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Negotiating Hybrid Identities in Diasporic "Translation Sites" of Pirzad's *A Day Before Easter*

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Abstract

Pirzad's novel *A Day Before Easter*, delves into the evolving identity of Iranian Armenians, highlighting their diasporic and transnational identities, despite acknowledging historical roots. Based on the ideas of hybridity and translation sites as the framework, this study explores how translation sites as symbolic spaces influence the development of multiple and hybrid identities of Armenian and Muslim characters as well as the possibility of linguistic and cultural interactions between them. Three distinct translation sites, the church, the school, and the graveyard, were identified in this study. These sites revealed how the characters' identities were developed based on their interactions with Iranian Muslims, affecting their language, religion, and society. The school functions as zones of connection and communication between Muslims and Armenians where some Armenians display hybrid, multiplied identities while the church functioned as a site of "counter-translation," where Armenians maintained a solidified and diasporic identity, enclosed by their religious and ethnic boundaries. The study suggests that identity conflicts at the translation sites in the story created a space for negotiation, fostering reconciliation and blending of national and Armenian heritages.

Keywords: Diasporic literature; Cross-cultural Negotiation; Hybridity; Identity; Translation sites**,** Pirzad

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1. Introduction

Diasporic literature, authored by writers living outside their homeland, captures the complexities of migration, loss, and identity formation (Pareek, 2024, p. 131). These authors often face marginalization within both their host country's literary canon and their national literature. However, translation studies offer a promising avenue for increased visibility for diasporic writers (Luo, 2020, p. 1). Diasporic literature is characterized by its intertextual richness, drawing from diverse cultural sources to create a layered narrative that navigates tensions between cultural memory and integration (Luo, 2020). The relationship between translation and diasporic literature is particularly noteworthy. Both share the essence of crossing boundaries—translation transcending linguistic barriers, and diaspora involving geographical displacement (Luo, 2020). This shared "trans-" and "diaspora" dynamic creates a cultural contact zone where historically and geographically separated peoples engage in ongoing relationships (Luo, 2020). Translation can be seen as a diasporic practice, where a source culture finds new life on foreign soil, and diasporic literature becomes a practice of cultural survival and adaptation, characterized by de-centeredness and in-betweenness (Luo, 2020).

Through the lens of diasporic literature, this study examines Zoya Pirzad's novel *A Day Before Easter*, focusing on how the diasporic identity of Iranian Armenians has evolved into a more transnational identity. Pirzad explores the shifting sense of identity among Iranian Armenians across generations, depicting how the new generation constructs a more multifaceted understanding of Armenian-ness that is fluid and actively negotiated rather than fixed. The Armenian community in Iran, with roots dating back to the 17th century and the forced relocation under Shah Abbas I, reflects a "post-deportation diaspora" within Iran, as described by Tölölyan (2014:85). Living alongside Muslim Iranians has required Armenians to adapt and negotiate a dual identity, as noted by Yaghoobi (2018), who emphasizes the Armenian community's enduring commitment to their heritage while also integrating aspects of Iranian culture. This "acculturation without complete assimilation" underscores the adaptive nature of the Iranian Armenian identity, positioning it as a hybrid that negotiates both cultural belonging and differentiation (Yaghoobi 2018:112). During Iran's constitutional era (1906-1911), Iranian Armenians navigated this hybridity,

combining their specific Christian Armenian identity with a broader Iranian one to participate in political and intellectual life (Yaghoobi 2018:112). Pirzad, an Iranian-Armenian novelist, captures this hybridity within her characters. *A Day Before Easter* explores the identity conflicts stemming from forced displacement and integration pressures. This study uses the concept of "translation sites" to analyze how Armenian characters interact and negotiate identity with their Muslim counterparts. The analysis shows how these "translation sites" foster hybrid identities, blending Armenian heritage with the influences of Iranian society.

Key concepts of hybridity and translation sites are crucial for understanding the negotiation of identities among Armenian and Muslim characters in *A Day Before Easter*. Hybridity, as defined by Bhabha (1994), involves cultural mixing, where individuals and communities combine elements from various cultures to form unique, hybrid identities. "Translation sites," as Simon (2019) describes, are both metaphorical and literal spaces where intercultural exchanges occur, offering a framework for analyzing the identity dynamics in Pirzad's novel. This approach demonstrates how Armenian and Muslim characters like Edmond and Tahereh engage in intercultural negotiation, actively constructing and evolving their identities through shared spaces.

2. Objectives

This study aims to reveal the interplay between Armenian characters' hybrid identities and their negotiation strategies within translation sites in *A Day Before Easter.*

3. The Significance of the Study

This interdisciplinary study bridges diasporic literature and translation studies, examining how identities grounded in historical displacement evolve into multifaceted, transnational identities. It sheds light on cultural reconciliation within "translation sites," as depicted in diasporic literature, and explores how these interactions enable characters to transcend ethnic and religious divisions, embracing hybrid identities. By examining the Armenian diaspora's cultural negotiation, the study provides insight into the balance diasporic individuals maintain between preserving ethnic identity and forming complex identities in the host culture. Additionally, the research

emphasizes literature's role in representing hybrid identity formation, with broader implications for understanding multiculturalism, transnationalism, and identity politics. Ultimately, this study opens avenues for future research into "translation sites" as facilitators of cultural dialogue and reconciliation within diasporic narratives.

4. Review of the Related Literature

The term "diaspora," originally rooted in Greek and Hebrew contexts, has evolved from describing forced exile (e.g., Jewish "galuth") to encompassing voluntary migrations and transnational movements. Today, it reflects the complexities of migration due to economic, political, and cultural factors, challenging the relevance of nation-states (Raina 2020: 6469). Diasporic experiences are marked by cultural collisions, alienation, and a longing for the homeland, often depicted in diasporic literature through themes of trauma and identity (Raina 2020: 6470). Contemporary diasporic writings celebrate multiplicity and globalization, emphasizing collective memory, dispersion, and a desire to restore ancestral ties (Raina 2020: 6470). Literature, as Margaret Atwood notes, serves as a mental map for survival and identity formation in foreign cultures (as cited in Raina 2020: 6471). Identity in diasporic literature is fluid and transformative, often explored through cultural hybridity. Bhabha (1994: 37) highlights hybridity as a challenge to colonial power, emphasizing the "Third Space" where cultures overlap and transform. This concept is central to understanding diasporic identities, particularly in transnational contexts (Kanaglingam, 2023).

Second-generation diaspora members often experience "non-belonging," navigating multiple cultural affiliations and engaging in transnational practices (Kanaglingam, 2023; Agyei-Odame, 2021; Nyanang, 2021). Translation plays a vital role in bridging cultural gaps, facilitating communication, and negotiating cultural differences within diaspora communities (Baer & Pokorn, 2019; Fukari and Wolf, 2007: 44-113). Zoya Pirzad's works, such as *Things We Left Unsaid* and *A Day Before Easter*, exemplify diasporic hybridity. Yaghoobi (2019: 103) argues that Pirzad's characters, like Clarice, embody fluid identities shaped by cultural and gender struggles, reflecting the author's own negotiation of Armenian and Iranian identities. Heidari and Sasani (2021: 174-183) note that Pirzad critiques rigid cultural values, advocating for a more inclusive understanding of humanity.

Her works highlight the complexities of maintaining Armenian identity within an Iranian cultural framework, reflecting broader historical and social dynamics (Berberian 2018: 98). In *A Day Before Easter*, Pirzad explores the hybrid existence of Iranian Armenians, emphasizing cultural clashes and the evolution of diasporic transnational identities (Yaghoobi, 2018: 112). Yaghoobi's (2018) article offers a foundational analysis of hybrid identities and cultural clashes in Zoya Pirzad's *A Day Before Easter*, focusing on the diasporic experiences of Iranian Armenians and the evolution of Armenian identity through forced relocation and cultural hybridity. The present study builds on this by introducing Simon's (2001, 2019) concept of "translation sites" as spaces where cultural negotiation and identity formation occur. While Yaghoobi examines broader cultural and historical dimensions, the present study provides a more granular analysis of specific translation sites—such as the church, school, cemetery, and Danique's house—where Armenian and Muslim characters navigate linguistic and cultural interactions to construct hybrid identities. By applying Simon's frameworks, the present study contrasts the older generation's fixed diasporic identity (e.g., the grandmother) with the younger generation's hybrid identities (e.g., Edmond and Alenush), offering a nuanced understanding of identity formation. This methodological approach, combining thematic analysis with Simon's theories, advances the discourse on diasporic literature by highlighting the role of cultural and linguistic negotiation in shaping hybrid identities, complementing and expanding Yaghoobi's foundational insights.

5. Methodology

This study employs a descriptive-qualitative approach grounded in the theoretical concepts of hybridity and translation sites (Simon, 2001, 2019) to examine *A Day Before Easter* by Zoya Pirzad. Using these frameworks, the research explores specific translation sites as symbolic spaces influencing the development of hybrid identities among Armenian and Muslim characters, as well as the linguistic and cultural interactions between them**.** Data for this study were derived from an in-depth reading of the novel and meticulous analysis of its literary elements, focusing on direct and indirect speech in character dialogues, key interactions, and thematic elements that reflect intercultural negotiations. The primary corpus of this study is Pirzad's (2000)

novel *A Day Before Easter*, composed of three interconnected stories— "*Sour Cherry Stones,*" *"Seashells,* "and "White Violets"—all narrated by Edmond, the protagonist. These stories chronicle Edmond's life across three distinct stages: his childhood, middle age, and later years, each offering a distinct lens on the interactions and identity negotiations between Armenian and Muslim characters. The first story, *"Sour Cherry Stones,"* explores Edmond's childhood friendship with Tahereh, the daughter of the Muslim janitor at the Armenian school, and the resulting social tensions within the Armenian community. The second story, "*Seashells,*" centers on Edmond's later years in Tehran, where his daughter, Alenush, announces her engagement to Behzad, a Muslim man, sparking familial conflict. The third story, "*White Violets,*" depicts Edmond in his later years, grappling with solitude after his wife's death and his daughter's emigration. Together, these stories illustrate how Edmond's relationships evolve across cultural boundaries.

5.1. The Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is anchored in Simon's (2001, 2019) concepts of "hybridity" and "translation sites," which provide a lens for analyzing cultural and linguistic negotiations in Zoya Pirzad's *A Day Before Easter*. Simon (2001: 217) defines hybrid texts as exhibiting "translation effects," manifesting as linguistic and cultural dissonances like unconventional syntax or disparate vocabulary, reflecting identity negotiation in hybrid spaces. These texts employ "deterritorializing strategies" and "creolization" to challenge fixed identities and national borders, creating liminal spaces where cultures overlap (Simon, 2001; Schäffner & Adab, 1997, 2001).

Simon identifies types of textual hybridization, including texts rich in cultural references, plurilingualism disrupting national boundaries, and mixed-genre texts combining myth, satire, and sacred themes, all occupying an "in-between" space of languages and cultures. Hybrid writers, often bilingual, reveal the uncertainty of codes and meanings, challenging singular cultural origins (Simon, 2001; Snell-Hornby, 2001). In diasporic contexts, individuals navigate tensions between native and host cultures, forming hybrid identities. Exiles may initially solidify a fixed diasporic identity tied to their homeland but gradually assimilate aspects of their host culture, resulting in fluid, negotiated identities (Simon, 2001: 218). Simon (2019)

further introduces "translation sites" as spaces shaped by linguistic exchange and memory, where languages and cultures coexist or collide. She describes translation as a pendulum, swinging between recalling suppressed voices and reviving forgotten languages, termed "counter-translation" (Simon, 2019: 7-9). Translation sites include Architectures of Memory, which are dominated by the history of one language and serve as spaces for cultural revival (e.g., the Armenian church); Transit Sites, which facilitate movement between cultural spheres and enable the negotiation of hybrid identities; Crossroads, where language clashes and activist interventions contest cultural and linguistic boundaries; Thresholds, which create dialogues between the immediate and universal, bridging local and global cultural dynamics; and Disciplinary Spaces, where language is surveilled and controlled, often treating certain languages as "contaminated" or unwanted (e.g., the sherbet shop). This study applies Simon's frameworks to examine how translation sites in *A Day Before Easter*—such as the church, school, cemetery, and Danique's house—facilitate hybrid identity formation among Armenian and Muslim characters. By analyzing these sites, the study explores how characters navigate cultural differences and transform their identities through linguistic and cultural interactions, offering a nuanced understanding of diasporic identity construction within specific cultural and linguistic contexts.

To justify the selection of specific character interactions for analysis, this study applied a purposive sampling method. The interactions chosen were those that prominently featured significant cultural and linguistic negotiations between Armenian and Muslim characters, aligning with the study's objectives. For instance, Edmond's friendship with Tahereh, Alenush's engagement announcement, and the characters' encounters within the church, school, and cemetery were identified as pivotal due to their role in shaping hybrid identities. This sampling strategy ensured that the data directly addressed the research questions, focusing on critical moments of cultural and linguistic interaction.

The research builds upon Simon's (2019) concept of translation sites and her typology of hybrid texts (Simon, 2001), using these as analytical tools to examine how Armenian and Iranian characters negotiate cultural and linguistic differences within the novel's translation sites. To achieve this, each chapter of the novel was meticulously analyzed using a combination of thematic analysis and Simon's

conceptual framework. Specific techniques included identifying and coding recurring themes, mapping characters' interactions, and categorizing key translation sites based on their linguistic and cultural impacts. Recurring themes, such as Armenian identity, cultural clashes, and hybrid identity, were analyzed at both the sentence and paragraph levels to uncover patterns in how characters engaged with their cultural surroundings. Analytical techniques were systematically applied to align with the research questions. Data analysis followed three stages: (1) categorization, which involved mapping interactions based on the translation sites identified (e.g., the church, school, and cemetery); (2) interpretation, which involved analyzing the translational effects (e.g., communication, miscommunication, or negotiation) observed within these interactions; and (3) synthesis, which examined how these effects contributed to the formation of hybrid identities. To ensure the validity of these methods, triangulation was employed, cross-referencing findings from character dialogues, epilogues, and thematic patterns. Simon's (2019) concept of "translation sites" and her idea of "hybrid identities" (Simon, 2001) were used as analytical lenses, enabling a nuanced categorization of character interactions and their translational effects. By integrating Simon's frameworks with purposive sampling and thematic analysis, the methodology ensures rigor and alignment with the study's objectives, offering a detailed and systematic approach to examining how translation sites influence hybrid identities within *A Day before Easter*.

5. Research Questions

How do translation sites in *A Day Before Easter* as symbolic spaces influence the development of multiple and hybrid identities of Armenian and Muslim characters as well as the possibility of linguistic and cultural interactions between them?

6. Discussion

Based on Simon's (2019) notion of "translation sites" and construction of hybrid identities in her typology of hybrid texts (Simon 2001), the present study found the following results: Pirzad depicts four different translational sites in her work, which this study explored one by one.

The author's *A Day Before Easter* features various polyglot spaces shaped by

language traffic and memory clashes. The old church is an architecture of memory, where translation can revive the eliminated and forgotten Armenian language, whose speakers were murdered. This highlights the importance of language in shaping these spaces.

The Old Church

> The church was a rectangular gray stone building with six high, narrow windows that I had never seen open. My grandmother said that the church and school had been built by the first Armenian immigrants who settled in our seaside town (Pirzad 2006:11).

The church is a place made by the first Armenian migrants in Iran in which Armenian language and traditions are revived. It is an architecture of memories, a site of "counter translation", in which the reflection of Armenian words can be heard. It is the site of struggle to reanimate and reinstate Armenian language and the world it contains.

> In a book that my father read from time to time, and whose photos my mother had forbidden me to look at, there was a strange picture. It was a photo of a hill made out of people's skulls […|. I asked my father, "What is this picture of?" "The heads of the Armenians who were murdered by the Ottomans," he replied. Mother had arrived at exactly that moment and yelled at my father, "Stop! He's a child, you'll frighten him." Father, still staring at the photo, said, "Child or adult, everyone has to know what tragedy befell his people." When I got older, I understood why each year we celebrated my birthday, which was 24 April, a few days early or a few days late. Grandmother and Mrs. Grigorian fasted each year on 24 April, went to church, and lit candles. (Pirzad 2006: 35)

This example demonstrates the church as a site to revive Armenian language, traditions and memory. The church is located in border zones, where the wounds of history are still legible and Armenian lit candles and fast on 24th of April are reminders of the murder of their fellow men by the Ottomans. It is a site in which the older generation of Iranian Armenian characters consciously perceive themselves as a spatially dispersed community:

> I could never concentrate in church. I played with the candle wax that dripped onto my hand, or stared at the light from the stained-glass windows illuminating the painting of Jesus and Mary that hung over the altar. The smell of incense

> made me sleepy and when I was startled out of my daze, my gaze immediately would be drawn to Tahereh, earnestly praying or listening intently to the priest. I used to feel ashamed and tell myself, Edmond, you're not a real Christian! The same thing that Grandmother said of everyone, either to their face or behind their backs. (Pirzad 2006 :11)

In the novel, the significance of the church and religion is highlighted through one the most important religious traditions, Easter, which is not only reflected in the title of Pirzad's story, but is also that time of the year that recalls Edmond's annual reminiscences throughout the story. In the church, Pirzad explores the older generation of her characters' continuous struggle with maintaining a singular, fixed Armenian identity and the new generation's construction of a new one through exchanges with Muslim Iranians. Edmond is representative of the new Armenian generation who desires to know more about Muslims' religion and culture while he is also anxious about not being faithful to his Armenian culture and Christian faith:

> Grandmother often rebuked us. "Shame on you if you have to learn about religion and faith from the Muslim janitor's daughter." But one day, as we were leaving the church after the service, she noticed that Tahereh was wearing a little cross around her neck, and her eyes filled with tears. She kissed Tahereh on the forehead and after that day I never heard her say "the Muslim janitor's daughter" again. (Pirzad 2006: 26)
>
> Tahereh was the only non-Armenian in our town who didn't make Grandmother's brows furrow. In the presence of Grandmother, no one was permitted to speak sloppy Armenian or to introduce a word of Persian. Tahereh spoke with Grandmother and the principal and the teachers as though she were reading from an Armenian textbook. She came with us to church on Sundays, and, just like Grandmother, closed her eyes firmly, knelt to pray, and crossed herself. She knew all the prayers and hymns by heart. (Pirzad 2006: 25)

The grandmother is representative of an old Armenian generation with a fixed identity who doesn`t show any respect for Muslims and is very loyal to the Armenian traditions and religion. The only Muslim, whom she accepts and builds a relationship with, is Tahereh, who knows all the prayers in the church even better than Edmond and other Armenian children. Tahereh is a character with a hybrid identity who

linguistically and culturally negotiates with Armenians. The next translation site depicted in Pirzad`s work is the school as a site of cross-cultural negotiation between Armenian and Muslim characters.

In this story, the school serves as a crossroad for translation, involving colliding voices and activist intervention. Persian and Armenian languages challenge conventions, and translation expands beyond written forms to become a more volatile figure of passage across forms of expression, making it a site of crossroads.

The School

> The courtyard of the school and church were the only places where Tahereh and I could play together after school. Tahereh never came to our house, maybe because she knew that my father wouldn't like it. The room that Tahereh shared with her mother and father, on the ground floor of the school, was small and didn't have enough space for us to play. Also, if my father knew that I'd gone to the janitor's quarters, he would have thrown a fit, and my mother and I would have been forced to listen to a long and repetitive lecture about class and religion and the differences between people (Pirzad 2006: 12).

The school is a site of cross-cultural negotiation between Edmond, the main Armenian character and Tahereh, The Muslim janitor`s daughter. While the school is a dominant cultural institution of the Armenian community, it is a site where the Muslim girl and the Armenian boy can freely interact and play. This interaction in the school as a translation site is very influential in the formation of a hybrid identity in Tahere, Tahereh and Edmond. We read:

> The other pupils were already standing in line, reciting the Morning Prayer. "Our Father, who art in heaven…." "…art in heaven," I recited with the other kids and thanked God that the principal's eyes were shut and he hadn't seen me come in late. I found a place at the end of the line behind Tahereh. Tahereh's eyes were closed. Palms clasped together, head bowed, the tip of her nose touching the tops of her fingers (Pirzad 2006:14).

There was an acrid smell inside. Tahereh was standing in the middle of the room. She was wearing a flowered *chador* that went to the floor. I could only see the round of her face, which was looking intently at the ceiling. There were no chairs in the room. I sat on the floor and leaned against the wall. Now Tahereh was looking at her feet.

(Pirzad 2006: 24-25).

> To Tahereh I said, "I meant that your prayers will be invalidated. You can't wear a cross when you're praying!" She put a hand on her hip. "Who said I have a cross?" "You do!" I insisted. "I've seen it myself." She put a finger through the chain on her neck and held it out in front of her. "Come here and look." A small Allah hung from the chain. I asked, "Where's the cross?" She swung her braid behind her head and laughed. "For school and church, I wear the cross. For prayers, it's Allah" (Pirzad, 2006: 27).

The school is a translation site in which Tahereh wears a cross around her neck for Armenian classes and an Allah hung for prayer in her parents' room at school. Tahereh is a character with hybrid identity who worships God and prays both in the church and school in different languages. The communication and negotiation with Tahereh have a very important role in construction of hybrid and multiple identities in Edmond:

> I focused for so long at the school building with its dark exterior and the two lit windows that it started to look like a face with a large gaping mouth and two loose teeth. At first this made me laugh, but then my head turned involuntarily and I glanced at the church behind me and became afraid. A chill crept over me from the gravestone (Pirzad 2006:24).

As a hybrid character, Edmond's ideas and sentiments toward the church and the school reflect the two translation sites, as seen in this example. The school is a place where ideas and emotions are negotiated and translated. He finds solace in the school, which is the place of the new generation in the diaspora, while the church space, is associated with the older Armenian generation and has a monolithic identity that reflects conflicts between cultures and histories; it serves as a site of contradiction. The study identifies the Sherbet shop as a translation site, a disciplinary space for language surveillance and control. This site represents Armenian national, religious, or linguistic origins where Persian language is treated as "contaminated" and unwanted.

The Sherbet Shop

> Mrs. Grigorian put a glass of sour-cherry sherbet in front of me. "I don't like sherbet," I said. "Are the flowers on your tea towel tulips?" I said "tulip" in Persian and Mrs. Grigorian laughed. "'Tulip' in Armenian is *kakach*." Then

> she turned to my father and said more seriously, "You are right. The Lord would not be pleased." (Pirzad 2006: 24)

Mrs. Grigorian insists on talking Armenian in the sherbet shop and corrects Edmond`s use of the Persian word "tulip" instead of the Armenian word "kakach". The sherbet shop is the disciplinary space of the surveillance and control of language. In the sherbet shop Language is an important tenet of the Armenian identity and plays a significant role in this "otherizing" process since whoever does not speak Armenian is excluded. This is a site which resists translation and is representatives of characters' national, religious, or linguistic origins. In the case of Edmond, the conflict between the uses of the two languages disturbs his articulation, produces incorrect grammar, and jeopardizes his integrity of thought. This is because naturally the hybrid speaker's mind is divided into two conflicting halves, which makes it difficult and confusing for an average person to keep the two languages separate. Bilingualism, therefore, by its nature causes a language to transform from a heterogeneous entity to a hybrid one. It also turns into a key element in the development of the hybrid identity.

The graveyard and Danique's home are seen as sites of transit, the transgressing boundaries, where Edmond finds inner contentment and overcomes linguistic, religious, and ethnic barriers. Sites of transit allow travelers to move between spheres and accept cultural and linguistic differences, resulting in modes of translation based on differences and passage trajectories

The Graveyard

"Behind the church there was a graveyard. There was no wall between the graveyard and the courtyard, maybe because there was no need for it" (Pirzad 2006: 12).

> When I looked up again, I saw that I was in the graveyard behind the church. Tahereh was sitting on the grass next to one of the graves. I went over to her and sat down. She was tearing a long stalk of grass into tiny bits. Without looking at me she asked, "Aren't you scared?" She plucked a few more blades of grass. "I never understand why you're scared of this place," she went on. "These people are dead. There's nothing to be afraid of from the dead. They can't beat you. They can't bother you. But my father beats my mother and me. He won't leave us alone. I'm afraid of my father. No – I'm not afraid of him,

> I hate him. I wish he were dead!" She raised her hand to her cheek. I looked at her. She was crying. I had never seen her cry before. I put my hand on her shoulder. She jerked away, got up, and left. (Pirzad 2006: 38-39).

The graveyard is a space of peace and reconciliation between Armenian and Muslim characters. Edmond's relationship with Tahereh ends with the public disclosure of the "scandalous" love affair between Tahereh's mother and the school principal. While Tahereh's actions grant her a space within the Armenian community, ultimately, she has to say farewell to her best childhood friend for good. However, her audacity later becomes a source of hope and agency for Edmond in developing his future identity. In the following years, within the spatial familiarity of the cemetery where he used to play with Tahereh, Edmond asks Alenush, his rebellious daughter, to invite Behzad, her Muslim husband. Remembering his own happy times with Tahereh and a friendship lost, Edmond refuses to allow the same happen to Alenush. By the end of the story, having learned from his experiences, Edmond finds peace and reconciliation with himself and with his daughter, Alenush.

Danique`s House

> Then suddenly she says, "Edmond, how long do you think you can go on this way?" My spoon sits motionless in my cup. "Isn't four years enough? Four years of you being tormented here and Alenush suffering on the other side of the world?" I look at the steam rising from the tea. What does she mean? Why does she think I am torturing myself? How is Alenush being harmed? Alenush has been leading her own life for many years now. She seems to be satisfied with it. Sometimes she writes me a letter. I answer them. What more can I do? Danique folds her hands in her lap. "This poor girl almost died from suffering waiting for Martha to finally reconcile herself to the situation, and now you…" (Pirzad 2006: 81).

Danique is an Armenian woman introduced by Pirzad in the third section of the story. She is a friend of Edmond's and his wife, Marta. Danique has chosen self-exile and undergoes much suffering because "she was in love with their Muslim neighbor" (Pirzad 2006:73). Her house is the site of challenging the traditional perceptions of "self" and the "other," and incorporating and transgressing boundaries. It is only after

celebrating a nontraditional Easter at Danique's house, free from his own traditional family that Edmond decides to reconcile with his daughter, Alenush, who married a Muslim man and to reconcile his "true" self, a hybrid one. Through his recollections of the past and forgiving his daughter, Edmond reaches an inner peace in the present. His inability to bridge the divides of language, religion, and ethnicity comes to an end within the final moments of the story. He comes to terms with the reality of his life and embraces the multiplicity of his Armenian identity within a predominantly Muslim society.

7. Conclusion

This study applied the concepts of "hybridity" and "translation sites" from Simon (2001, 2019) to analyze cultural conflicts and identity negotiations in Pirzad's *A Day Before Easter*. It focused on the interactions between Armenian and Muslim characters as they navigate cultural and linguistic boundaries, examining the role of translation sites in shaping the characters' multiple and hybrid identities and their potential for cultural reconciliation. By analyzing these interactions, the study validated its hypothesis, revealing how hybrid identities emerge within diverse translation contexts.

The study identified three key translation sites—the church, the school, and the cemetery—that facilitated communication and miscommunication between Armenian and Muslim characters, shaping their identities based on their engagements around language, religion, and social norms. Certain Armenian characters, such as Edmond, Danique, and Alenush, develop hybrid identities as they negotiate their heritage within these spaces, cultivating transnational perspectives. In contrast, characters such as Mrs. Grigorian and the grandmother represent an older generation with a consolidated, diasporic Armenian identity, particularly within the "counter-translation" space of the church, which reinforces ethnic and religious boundaries.

Overall, *A Day Before Before Easter* serves as a compelling example of a hybrid text, depicting Iranian Armenians' continuously negotiated identities within diverse translation sites in relation to "the others," or Iranian Muslims. The story emphasizes a transformative space where conflicts between past and present enable characters to embrace hybridity, fostering a vision for peace between their ancestral

and host cultures.

This study underscores the significance of translation sites in diasporic literature for illustrating the complexities of hybrid identities and cross-cultural negotiation. Future research could expand these findings by analyzing specific examples of other diasporic narratives that feature similar translation sites, such as Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake* (2003) or Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* (2003), which explore transnational identity and intercultural dialogue in immigrant contexts. Such comparative analyses could further validate the importance of translation sites in shaping hybrid identities across different cultural and historical settings. Longitudinal studies on hybrid identity formation could also reveal how generational shifts and socio-political changes affect identity negotiation within translation sites, especially in response to evolving cultural and national dynamics. Additionally, examining how transnational identities engage with both homeland and host cultures within translation sites could enhance our understanding of diasporic literature's role in promoting global empathy and intercultural dialogue.

Statements and Declarations

This article‹ Negating Hybrid Identities in Diasporic "Translation Sites" Of Pirzad's A Day Before Easter is developed by the cooperation of two University Instructor, Dr. Fatemeh Zand and Dr. Elham Rajab Dorri from the field of Translation Studies at Valie-Asr Rafsanjan and Jahrom Universities.

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AI Use Declaration

The use of artificial intelligence was limited exclusively to language editing and proofreading. All stages of the research process, including data collection, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation, were conducted independently by the authors.

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