....*

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**The Cultural Identity Construction of Pakistani Muslim Diaspora  
as Portrayed in *Blinded by the Light* (2019)**

By: Zahra Ariza Firdausia

**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to analyze the formation of the cultural identity of Pakistani Muslim family characters in the film *Blinded by the Light*. To determine one's cultural identity, Bhabha has three main concepts that can be used: mimicry, hybridity, and ambivalence. According to Homi K. Bhabha, the concept of cultural identity construction in terms of mimicry occurs in a colonized country. Meanwhile, in the film *Blinded by the Light*, mimicry occurs in a colonizer country. This study uses the postcolonial theory of Homi K. Bhabha. The researcher uses qualitative methods, which are carried out using descriptive analysis. Furthermore, this study uses postcolonial theory from Homi K. Bhabha and uses three of his concepts, mimicry, hybridity, and ambivalence to see the cultural construction of the characters of Pakistani Muslim families in *Blinded by the Light*. Each of these concepts is a process that is related to one another. The result of this study indicates that Pakistani Muslim family forms a new cultural identity. To determine one's cultural identity Bhabha has three main concepts: mimicry, hybridity, and ambivalence that can be used. Each of these concepts is a process that is related to one another. The results of the analysis of the three concepts in the film give rise to a new cultural identity in the form of staying between two identities and also trying to survive and balance their old and new identities.

**Keywords:** *Blinded by the Light*, *Cultural Identity*, *Pakistani diaspora*, *Homi Bhabha*

## **Konstruksi Identitas Budaya Diaspora Muslim Pakistan yang**

### **Digambarkan dalam *Blinded by the Light* (2019)**

Oleh: Zahra Ariza Firdausia

#### **ABSTRAK**

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis pembentukan Identitas budaya tokoh keluarga Muslim Pakistan pada film *Blinded by the Light*. Untuk menentukan identitas budaya seseorang, Bhabha memiliki tiga konsep utama yang bisa digunakan: mimikri, hibriditas, dan ambivalensi. Menurut Homi K. Bhabha, konsep konstruksi identitas budaya dalam konsep mimikri terjadi di negara jajahan. Sedangkan pada film *Blinded by the Light*, mimikri terjadi di negara terjajah. Peneliti menggunakan metode kualitatif yang dilakukan dengan menggunakan analisis deskriptif. Lebih lanjut, penelitian ini menggunakan teori Postkolonial dari Homi K. Bhabha dan menggunakan tiga konsepnya, yaitu mimikri, hibriditas, dan ambivalensi. Setiap konsep tersebut merupakan proses yang berhubungan satu sama lain. Hasil dari analisis ketiga konsep tersebut pada karakter keluarga Muslim Pakistan pada film *Blinded by the Light* memunculkan sebuah identitas budaya yang baru, berupa tetap berada di antara dua identitas dan mencoba bertahan serta menyeimbangkan identitas lama dan identitas baru mereka.

**Kata Kunci:** *Blinded by the Light, Cultural Identity, Pakistani Diaspora, Homi*

*Bhabha*

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of Study

Identity concerns many aspects of life. According to Michael Bamberg (2009, p.132), a psychologist and narratologist, identity can be categorized as an attempt to distinguish and integrate different social dimensions such as age, race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, occupation, class, nation-state, or regional area. Identity is also understood as an essential underlying characteristic of a person or society when responding to things other than themselves. People can clearly understand themselves and their societal role when they achieve a stable identity. In other words, with identity, a person will feel comfortable living in a community.

The concept of identity is closely related to the idea of culture. Identity can be formed through the cultures or subcultures of which a person is a part or participates, including the diaspora. Walker Connor (1986, p.16) said diaspora is *“That segment of people living outside the homeland.”* Furthermore, it can be interpreted that diaspora describes the forced or voluntary expansion of a religious or ethnic group from its homeland. One of the factors that causes diaspora is colonialism.

Colonialism refers to European expansion, including the British Empire, from the late fifteenth to twentieth centuries when European nation-states established colonies on other continents. One of the countries that the British Empire colonized was India. The effects of colonialism led to the separation of Indian Muslim groups in the 1940s into a separate country, Pakistan (Kaviraj, 2000,



p.152). Afterward, during the 1950s, according to Brah (1996, p.21), labor was migration from the ex-colonies to the metropolises. In this context, the ex-colonial country is Pakistan. Also, at that time, colonial ties facilitated the migration of Pakistanis to Britain in response to labour shortages (Arif and Irfan, 1997, p.990). In addition, Pakistani in the diaspora and working-class experience racism and discrimination by the British.

One of the films that raised that topic is *Blinded by the Light*. The film depicts how to become a diaspora in a country experiencing racial turmoil and the British economy of the 80s. In *Blinded by the Light*, the director, Gurinder Chadha, describes how the characters in the film live in a country where there is a racial conflict and what effects they experience as a diaspora, which is also the impact of colonialism in the past. One of the most highlighted effects of the film is their cultural identity. Cultural identity is an essential contributor to the well-being of society and gives people a feeling of belonging and security. *Blinded by the Light* also presents another Muslim diaspora life point of view.

Since the status of the characters of Pakistani Muslim family in *Blinded by the Light* is diaspora in England, they already have the cultural identity of the place where they come from. In addition, as a diaspora, they experience changes in cultural identity because they have to adapt to the dominant culture. Besides, due to the racial turmoil and anti-immigrant politics of Muslims, they must accept the challenges of bullying, racism, and intimidation that often occur. So, the Pakistani Muslim family is confused in determining a new identity as a Pakistani or British.

This phenomenon also confirms Homi K. Bhabha's argument on the postcolonialism problem. Bhabha's postcolonial theory focuses on understanding colonialism's complex processes and aftermath. According to Homi K. Bhabha, the concept of cultural identity construction in terms of mimicry occurs in a colonized country. Meanwhile, in *Blinded by the Light*, mimicry occurs in a colonizer country. Through the concepts of mimicry, hybridity, and ambivalence in Bhabha's postcolonial theory, the researcher wants to analyze further how the construction of the cultural identity of the Pakistani Muslim diaspora in *Blinded by the Light* is described. This issue is still relevant to analysis at this time. In addition, Ami Villarejo's film theory is also used to help researcher explores how the construction of the cultural identity of the diaspora is depicted in *Blinded by the Light*.

## **1.2 Research Question**

Based on the background of the study, the researcher formulates a research question: How is the cultural identity construction of the Pakistani Muslim diaspora as portrayed in the characters of *Blinded by the Light*?

## **1.3 Objective of Study**

Based on the problem statement, this research aims to explain the cultural identity construction of Pakistani Muslim diaspora as portrayed in the characters of *Blinded by the Light*.

#### 1.4 Significance of Study

First, the researcher hopes this paper can give an understanding of cultural identity and diaspora construction by using Bhabha's theory. Second, this research aims to show people how cultural identity is being presented by people who originally come from other countries. Third, it is hoped that this research also contributes to demonstrating how the portrayal of the cultural identity of the diaspora is explained by Bhabha's theory of postcolonial.

#### 1.5 Literature Review

The researcher does not find research that uses the same objects. However, the researcher finds several studies that use the same theory and discuss the same topic as this research.

The first research is a journal of language and literature entitled Cultural Identity Construction in the Novel *East Wind: West Wind* by Pearl S. Buck written by Neisya, Fitria Aprilia and Puspa Lutpiyana Duwi Lestari in 2022. In this research, they use postcolonial theory proposed by Homi K. Bhabha and focus on to identify the cultural identity, which consists of stereotypes, mimicry, ambivalence, and hybridity, and how it is experienced by the main character in the novel. There are several differences that distinguish this research from the author's research. The first is the difference in the material objects used. This research uses the novel *East Wind: West Wind* by Pearl S. Buck, while the writer presents a film entitled *Blinded by the Light*. Second, the different issues behind the reconstruction of the character's identity. The background to the reconstruction of cultural identity

in this research is how the character accepts a different viewpoint from the western world, while the background to the reconstruction of cultural identity in the author's research is the racial and economic turmoil in England in the 80s.

The second research is a graduating paper of Islamic State University of Sunan Kalijaga entitled “Cultural Identity Construction of Pakistani Muslim Diaspora as Seen in Wajahat Ali’s *The Domestic Crusaders* written by Tri Ayu Widyaningsih in 2020. In this research, she uses diaspora and cultural identity theory by Stuart Hall. Also, she focuses on constructing cultural identity on the characters in *The Domestic Crusaders* who had the status of a diaspora that live in America. There are several differences that distinguish this research from the author's research. The first is the difference in the material objects used. This research uses the drama script *The Domestic Crusaders* by Wajahat Ali, while the writer presents a film entitled *Blinded by the Light*. Second, the different issues behind the reconstruction of the character's identity. The background to the reconstruction of cultural identity in this research is the issue of the 9/11 attacks, while the background to the reconstruction of cultural identity in the author's research is the racial and economic turmoil in England in the 80s.

The third research is a graduating paper of Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta entitled “Cultural Identity Construction of Malcolm X as Seen in *Malcolm X* (1992)” written by Riska Waskita Sari in 2021. In this paper, she analyses the construction of African American cultural identity, especially from the figure of Malcolm, and uses the concept of cultural identity and diaspora theory by Stuart Hall. There are several differences that distinguish this study from the

author's research. The first one is differences in material objects. This research carries a movie entitled *Malcolm X*, while the author carries a movie entitled *Blinded by the Light*. The second is the different issues behind the reconstruction of the character's identity. The reconstruction of cultural identity in this research is motivated by the issue of the slavery, while the thing behind the reconstruction of cultural identity in the author's research is the racial and economic turmoil in England in the 80s.

The fourth research is a journal of Gunadarma University entitled “Immigrant Cultural Identity Representation in *Just Get Married* Film Promotion Booklet” written by Ahmad Jum’a Khatib Nur Ali in 2021. This study aims to identify representations of immigrant cultural identity in the “Just Get Married” booklet. The results of this study found that the representation of immigration status in the film can be seen from two perspectives, namely political and cultural perspectives. The results of the analysis show how the two parties are interrelated. Immigrants with non-European cultural ancestry, especially in Germany, have more difficulty obtaining citizenship or naturalization.

### **1.6 Theoretical Framework**

In this research, the researcher applies the Postcolonial theory by Homi Bhabha and Film Theory to analyze the characters in *Blinded by the Light* (2019). The characters presented in this drama script are Pakistani Muslim diasporas living

in England. The researcher uses this theory because it relates to the problem that the researcher wants to analyze in this paper.

### **1.6.1 Post-Colonial Theory**

The researcher uses Postcolonial theory from Homi K. Bhabha. This theory is very helpful for understanding the construction of Pakistani Muslim cultural identity where they have the status of a diaspora living in England.

In his concept, Bhabha asserts that neither the colonizers nor the colonized are independent from each other. These colonial relations are structured by various and contradictory forms of belief. Between colonizer and colonized, there is a "space between" which allows the two to interact and there is a loose space for a resistance. Resistance can never be easily explained because it is specific, incomplete, and ambiguous. This is what then makes colonial identity unstable, and always changing.

Homi K. Bhabha has main thoughts on postcolonialism, namely mimicry, hybridity and ambivalence. In this case, Bhabha states that mimicry is the process of rewriting the identity of the colonized in the third space, as a way of deconstructing colonialist discourse. For both the colonizer and the colonized, this act of mimicry produces effects that are ambiguous and contradictory. This imitation process is solely for its own interests and goals. At a certain level, this act of mimicry can also be a mockery of the invaders because they do not completely imitate the model offered by the invaders.

The next concept is hybridity. Hybridity refers to cross-cultural exchange. Furthermore, the hybridity strategy can be achieved by mimicry. Hybridity refers to the interaction between different cultural forms, which will one day result in the formation of new cultures and identities with their own history and textual embodiment. For example, hybridity can be seen in the adoption of cultural forms such as clothing, food, and so on.

Ambivalence comes from mimicry (Bhabha, 1992, p.91) which is an unconscious feeling of conflict between wanting something or rejecting it at the same time (Ashcroft et al, 2007, p.10). Ambivalence occurs when the colonized do mimicry towards the colonizers but they cannot do it perfectly. It happens when the colonized want to imitate the culture of the colonizers but on the other hand they still love their original culture.

### 1.6.2 Film Theory

Since cinema is the primary data source for this study, the researcher has applied film theory as a second theory to assist in the analysis of the data. There are many movie theories. One of the most well-known theories is *Mise-en-Sene* applied in this article. According to Bordwell & Thompson (2008, p.112), *mise en scène* means "set in the scene" and was first applied to theatrical production practice. There are several aspects that exist in the *mise en scene*, such as setting, lighting, costume, make up, and figure behaviors.

In addition to aspects in *mise en scene*, Amy Villarejo, in her book *Film Basics*, states that each camera position can be analyzed in terms of the distance

between the camera and its subjects (2007, p.38). There are several types of shooting according to her as follows:

1. The extreme long shot (ELS), in which the human form is hardly discernible;
2. The long shot (LS), in which people may be seen but are nevertheless dwarfed by the surroundings;
3. The medium long shot (MLS), which frames the subject of the image from the knees up;
4. The medium shot (MS), in which the subject is framed from the waist up after a small in-camera movement;
5. The medium close-up (MCU), in which the subject is seen from the chest up while we are a little closer;
6. The close-up (CU), which isolates a certain area of a person (most notably the face);
7. The extreme close-up (ECU), in which just a small piece of the face (an eye, the lips) is visible.

## **1.7 Method of Research**

### **1.7.1 Type of Research**

The researcher uses qualitative research in this paper. Qualitative research is more tentative and exploratory in nature compared to quantitative research (Walliman, 2011, p. 143). The purpose of qualitative research is to understand the condition of a context by leading to a detailed and in-depth description of the



portrait of conditions in a natural context (natural setting), about what actually happened according to what was in the field of study.

### **1.7.2 Data Source**

The data source of this research consists of primary and secondary data. The primary data are obtained from the contents of every scene in *Blinded by the Light* (2019), including shots and dialogue of the main character and other characters. The secondary or supporting data are taken from some journals, articles, books, and other works that can be related to the main data, mainly focusing on the object and theory.

### **1.7.3 Data Collection Technique**

There are several steps that have to take collect the main data. First, the researcher watches the film *Blinded by the Light* (2019) thoroughly to get the intrinsic elements. Then, the researcher divides the dialogue, action, and scene that is related to the issue. Third, the data will be categorized by extending the representative dialogue or action by using the aspect of Bhabha's Postcolonial theory. The researcher next searches and reads journals, books, and articles related to the topic to enhance both the data and the evidence.

### **1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique**

The researcher will use Postcolonial theory by Homi K. Bhabha to analyze the construction of cultural identity of Pakistani Muslim family characters in *Blinded by the Light* (2019). There are some steps to analyze the data. First, the researcher interprets the data. Secondly, the researcher identifies the scenes and dialogues in the film that related to the issue by using Bhabha's theory. Third, the

researcher uses the data to answer the research question. Furthermore, this study also uses Film theory by Amy Villarejo to support the data analysis. The researcher classifies the movie's scenes into camera movement and distance types.

### **1.8 Paper Organization**

The researcher classifies this paper into four chapters; introduction, intrinsic elements, analysis, and conclusions. The first chapter is an introduction, which contains the background of study, research question, objective of study, significance of study, literature review, theoretical approach, research method, and paper organization. The second chapter is the intrinsic element, which contains the summary of the film, theme, setting (place, time, social condition), characters and characterizations, plot, and point of view. The third chapter is the analysis which is the main chapter that contains the analysis of *Blinded by the Light (2019)* to answer the research question. The last chapter is the conclusion, containing a summary of the research results from *Blinded by the Light (2019)*.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

#### 4.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this research as stated in the first chapter is to find out the cultural identity construction of Pakistani Muslim in *Blinded by the Light* 2019. Hence, the research question is how is the cultural identity construction of the Pakistani Muslim diaspora as portrayed in the characters of *Blinded by the Light*. To answer the research question, the researcher uses a Postcolonial approach by Homi K. Bhabha which applies three concepts: Mimicry, Hybridity and Ambivalence.

However, the mimicry process that is carried out is a form of denial of their cultural identity as well as camouflage to defend themselves or survive (Lacan, 1997), even though the forms of mimicry happen in the colonizer land that is different with the Bhabha's theory. In Homi K. Bhabha's theory, the concept of cultural identity construction in the concept of mimicry occurs in colonized land. On the other hand, they also still maintain their Pakistani identity, so ambivalence arises. In the end, there is no pure culture because cultural identity is actually derived from other cultures. The cultural identity of Pakistani Muslim family characters in *Blinded by the Light* is rather complex since they are influenced by the dominant new culture. They live between two identities and try to survive and also balance their old identity and their new identity.

## 4.2 Suggestion

By using the same material object, *Blinded by the Light* (2019), the researcher suggests the next researcher to analyze character development of the characters in this movie. Besides identity being the main issue in this movie, analyzing the character development is another main issue portrayed in this movie. Furthermore, the next researcher also can apply a psychological approach.



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