

*Symbolic Hybridity and the Identity Crisis in Vampire Fiction:
Niklaus Mikaelson*

رمزية التهجين و أزمة الهوية في خيال مصاصي الدماء: نيكلاوس مايكلسون

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تاريخ الوصول 2022/07/18 القبول 2023/12/27 النشر على الخط 2024/01/10
Received 18/07/ 2022 Accepted 27/12/ 2023 Published online 10/01/2024

Abstract:

The effects of the imperialist agenda are ever present. Nations, even after acquiring their freedoms, suffer from the residue of an oppressed self. The heritage of colonialism includes a set of elements such as identity crisis as a result of hybridity. The latter denotes an unwanted marriage between two ambivalent cultures. A myriad of gothic works carry in their pleats symbolic instances of colonization wherein the vampire is often compared to the coloniser. In this paper, the aim is to analyze the vampire as an invader in parallel to another mystical creature, a werewolf, who is believed to take the role of the colonised. Niklaus Mikaelson, the hybrid, in the TV series The Vampire Diaries is put under scrutiny as the best sample to study the symbolic representation of a colonial and racial hybridity between the self and the other, the supreme vampire and the lowlife werewolf.

Keywords: Colonialism, Identity Crisis, Hybridity, Gothic Fiction, Niklaus Mikaelson.

ملخص:

للأجندة الإمبريالية آثار دائمة. فبعض الأمم ، حتى بعد حصولها على حرياتها ، تعاني من بقايا الذات القمعية. يتضمن تراث الاستعمار مجموعة من العناصر مثل أزمة الهوية الناتجة عن التهجين. يشير الأخير إلى زواج غير مرغوب فيه بين ثقافتين متناقضتين. هنالك مجموعة من الروايات القوطية التي تحمل في طياتها أمثلة رمزية للاستعمار حيث غالبًا ما يُقارن مصاص الدماء بالمستعمر. يهدف هذا المقال إلى تحليل مصاص الدماء باعتباره غازيًا بالتوازي مع مخلوق خيالي آخر ، المستندب ، الذي يعتقد أنه يأخذ دور المستعمر. تم وضع نيكلاوس مايكلسون من السلسلة التلفزيونية *The Vampire Diaries* ، الهجين ، تحت الفحص باعتباره أفضل عينة لدراسة التمثيل الرمزي للتهجين الاستعماري والعرق بين الذات والآخر ، مصاص الدماء الأسمى والمستندب الأدنى.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاستعمار ، أزمة الهوية ، التهجين ، الخيال القوطي ، نيكلاوس مايكلسون.

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1. INTRODUCTION

For centuries, imperialism, conquests and colonialism had festered the world. The powerful had always felt the need to acquire more territories, first using savagery and pretexts of civilisation. The world, hence, had to be divided between a self and another, the predator and the prey. This dichotomy, such as many worldly incidents, had been documented through the pages of fiction resulting in the postcolonial theory.

Literature as a genuine form of art has never ceased to mirror the true, vivid representations of the human condition. In this light, literary writings have greased the wheel for authors to expose the imperial ideologies. However, in recent days, visual media has replaced literature as the primary means of artistic expression enabling a panel of artists to start using television and films as alternative mediums to forge identities and express the human experience through adaptations. As such, series and movies have given solid grounds for the postcolonial theory to attempt at conveying sincere narratives that highlight issues of resistance, identity and otherness. Accordingly, literature and adaptation often work in mysterious ways where fictional beings and symbolic incidents would work as a metaphor for the coloniser and the colonised.

In this research paper, it is believed that, vampire fiction is one of such utensils which emblematically manifest the postcolonial theory. Common knowledge of vampires dictates that they are creatures which suck the blood of humans to survive, denoting exploitation. In a symbolic manner, vampires colonise the body of the other and drain its powers. Furthermore, the existence of the self as a vampire denoted the need for an other which is a werewolf, a savage version of the sophisticated un-dead. The matrimony between a vampire and a werewolf gives birth to a hybrid endowed with both's powers yet belonging to neither. The latter is thought out to be adequately portrayed through Niklaus Mikaelson, one of the most renowned literary characters in the world of vampire fiction. Niklaus is not only appreciated for his evil charms, yet also due to being a metaphorical persona for postcolonial hybridity and its effects.

In culmination, the aim of this research paper is to explore the postcolonial hints in vampire fiction and how they symbolically denounce the effects of colonialism. In particular, the focus is to be laid on the character of Klaus Mikaelson, developed in the supernatural drama *The Vampire Diaries* (2009-2017), a character projected as the offspring of the self and the other resulting into an identity crisis.

2. Postcolonialism in Fiction

In the first half of the twentieth century, colonialism had spread like a wildfire as half of the world's surface has been under political and economic control. Yet following fervent liberation

waves, these nations set themselves free from the chains of imperialism. Nevertheless, the ghost of colonialism has emerged from the ashes of its dimness and had been circling the post-colonialist framework. Aftereffects of such dominion, referred to as postcolonialism, transpired as a major topic of discussion in literature and diverse artistic endeavours uncovering the imperial regimes' abominations which have created and destroyed nations, committed crimes, destroyed people's lands, cultures, languages and histories, and relocated enormous numbers of people from one locality to another (Ashcroft et al, 1989, p.19)

On that account, postcolonialism is most frequently and crudely used in order to delimit the transition from colonialism to self-determination among formerly colonised nations. Postcolonialism, duly, operates as a chronological marker and a periodisation technique; it suggest a hopeful transcendence of the nineteenth century imperialism and a more balanced political and economic power between the West and developing nations (Darian-Smith, 1996, p. 292).

The endeavour of postcolonialism held a prominent position in the contemporary literary panorama after a significant epoch of colonial domination. These colonised identities have constructed a post-colonial discourse which addresses the problems and consequences of colonial control, emphasizes or describes a number of ideas, including hybridity, diaspora, ambivalence, identity crisis, mimicry, and so forth leading to the postcolonial theory which in turn established itself as an academic discipline in the 1990s as a response to colonialism's cultural legacy, offering a way to "deal effectively with the challenges and the varied cultural provenance of postcolonial writing (Christian, 1995, p. 457-460).

Therefore postcolonial literature is characterized by its opposition to colonialism and by its portrayal of the struggle of the disadvantaged people who experienced deprivation and cultural upheaval as a result of colonial rule. In this regard, Ashcroft asserts that "we use the term 'postcolonial'... to cover all the culture affected by the moment of colonisation to the present day" (Ashcroft et al, 1989, p. 2). In this vein, the primary aim of a postcolonial literature is to display local peoples' battles with the challenge of forging their own identities in addition to the shifting economic landscape and cultural ambiguity. As a result, after being freed from colonial rule, populations tried to build their nations while expressing their own cultural and national identities.

2.1. Homi Bhabha's Hybridity

The notion of hybridity is used to denote different meanings. In postcolonial theory, however, it is associated to the marriage between a conqueror's and a conquered's cultures. A hybrid, duly, refers to the progeny of two nations. Among the first scholars to explore the notion of hybridity in the postcolonial theory is Homi Bhabha inspired by Mikhail Bakhtin's studies on double-voicedness (Kradiy, 2005, p.ix). Bhabha advanced that: "hybridity, ambivalence and mimicry...revealed the inherent vulnerability of colonial discourse" (ctd in Ashcroft et al, 2007,p.37). Shedding light on the word vulnerable is essential due to the fact that hybridity was considered an anomaly to both

cultures. Hybrids were seen, by the coloniser, as a tool to further brain-wash a culture, and for the colonised a blasphemy to the native ethos.

Furthermore, Hybridity is perceived as the process by which two cultures become one where differences between cultures are rendered similar and similarities become differences, and as such, the hybrid is neither considered analogous to both nations nor dissimilar to either since it is the offspring of both (Young, 1995, p.26). Differently put, hybridity insinuates an eternal transformation even after decolonization the residue of the conqueror is everlasting that it acutely transforms a nation (Fanon, 1968, p.36). As a result, the hybrid is put in a confusing status and struggles to find a proper place to belong. They are lost in what Bhabha termed as a “Third Space”. Bhabha explained this abode as an “alien territory” which serves to create an international ethos and to destroy all signs of multiculturalism and autonomy of cultures (1994, p.38). Moreover, hybrids, eventually, find themselves agonising from an identity crisis wherein Zohdi (2017) postulated that identity loss stems from an individual being enchained by two aspects, most likely two opposing cultures. The latter situation results in a “double vision” or “double consciousness” leaving the hybrid ignorant of his true self (p.146).

Consequentially, hybridity is for many scholars, including Bhabha, an internal phase of transition from one culture to another and vice versa. Suitably, the group of people in question suffer from “a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction in the ‘beyond’” or having a dual identity (1994, p.1). Disorientation and absence of a place to call home was also explored by Bhabha as “unhomeliness”. To be homeless, for Bhabha, does not signify a place, but a feeling of belonging, and without it an individual is incomplete (ctd in Zohdi, 2017, p.147).

According to Amardeep Singh, there are four types of hybridity in postcolonial theory, yet the most convenient for this research paper is “Racial hybridity”. When the term hybridity was first brought to being it was extrapolated from biological studies. A hybrid, biologically, is “the merger of two genetic streams” (Singh, 2009). In the selected work the two races in question are vampires and werewolves who are assumed to function as a metaphor for the natives and the settlers.

In fiction, many analytical works attempted to explore the different façades of hybridity, and despite their variant results, all came to the conclusion that the existence of hybridity following the clash of two nations is inevitable. No culture is entirely pure, no race is unadulterated, and ergo, no nation is free of the traces of hybridity (Kraidy, 2005, p.148). The problematic, thus, does not lie in proving the existence of hybridity or the lack of it thereof; it is the effects of this notion which are of utter importance, most precisely in terms of identity.

2.2. The Identity Dilemma

For eons and eons, the colonisers’ objective has remained constant, to remove and distort the indigenous people's cultural identity in order to further the western colonial world's greed for imperial economic gain. In this sense, the dilemma of identity has become the most prevailing and controversial issue in postcolonial fiction and its diverse adaptations.

According to Sheoran “the major themes in the works written in the postcolonial period have been the fragmentation and identity crisis experienced by the once colonized peoples and the important impacts of colonialism on the indigenous” (ctd in Dizayi, 2015, p.1002). In fact, the question of identity has never been a clearly defined one for Mercer argues that “identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty”(1995, p. 43).

Intrinsically, identity is a multifaceted term, yet, in its simplest sense, it is founded on past experiences which are typically supplemented by characteristics like nationality, ethnicity, culture as well as race. Although identity develops on an individual basis, each person also bears a variety of social identities that have ramifications on the political (such as being a colonial person or being a member of a minority group) and cultural levels. When they mediate views of the colonised group by the dominant group (or coloniser), as well as individual perceptions and reactions, these elements take on specific meanings in social relationships (Ghosh et al. 2008, p.57). When one of these elements is distorted, the issue of identity arises.

Nevertheless, within the postcolonial context, it proves difficult to settle a comprehensive delineation for the notion of “identity” as it is conventionally fastened to the so-called “other”, in other words, one can solely discern himself/herself with the existence of the other. In the light of this binary relation between the self and the other, “Identity emerges as a kind of unsettled space or an unresolved question in that space, between a number of intersecting discourses” (Hall, 1989,p. 10). The roots of this perspective have been inserted on Edward Said’s notion of binary opposition between the West and the East. In his works, he emphasizes the view that identity is forged by the coloniser, as truth is defined by those in positions of power.

In this sense, the focal point in Said’s argument is that colonised individuals are firmly rooted in and committed to the ideologies and tactics of the coloniser and they have successfully influenced the colonised as a result. Therefore, identity is conceptualised and organised within the confines of Western or coloniser’s knowledge; accordingly, those who have been colonised are unable to identify themselves outside of this Orientalist perspective (ctd in Dizayi, 2019, p.82).

In a distinct line of view, and shifting away from Edward Said’s dichotomies, Homi Bhabha in his seminal work *the Location of Culture*, displayed the notion of hybrid identity as an “interweaving of elements of both colonizer and colonized challenging the validity and authenticity of any essentialist cultural identity”(ctd in Meridith, 1998, p.2). He continues his endeavor by establishing the concept of ‘the third place’, as mentioned earlier in this paper, which signifies an “in between the designation of identity” succinctly “this interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains the difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy (Bhabha, 1994, p.4)

On the other side of the spectrum, Frantz Fanon in his argument in works like *Wretched of the Earth*, and *Black Skins White Masks* detailed the psychological impact and harm of colonialism and its repercussions on indigenous people who now find themselves on a protracted quest for self-

discovery donning "white masks" to deal with the West, or denying one's own unique identity to present oneself to the coloniser in a way that precludes any degrading characteristics that portray the colonised as "primitive" (Rayan, 2012, p.11). Additionally, Ashcroft et al. assert that displacement is the cause of the postcolonial identity crisis. To put it another way, the magnificent indigenous values and traditions together with the complex blending of two diverse cultures which result in an overwhelming tension that causes internal strife among the inhabitants displayed by a genuine and active sense of perplexity, quandary, and alienation (Ashcroft et al., 2008, p. 8-9)

On a psychological level, individuals who have experienced colonisation frequently face a difficult dilemma about the most acceptable standard to adhere to. They are forced to make one of two tough decisions: either they stick with their traditional or original identities, which they find difficult to confront in the modern world, or they accept the coloniser's imposed identities and cultures, which they find alien. It is therefore obvious that they will go through a significant internal conflict that might eventually result in the separation of individuals of the same ancestry; those who embrace and embody the western identity and others who reject it (Bhabha, 1994, p.38). Moreover, the struggle of such characters may not always be explicit for it can be transmitted to the world in a symbolic manner.

2.3. Symbolism

Symbols are often perceived as linguistic signs endowed with their own meaning. Nonetheless, they can also carry hidden innuendos. In Arts and fiction, a symbol is defined as "a figure in which the vehicle – the image, activity, or concept used to represent something else –represents more than one thing (or tenor) and is broadly suggestive, having both literal and figurative significance" (Murfin & Ray, 2009 p.504). Furthermore, the notion of symbolism is a literary technique wielded to embellish literature and give it a higher meaning than what meets the eye.

Historically, the term symbolism is believed to have originated back in time and place to ancient Greece, though it was not adequately documented (Wellek, 1970, p.249). Yet, the function of symbolism as a coding technique is thought out to have existed as long as humans have. Arthur Symons, in his introduction of *the Symbolist Movement in Literature*, advanced that the origins of symbolism were manifested in the names God attributed to every creature, object, and mechanism. Later on, symbols became the vehicle by which man started communicating his thoughts and understandings of the world around him (1908). Within the literary realm, although symbolism was ever present in different literary periods it did not gain traction, as a literary device, until the modernist era to negate the realistic mode of what preceded it (Wellek, 1970, p.250). Rosalina Neginsky adds that symbolism in fiction "originated in opposition to the industrialized and materialist society and opposed rationalist and positivist doctrines" (2010, p.2) alluding to the surrealist and artistic aspect to symbolism as it refused all what was tangible and revered the imaginative.

Symbolism spread through Europe during post realism after having palpably become eminent in nineteenth century France and later on England (Neginsky, 2010, p.2). More so, the purpose for which symbolism started to be more inculcated in literature and art is the belief that it reflected the

human crisis, human suffering and erraticism in an implicit manner that “ For many symbolists, sensitivity means a taste of the bizarre, anxiety, decadence, apathy, lifelessness, disorder of sense” (Pederesn, 2015, p.293). In accordance, it is evident that symbolism stressed the human struggle to accept his reality and escape to a world of imagination, or to reflect ones’ struggle through a symbolic language, both to beautify it and to give it more profundity. Symbolism, then, echoed the rejection of “the dominance of positivism, which emphasized rational thought, objectivity, and scientific method” as well as it “sought to accurately represent the external world of nature and human society through descriptions of objective reality” (Milne, 2009,p.802).

On that note, symbolism reflected human resistance against any type of oppression be it ones’ reality or a physical type of domination such as colonialism, as it was used to investigate colonialist attributes in literature. Symbolism was investigated through the postcolonial theory in which the concept of Cartography can be brought to light. This term is used to refer to mapping territories which, according to Shehla Burney, is a symbolic way to reflect a coloniser’s urge to earn and control territories (2012, p.179). Henceforth, there are various literary works which have used symbolism to reflect colonialist attitudes, for instance, Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* had been analysed by many scholars due to its richness of a symbolic language aimed to cipher imperialism. In view of that, Cedric Watts postulated that *Heart of Darkness* is “a richly symbolic resonance” of colonialism (1983, p.205). Sometimes, this symbolic language, in the postcolonial theory, reflects postcolonial heritage and not only colonialism such as the case in Jamaica Kincaid’s *My Mother and Girl*. Kincaid’s story portrays the relationship between offsprings and their mothers, and their struggle to obtain an identity of their own. According to Edwin Onwuka the mothers in the stories symbolise the effect of colonialism on the conquered nation where its people suffer of loss of identity and “unhomeliness” (2013, p.136).

These mentioned literary works are but a few examples of how symbolism is inculcated in order to shed light on the effects of colonialism. Symbols work in the shadows as hidden meanings emanating from different type of stories. In postcolonial literature, the trickiness of symbolism is used as a tool for resistance and a manner by which imperialism and injustices are denounced. Therefore, this utensil is to be adapted as an analytical tool to study the selected work believing that it harbours enough symbols associated with the colonial heritage.

3. The Original Hybrid: Niklaus Mikaelson

Since early folkloric legends and mythological tales, werewolves and vampires have always been portrayed as two supernatural species standing on different spectrums and engaging in a ceaseless conflict. Werewolves have been denoted as supernatural shape-shifting species of people that unwillingly turn into enormous, terrifying and incredibly violent wolves on the night of the full moon, hinting at their savage and animal instincts. On the other hand, vampires, the sophisticated predators, are un-dead, non-living creatures that prey at humans by feeding on their blood. Such supernatural beings have become the key characters in books, movies, and other forms of media like

web series, which has piqued the interest of readers and viewers alike. Some of them have become recognizable figures in popular culture.

Niklaus Mikaelson or, as commonly referred to, Klaus is a fictional character introduced in the novel *The Rise* authored by Julia Plec; however, on the screens, Niklaus is presented as the antagonist in the second season of the renowned fantasy drama series *The Vampire Diaries* (2009-2017) and then the protagonist of the spinoff series *The Originals* (2013-2017). His story is traced back for over a thousand years, in the 10th century, born to the all-powerful witch Esther and a werewolf called Ansel in Mystic Falls and raised with his six half-siblings by his stepfather Michael, both unaware of his true lineage. The members of the Mikaelson's family are known as the original vampires (Williamson &Plec, 2011)

When a mortal, Klaus was very compassionate and sought affection from others especially his family, the Mikaelsons; yet, Klaus developed a violent and cruel personality as a result of Michael's cruelty towards him. His anger and impulsiveness heightened as soon as he was turned to an Original Vampire. Originally, their transformation goes back to the night Henrik, one of his brothers, was slain by one of the changed werewolves as Henrik and Niklaus were watching the wolf shift. Michael, devastated by the death of his child, persuaded Esther to utilise her magic to shield their other children. Esther cast The Immortality Spell at Mikael's request, turning Niklaus, his brothers, and his stepfather into Original Vampires, the first vampires to ever exist and the ancestors of the vampire race. Nevertheless, with Niklaus being the offspring of an affair his mother had with a werewolf.

Once committing his first human kill, Niklaus' werewolf gene was activated, resulting in his transformation into a vampire/werewolf hybrid, endowed with colossal power from his both sides; however, creating a deep internal conflict. Shortly after becoming a hybrid, Esther used her dark magic to cast a curse on him that made his werewolf nature lie dormant before rejecting and leaving him, this spell has become known as the 'hybrid curse' (Williamson & Plec, 2011)

3.1. Vampires and Werewolves from a Colonialist Lens

Vampires and werewolves were rendered an essential part of gothic literature and fiction. There is a plethora of movies and television series dovetailing around the two species. Still, they are not simply fictitious creatures for they carry real historical insinuations of the world. On that note, it is claimed that "Modern American television is guilty of using colonialist discourse as a way in which to entertain and reinscribe western ideals as dominant and homogenous" (Guitar, 2015, p.1). That is to say, a colonialist discourse can be found in different genres of movies and series, among which fantasy ones are the most adamant.

Based on Jenna Guitar's research on *the Originals*, she advanced that the Hollywood industry "introduces the supernatural as a way to explain the horrors of the past to attempt to alleviate American cultural guilt over its own imperialistic and colonizing past, and present!"(2015, p.4). She gives the example of *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter*, whereby vampires epitomise the racist south or differently put the imperialist notion(Guitar, 2015,p.4). Subsequently, in *The Vampire*

Diaries and the Original, the Mikaelsons mirror the invader in a sense that they embodied a financially fortunate white family which moved from Europe to the New World and settled there. With the sun curse, they have mutated to vampires where the characteristics of the coloniser were heightened, they became the most prevailing civilised family and masters of all others, owing to their supernatural powers which set them as the self. On the other side, the original people of the New World were beasts, werewolves, who suffered a moon curse, a curse which conveniently exposed savage and primitive traits of the natives insinuating their status as the colonised other.

In detail, it was in Middle Ages Europe that the Mikaelsons, that is Michael and his wife Esther decided to carry their wealth and partake in a voyage to the New World after a plague spread in their village where they supposedly lost a child, though they did not (Plec & Dries, 2011). The colonised land was often described for being exotic and mystical while the people embryonic (Rayan, 2012, p.11). Giving the colonisers pretexts to conquer this land. On the same note, once Rebekah Mikaelson explained the reasons behind her family's settling in Mystic Falls, she referred to it as a "mystical land where everyone was healthy blessed by gifts of speed and strength" leading, eventually, the rich white family to move to this haven and exploit its magical powers (Plec& Dries, 2011). Once in Mystic Falls, Virginia, the Mikaelson couple had more children only to discover that the natives whom they believed as friends turned out to be monsters cursed to turn from humans to wolves every full moon.

To gain further pretext to what the Mikaelsons were about to become, one of their kids, Henrik, led himself to be attacked by wolves since he did not respect their traditions just like a coloniser would violate the rituals of the natives. After Henrik's death, Esther, as a witch sought the help of one of her kin in order to turn her family from humans to vampires (Plec& Dries, 2011). It was clarified that the Mikaelsons and specifically Michael did not wish his family to survive or leave a land which did not belong to them in the first place. He, in truth, wished his family to be "superior to the wolves" (Plec& Dries, 2011). The connotation of the word superior has more insinuation than to simply be stronger; it also meant that the Mikaelsons would be the dominant superior breed, the self.

In the process of signifying the ambivalent relationship between the Mikaelsons and the natives, their curses are reversed. While the werewolves were unable to transform into their beastly selves until a full moon and not being able to stop themselves from transforming in the first place and hurting innocent people, the vampires were not to walk in the sun without being burnt to ashes (Plec& Dries, 2011). Ergo, whereas the vampires saw themselves as the superior race, the self, the natives were unwillingly compelled to be the savage other. As already explained, vampires in many fictitious works reflect a colonising attitude due to their blood sucking ability and desire (Arata, 1990, p.630), wherein blood is a signifier of identity since it is perceived as the "essence that somehow determines all those other features-physical and cultural-that distinguish one race from another" (Stevenson, 1988, p.144). Those who eradicated the identity of people and exploited them in the process are colonisers and, in this fictitious story, they are the vampires who sucked the blood out of their victims.

It is more than clear that the vampires in this story reflect the coloniser. They are white, rich, sophisticated, and they possess the power to drain people from their source of identification, blood. The werewolves, on the other hand, are animals, unable to control their primeval nature. Yet, what if the vampires and werewolves would conceive? What will be the progeny of their matrimony? And which skin will it, take that of the superior or the savage? Or will it be an abomination to both?

3.2. The Hybrid Curse

There is broad agreement among postcolonial theorists that hybridity developed as a result of encounters between "colonisers" and "the colonised" that were culturally internalized and led to the dichotomous creation of these identities (Yazdiha, 2010, p.31). This trans-cultural hybridity turns out to be a curse more than a blessing, as it leads to hatred and destabilisation. Elaborately, In terms of the physical body, it is possible to start by thinking about this merging of two races that are thought to be distinct and independent creatures. The corporeal hybrid was historically created from two symbolic poles, a physical depiction of the coloniser and the colonised (p.32). In klaus' case, he is the result of fusion between two supernatural contested breeds, being inherited with werewolf genes as his original and colonised side, then bestowed the curse of vampirism and immortality which reflects his coloniser traits.

Furthermore, these mixed-race conceptions were for a long period of time present in popular representations such as folktales, fables and myths; however, they were particularly demonized as a physical manifestation of unclean blood, and racism long served as an instrument of power that insisted that even in this mixing of two bodies, just "one drop" of black blood would render the body impure and alien, an abomination. (Yazdiha, 2010, p.32). In a stricter sense, hybrid forms, whatever their origins, threaten and unbalance that separation from 'others', hence create fear. On that account, Niklaus as a hybrid was considered a first of his sort. Such a being was believed to be too powerful to exist, and because of this natural imbalance, he was reprimanded by everyone for his savage and cruel ways, even the most resilient vampires become paralyzed with fear at the mere mention of his name. Due to his hybrid nature, he was rejected hunted down by his step-father for several years, even so, his mother put dark magic on him to suppress his powers and deny him from his true self.

For the hybrid body, hybridity generates a kind of permanent condition of ambiguity and placelessness and inhibits its cultural incorporation through other races. This is particularly reflected in Klaus as he belongs neither with vampires nor with werewolves, constantly, being at war with his siblings. Nevertheless, audiences witness that Klaus displays instances of affection and friendship, particularly towards Caroline Forbes, and Stefan Salvatore, whom he considers his only companion but both do not return this affection back. As one of the striking results of hybridity is the feeling of unhomeliness and dislocation as Bhabha states: "the borders between home and world become confused; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 13) it can also originate from the mismatch and discord that occurs when an individual's opinions and feelings are different from

those of their surroundings. In the series, Klaus spent his life span wandering from one place to another, between Southern France, Italy, Spain, England and New Orleans, never finding a stable home, subsequently, a large part of his desire is to create his own race of hybrids as a way to retaliate against vampires (the coloniser) as a form of resistance and to ultimately seek belongingness.

3.3 Lost between Vampirism and Lycanism

Identity though a strong construct of all human life, is also a vulnerable element. Identity is how an individual is known to the world; it is a sense of belonging to a certain family, group, culture or nation. Nonetheless, due to the fragile nature of identify it can also be threatened and lost. Evoking Homi Bhabha's research on hybridity, it is evident that identity is most likely to be disoriented once a person is lost in the "Third Space", a perplexing locality when the person possesses two origins yet belongs to neither (1994, 38). Such a person experiences an identity crisis by possessing "double vision" or "double consciousness" (Zohdi, 2017, p.146) instead of one, stable, true self.

As already discussed, Niklaus is a hybrid, both a vampire and a lycan, and despite possessing both of these species' powers and being immortal, he is defected. The entire rationale behind Niklaus' agenda in *The Vampire Diaries* is to create a race of his own, a hybrid race in which he can call a family (Septien & Meyer, 2011). Niklaus was a Mikaelson whether he admitted it or not, he grew up with his original vampire siblings, yet he never felt he was like them and so he sabotaged his relation with his original family by feeling distrust towards them, daggering them and scattering them around the seas (Dries & Daniels, 2011). On the other side of the continuum, he never trusted the werewolves either for he saw them as an inferior race. Though, inspite this distrust, he acted like a cursed wolf that cannot control his impulses, being a thousand years old supernatural creature still did not cure him from being repulsive that he acted savagely and without thought in various incidents. This denoted the leverage of the primitive side in him, whereas from a different angle he never turns into a wolf, which leaves him in between the two realms of savagery and civility.

Furthermore, the most accurate representation of Niklaus' identity crisis is his first appearance in 21st century Mystic Falls. He appears in the body of Alaric Saltzman, the history teacher (Daniels, 2011). Klaus was indeed cursed and had to inhabit a body other than his own, yet still it is apparent that his lack of true identification is an introduction to his own identity issues. These issues are portrayed through his self-destructive nature, wanting to be hated by the world and his siblings, but he is also depicted as a sensitive being through his artistic sense and his vulnerability for the vampires Caroline and Stephan. He even raised a slave as if he was a son to him and despite the obvious insinuations to his nature as a coloniser, and slave owner, Klaus reflected a gentler self. Marcel, the slave in question, once a vampire took over Niklaus' territory in New Orleans, and it is then that once more Klaus turns violent. He loved Marcel but he was still a hybrid, a beast at heart and so he used his poisonous werewolf bite to vampires to ravage the neck of one of Marcel's friends to bring his doom and to strut around his savage power (Plec, 2013).

Moreover, Niklaus' connection with his Mikaelson siblings is quite alluring yet also perplexing. His bond with them reflects a severe type of identity crisis owing to both his deep love

for them and his constant attempts to alienate them from him. It is believed that Niklaus believes that he is not worthy of true love that he keeps hurting his siblings, he believes himself an abomination as he is often referred to by his stepfather Michael. This idea is further highlighted when Klaus discovers he is to be a father. Deep down, Klaus knew the child ,werewolf Haley was carrying, was his and still he could not admit it, he rather ordered his brother Elijah to kill them both because Niklaus believed he did not deserve happiness. More so, his stupefaction is mirrored in his emotional attractions. He had deep feelings for the vampire Caroline and respected her as if she was superior but she could never reciprocate his feelings because of how malevolent he showed himself to be instead he makes a werewolf girl fall pregnant, a girl belonging to the inferior race which he constantly degrades even when she reveals her pregnancy of a so-called miracle child (Plec, 2013).

The fact that Niklaus was extremely vexed by whom he truly was, even after creating the hybrids whom he wished to call his own, is shown through his ill-treatment of them. He did not treat them as if they were his family instead he saw them as his minions to control and sacrifice for his own personal gains. This argument and all the previously mentioned ones are all proof of Niklaus' tortured psyche. They all pour into the same river of anguish, alienation and loneliness. Most importantly, they all echo the effect of hybridity on ones' identity, especially a hybridity between the self and the other, the dominant and the oppressed. On one side, Niklaus was the supercilious imperialist siring slaves in the image of hybrids, on the other he was the animalistic other despised by his siblings and the vampires he wished to befriend.

4. CONCLUSION

Human identity is one of the most complicated truths about existence. To know thy self and to understand ones' wants, emotions and desires are some of the most perplexing dilemmas a human can go through. Notwithstanding the inherent complexity of human identity, there are other external variables which bring the latter into the altar of oblivion. For instance, this research paper focuses on one of the core reasons behind identity crises. The dynamics between a coloniser and colonised and the birth of a hybrid offspring from the two is one of the crucial causes for identity crisis.

In this paper, the choice fell on a fictitious creation, a fantastical story of vampires, werewolves, humans, witches and most importantly hybrids. The story tackles many reflections of the dichotomy of the imperialist entity and its subjugated inferior with the most essential element being the hybridity notion. In the postcolonial theory, hybridity is the product of the matrimony between the conqueror and the native. In *The Vampire Diaries*, the hybrid is also the progeny of these two only they are symbolised as vampires and werewolves. Having features of superiority, wealth and an imperialist attitude embodied through the drainage of blood is what makes the vampires a mirror for the invaders. On the other hand, a primitive animalistic type of nature renders the werewolves the best representatives of the savage other.

In *The Vampire Diaries*, these two creatures give birth to an omnipotent, evil, yet tortured soul, an original hybrid, known as Niklaus Mikaelson. In the process of scrutinizing Niklaus' character in parallel to the postcolonial understanding of hybridity, it was evident that he represented both the self and the other in a perplexed manner for he, himself, was uncertain to which side he belonged, and akin to all the products of postcolonial hybridity he suffers an identity crisis. His crisis is reflected through alienation and exclusion from others compensated with his ruthless behaviour and desire to sire his own genetically related race as a way to belong somewhere and embrace his dichotomous nature.

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