

POSTCOLONIAL VIEWS ON THE APPLICATION OF MIMICRY IN *MY NAME IS KHAN*

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Abstrak

Istilah poskolonial terdiri dari 'post' yang berarti sesudah dan 'kolonial' yang berarti kolonialisme. Itu dapat disimpulkan bahwa postkolonial adalah masa setelah kolonialisme. Homi K. Bhabha adalah seorang tokoh terkemuka dalam studi pascakolonial. Dia adalah tokoh utama dalam studi postkolonial dan sangat dipengaruhi oleh teori poststrukturalis Barat. Salah satu film yang mengandung postkolonial adalah *My Name is Khan* karya Karan Johar tentang diskriminasi yang ditunjukkan oleh perlakuan Amerika terhadap Muslim. Dari konteks film terlihat bahwa konsep poskolonial yang lebih dominan oleh Homi K. Bhabha adalah mimikri. Mimikri mengacu pada situasi di mana orang-orang terjajah mencoba meniru penjajah dan tiruannya tidak pernah sama. Tiruan yang berbeda menjadi ejekan bagi penjajah dan ejekan ini sebenarnya adalah cara orang terjajah untuk melawan. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui bagaimana mimikri yang digambarkan dalam *My Name is Khan* dan bagaimana mimikri sebagai perlawanan atau tidak dalam *My Name is Khan*. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan menerapkan teori postkolonialisme Homi K. Bhabha yang diwujudkan dengan data dalam film. Data primer yang diperoleh dalam penelitian ini diambil dari film *My Name is Khan* berupa dialog, naskah, dan adegan. Selain itu, data sekunder seperti artikel, e-journal, e-book, dan sumber online lainnya digunakan untuk mendukung penelitian ini. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa konsep postkolonial Homi K Bhabha yang lebih dominan dalam *My Name is Khan* adalah mimikri.

Kata kunci: my name is khan, poskolonialisme, diskriminasi rasial

Abstract

The term postcolonial consists of 'post', which means after and 'colonial', which means colonialism. It can be concluded that postcolonial was the period after colonialism. Homi K. Bhabha was an outstanding figure in postcolonial studies. He was the main figure in postcolonial studies and was vigorously influenced by Western poststructuralist theory. One of the films that contain postcolonial is *My Name is Khan* by Karan Johar, about the discrimination shown by America's treatment of Muslims. From the context of the film, it can be seen that the more dominant concept of postcolonial by Homi K. Bhabha is mimicry. Mimicry refers to a situation where the colonized people try to imitate the colonizer, and the imitation is never the same. Different imitations become ridicule for the colonizers, and this mockery is actually the colonized people's way of fighting back. The purpose of this study is to find out how does mimicry depicted in *My Name is Khan* and how mimicry is the resistance or not in *My Name is Khan*. This study uses a qualitative method by applying a theory of post-colonialism by Homi K. Bhabha, which is manifested by the data in the film. The primary data obtained in this study were taken from the film *My Name is Khan* in the form of dialogues, scripts, and scenes. In addition, secondary data such as articles, e-journals, e-books, and other online sources are used to support this study. The results show that the postcolonial concept of Homi K Bhabha, which is more dominant in *My Name is Khan*, is mimicry.

Keywords: my name is khan, post-colonialism, racial discrimination

INTRODUCTION

The term postcolonial consists of 'post', which means after and 'colonial', which means colonialism. It can be concluded that postcolonial

was the period after colonialism. Postcolonial is not only seen as a postcolonial period but also as an analytical tool for questioning the ongoing practices

of colonialism. Postcolonial refers to all aspects of culture that have been influenced by the colonial process since its inception, from the initial contact with the colonial government to the present (Hawasi & Meida, 2015). However, postcolonial did not ignore the colonial perspectives of the colonizer and colonized. The colonizer and the colonized are not separated from each other. Between the colonizer and the colonized, there is a space between the two different cultures that can communicate with each other. Both are related to the colonists as well as the past, and because they are colonized in the Third World, they have a very wide range of executions (Novtarianggi et al., 2020). Postcolonial can be the proposition of the problem in which it emerges as a direction by selecting and accumulating knowledge throughout history (Diannita, 2021).

Postcolonial is to question the ongoing actions of colonialism or other types of colonialism that makes a life existence loaded with racism, inconsistent power relations, inferior culture, hybridity, and creolization. However, postcolonial is still ambiguous in its usage, and the debate seems unfinished until now. That's because there are several different views and ideas about the term. As a result, both postcolonial concepts and disciplines have undergone detailed and extensive analysis from a rigorous perspective in recent years (Andalas, 2016). It can be concluded that postcolonial theory is a set of statements regarding the conditions and tendencies of the colonizer and colonized.

Homi K. Bhabha was an outstanding figure in postcolonial studies. He contributed a lot of concepts such as ambivalence, hybridity, and mimicry (Bhabha, 1994b). Three concepts become general concentration to state that cultural production is always most productive in the most ambivalent places. These concepts reflect an approach by a colonized individual to challenge the unlimited strength of a colonizer. Bhabha argues that neither colonizer nor colonized are independent of each other. The colonizer in power is trying to differentiate themselves from the colonized (Sultoni & Utomo, 2021). However, the colonized had a way to resist by imitating something known as mimicry. The concept of mimicry has become a way for the colonized to imitate and become superior (Tallapessy et al., 2020).

According to Bhabha's view, the person who does the mimicry will not be one hundred per cent the

same as the original. They carry out the process of reformation, but they are not completely perfect (Amina, 2019). The imitator tries to imitate what the imitator has, and the two are forced to meet in a room which is called the third space. It led to the formation of hybrids and the handling of imitation in negotiations within that space (Bhabha, 1994). This shows that hybrids and mimicry cannot be separated. Hybrids show the conditions for encounters between colonizer and colonized, and mimicry shows the effects that result from those encounters that make the colonized imitate the colonizer. Various imitations are ridiculed when a complete imitation cannot be performed (Sultoni & Utomo, 2021).

Several previous researchers have conducted the same research on postcolonial views in literary works. The analysis of postcolonial views is found in a study conducted by Dikhy, Satyawati and Nasrullah entitled *Mimicry and Hybridity Through Japanese Society in the Last Samurai Movie* (Zhawara et al., 2021). Based on the results of this study, it tends to be seen that the four characters are adopting mimicry and hybrid practices and applying a new culture to their lives to adapt to the present, as represented by American and Japanese characters. There is also a study conducted by Inkarani, Heri and Yesika entitled *Mimicry and Hybridity of Hobbs in David Leitch's Fast and Furious: Hobbs and Shaw* (2019) Movie Script (Indrastuti et al., 2021). The results of this study refer to the elements of mimicry depicted in the characters when Luke Hobbs uses slang. Meanwhile, a hybrid element is reflected in Luke Hobbs's personality in terms of appearance and communication. In addition to this analysis, there is also an analysis conducted by Achmad and Hari entitled *Hibriditas, Mimikri, dan Ambivalensi Dalam Cerpen Kupata dan Meneer Chastelein Karya Rosyid*

H. Dimas: *Kajian Poskolonial* (Sultoni & Utomo, 2021). The results of this study reveal the hybridity aspect through the verbal attitudes contained in the mimicry aspect. The mimicry aspect is shown in the proud attitude of colonisers who use the colonizer's language. Ambivalence is indicated by the struggle of colonized in their native language.

Based on previous research that has been carried out, this research has differences from previous research in terms of the object of study, the material used and the focus used in previous research. It is the basis of this difference that attracts the

researcher's attention to research postcolonial views on the application of mimicry in *My Name is Khan*. In previous studies, there was no research on postcolonial views on the application of mimicry in *My Name is Khan*. In this context, post-colonialism theory by Homi K. Bhabha can be used as a basis for understanding postcolonial views on the application of mimicry in *My Name is Khan*. Using this theory, this article presents several questions that must be analyzed: a) how does mimicry depicted in *My Name is Khan*? b) how does mimicry as the resistance or not in *My Name is Khan*?

METHOD

In this study, a qualitative method is needed to analyze the postcolonial view on the application of mimicry in *My Name is Khan*. Qualitative methods were used in this study to collect data in the form of dialogues, scripts, and scenes related to the film. In obtaining this data, the first step was to watch the film *My Name is Khan* by Karan Johar. *My Name is Khan* was chosen because this film contains social issues that are suitable to be associated with post-colonialism theory. The next step is to analyze certain dialogues, scripts, and scenes that show indications related to the research topic. The data obtained are then presented by describing the dialogues, scripts, and scenes which are classified into information relevant to the topics discussed (Sumathipala et al., 2003). The results of the analysis in the form of a description are then interpreted qualitatively to obtain the desired general picture. Following the formulation of the problem, the three postcolonial concepts of Homi K. Bhabha, which are more dominant in *My Name is Khan* is mimicry. In this study, the questions from the first and second studies are interrelated. So, the researcher decided to combine the two questions.

Post-colonialism

Homi K. Bhabha is an outstanding figure in postcolonial studies. He was the main figure in postcolonial studies and was vigorously influenced by Western poststructuralist theory, especially by Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, and Michel Foucault (Bhabha, 1994). Bhabha says that during the time spent connected between two different cultures, the colonizer and the colonized, the two influence each other, and there is no native culture. The concept of

Bhabha asserts that the colonizer and the colonized are not separated from each other. Bhabha expressed that between the colonizer and the colonized, there is a space between the two different cultures that can communicate with each other.

Mimicry

Bhabha reveals that mimicry is a colonized desire to emulate the behaviour of the colonizer because of the desire for equal power (Bhabha, 1994b). According to Bhabha, there is a space between the colonizer and the colonized that allows them to interact and guides colonized to find strategies to resist colonial discourse. The concept of mimicry constructs personality or balance but, on the other hand, also remains in contrast to using the most successful power and information techniques (Amina, 2019). For colonized, mimicry was seen as a way to increase their status and dignity. In addition, it may have the opportunity to lead an advanced and better life.

ANALYSIS

In conveying problems in life, the role of media such as films is very important to convey general problems. The film is considered a place to tell a problem that arises, including various messages that can affect the audience (Adi & Wibowo, 2021). The problems found in cinema are not properly formed without paying attention to cinematographic techniques (Sitney, 1986).

As in the film entitled *My Name is Khan*, which will be the object of analysis in this study. This film tells about discrimination that shows the treatment of Muslims by Americans. Muslims are treated negatively by American because all Muslims are suspected of being terrorists after the September 11 tragedy. The Muslims counterattacked because they did not accept being accused of being terrorists. They want to be seen equally by Americans. From the context of the film, it can be seen that the more dominant concept of postcolonial by Homi K. Bhabha is mimicry.

An important part of this film is the identity of Rizvan Khan, an Indian Muslim who suffers from Asperger's Syndrome. Meanwhile, he was a genius. However, because of his deficiency, people feel strange about him. When people mocked him, he

chose to ignore it. He prefers not to put up a resistance unless that person is so bad.



Figure 1

As shown in Figure 1, a woman reported Rizvan Khan to security officials when he was at the airport to meet the American president. The woman felt that it was strange because Rizvan seemed to recite something. So he was taken to the room where he was cross-examined by the guards. Guards checked all the bodies and items that were brought in by Rizvan. After the guards found nothing suspicious, a guard named John was seen taunting him for Rizvan's strange behaviour.

"Well, tell the President something from me too then."

"Okay. Okay."

"Tell him I said, howdy."

"Howdy? How ... Okay."

"Pen?"

"J. Marshall."

"John."

"John."

"John. John Marshall says howdy. Howdy."

"Okay. Howdy."

In the scene above, Rizvan appears to be silent and obedient while the guards are checking him. He did not resist and allowed himself to be interrogated. However, he did not feel wrong and was able to escape from the guards. Due to his shortage, he still chose to follow what the airport guards told him.

In this scene, it can be understood not only the issue of discrimination but also the division between colonizer and colonized, namely the power of domination and resistance. Domination was carried out by guards who felt that their status was higher than Rizvan. Resistance, on the other hand, does not necessarily have to be physical. Resistance can be

effective through an attitude like Rizvan's. He obeys whatever John and other officers tell him to do. The physical problem is just a matter of orientation that Rizvan encounters.



Figure 2

The tragedy of September 11 left many people both lost and angry. America then retaliated against the actions of the Muslims. Americans destroyed the place and attacked Muslims believed to be at the root of the September 11 tragedy problem. It seems that some people are trying to destroy a store owned by Muslims, as shown in Figure 2. They make Muslims feel what they felt on September 11.

"Reports are in from various parts of America that Muslims are being targeted and attacked."

"Back off. Get away."

"A Sikh employee in Michigan was shot dead by his employer because he was mistaken for an Afghani."

It turns out that it doesn't resist at all, even when America destroys the place and attacks the Muslims. America's dominance over Muslims occurs when Americans take revenge on Muslims. Americans believe that Muslims have weakened after the tragedy. So they destroyed the place and attacked the Muslims. As a result, the Muslims who were attacked did not fight back because they couldn't do anything else because of the cornered situation.



Figure 3

The impact of the September 11 tragedy made

Muslims feel afraid. In this case, the attitude taken by Muslims emerges, and mimicry reinforces the idea that colonizer and colonized provide space for a hybrid situation. Muslims choose to change their appearance to mimic the appearance of non-Islamic people. On this issue, it can conclude that they will never be attacked by alienating or changing the appearance of Muslims who ultimately want to belike Native Americans.

“In the wake of 9/11, a lot of American Muslims are changing their names to escape racial profiling. Questions are being raised about American’s biased views towards the slamic community. Even as Muslim women wearing hijabs (veils) are being targeted.

Post 9/11, American’s view towards its Islamic inhabitants is changing rapidly.”

In Figure 3, a Muslim man is trying to change his appearance. He didn't want to be the victim of a racist attack by Americans. If seen by Muslims, it is identical to the beard as in the scene. Therefore, American Muslims are trying to change their appearance so that they don't look like Muslims. Even to erase their traces as Muslims, they finally changed their names. Not only men but women wearing hijabs are victims of the attack.

That could lead to a direct assumption about the depiction that Native Americans have a higher status than the Muslims there. Due to the fact that the majority of Americans are non-Muslims, more numerous Americans are Muslims. Indeed, it attacks the common notion that non-Muslim Americans are more numerous in America, and imitation shows an automated mechanism. However, even if Muslims imitate Native Americans, their imitations will never be the same.



Figure 4

One of the other impacts of the September 11 tragedy happened to the Rizvan family. Sam, his stepson, was bullied by his schoolmates until Sam died.

“The attack on your son seems very personal Mrs. Khan. It happened at the community soccer field.”

“Inspector Garcia told us that our Sam’s death may have been a racial attack. His wounds were proof of that. He was a Muslim, so he was killed. But I couldn’t understand. Being a Muslim is not a bad thing, Mandira.”

As in figure 4, Mandira, his mother, decided to resist Sam's school. She was dissatisfied when her son did not receive justice at all. Police said the evidence was unclear, but police hypothesized that Sam was the victim of bullying for using his stepfather's name, Rizvan Khan. Therefore, Mandira was angry and thought that Sam's death was because of Rizvan's last name, which was used by his son.

Then, Mandira asked Rizvan to meet the American president and asked him to tell him that he was not a terrorist. It is understood that Rizvan Khan has also made many sacrifices for the well-being of his family. Mandira wants his son's justice in Sam's school and public places, but Rizvan also wants the president's justice. Not only defending for his religion, but he also defended his own family. It is known here that Rizvan has shown that Muslims are not terrorists, as Americans claim that Muslims are terrorists. This is also one of the aspects of mimicry. Mandira cannot accept Sam, who dies without justice, and Rizvan cannot accept Muslims, who are considered terrorists. This shows that there are indelible relationships, everything is necessary for each other, and that is the mechanism of mimicry.



Figure 5

Rizvan Khan was arrested by the police when he met the US president. He shouted that he was not a terrorist to the crowd that was with the president. But because the situation at the time was so harsh that people around him thought Rizvan was saying he was a terrorist.

“I mean we’re told to report suspicious characters. Participate in protecting the country from extremists. And then when we do that we’re just put into the jail, like my brother. The question over here is, not why he’s trying to meet the President. The question is, what’s wrong in an ordinary citizen wanting to meet the President of his country? Or is it just wrong for a Muslim man to even try?”

Demonstrations were held for Rizvan Khan, who was imprisoned. Muslims flocked to help Rizvan get out of prison. As in figure 5, Zakir Khan, the younger brother, is being interviewed about his older brother being imprisoned. He argued that it was wrong for an ordinary person like Rizvan to want to see the president for justice.

The suffering that was felt, especially in the case that befell Sam, was not only Mandira who lost but also Rizvan Khan. It would never have happened if Mandira had not married Rizvan and Sam had not taken the name of his stepfather. Due to the September 11 tragedy, Americans were free to do what they wanted, and as a result, Rizvan was arrested. This situation is a situation where colonized can’t do anything. At that time, the world was dominated by invaders, and the colonized could not fight back. As a result, Sam was unable to obtain justice, and there was no Rizvan Khan, who was considered a terrorist at the time.

CONCLUSION

From the results of the analysis conducted, it can be concluded that the concept of post-colonialism appears in *My Name Is Khan*. There are three concepts by Homi K. Bhabha, but the more dominant in this film is mimicry. Mimicry is interrelated and is used to answer the questions in the first and second research questions.

Mimicry is shown in a scene where Rizvan Khan shows no resistance while being cross-examined by guards. Other scenes of non-resistance include shops being destroyed and Muslims being attacked by Americans. On the other hand, there is resistance when Muslims change their appearance to be attacked. This is a form of imitation. Then it was resistance when Sam was bullied, and Mandira demanded justice for her son.

Last, Zakir Khan and other Muslims fought for the release of Rizvan Khan.

Researchers also conclude that all the theories and concepts used in this study are reflected in *My Name Is Khan*. The structure of behaviour and attitude can be seen in every scene of this film. This film seeks to present a postcolonial view of the application of mimicry in *My Name Is Khan*.

Therefore, using Bhabha’s postcolonial theory, researchers can easily find a postcolonial view in the film *My Name Is Khan*.

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