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**Between Immortal and Man: A Colonialism and Post-Colonialism  
Analysis in Superman (2025) Movie**

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*"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free,  
nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."  
Galatians 3:28 (NIV)*

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the work was to investigate the Superman (2025) movie, by employing a postcolonial approach to show how the movie creates the concepts of identity, the rules of power, and cultural identity in modern society. Within a qualitative approach, the study used scene based textual analysis, narrative sequence close reading, and visual analysis of cinematography as the main methods of data collection. This methodology involved the interpretive analysis of dialogue, interaction of characters, political symbolism and media representations in order to discover how the postcolonial tensions, instilled in the movie. Based on a theoretical framework formulated by Homi K. Bhabha (1994/2004), the concept of hybridity, mimicry, ambivalence, and the Third Space, the paper studied Superman as a hybrid character who struggles with opposing identities between his kryptonian heritage and human origins. The findings: **1)** Superman is not depicted as a unified national hero but as a form of ambivalent subject, shaped by the plays of hybridity; **2)** Lex Luthor thus represents Bhabha, the mimicry, as it employed imitation, technological reproduction and performance to challenge a superior Other; and **3)** the film demonstrates heroism as a moral cultural struggle not a physical one, subversing the discourse of traditional hegemonies. The paper concludes that the Superman (2025) movie introduces the superhero as a colonizer and colonized, exposing interstrata tension of belonging, power, and resistance in the world of the film. The study contributes to the modern postcolonial discussion in popular cinematography and that the future research may conduct the comparative analysis of other texts of superheroes, how the audience receives postcolonial images, or how the theme of hybrid identity becomes reflected in the world media.

**Keywords:** *Colonialism, Post-colonialism, Superman, Hybridity, Homi K. Bhabha*

## INTRODUCTION

Reading children books and literature allows us to know how stories contribute to understanding of the world and identities of the readers. The power of superheroes in modern films is

similar to the teaching system of traditional children's tales. Not only entertainment in superhero films but it also tells issues such as justice and survival. The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2022) supports this by saying that children and teens had spent an average of 6 to 9 hours a day looking at screens and most of the time, it was spent on fictional media. The superhero stories are not only entertaining but they encourage young people to reflect those who have power, the opponents and the big responsibility of having power in this world. According to the United Nations (2021), nations that were once under colonial rule continue to face some of the highest levels of poverty, inequality, and cultural erosion. It is these struggles that translate into the stories that global media constructs according to which there can be no reading of a film like Superman (2025) outside of these narrating contexts.

The object of the study in this paper is the movie Superman (2025) This film follows a long tradition of tales about Superman but transforms him to a modern world where politics, migration, colonization and identity are at the main topics. Produced by Warner Bros. Pictures, the genre of the film is a superhero action that can be accepted by children aged thirteen and older (PG-13). It is a combination of the action, fantasy, and science fiction genres and will be released in 2025. The audiences are already very excited about the film though the awards remain to be determined. Superman (2025) features the story of Clark Kent or Kal-El who is forced to balance his two identities of being an alien on the planet Krypton and life as a human being on the planet Earth. Along with supervillains of the film Lex Luthor, Superman has to deal with pressures of governments and even corporations who attempt to use his power as a political power. This story also introduces the questions of whether Superman is fully part of the Earth, or he is an outsider, and this answer brings out the central problem of cultural power, belonging, and hybrid identity that incoming major research trends the research direction of postcolonial studies.

In this paper, the movie is analyzed using the postcolonial theory as formulated by Homi K. Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (1994). Colonialism is the political, economical and cultural control of a group by another and this most of the time obliterates or subjugates indigenous identity (Loomba, 1998). According to Bhabha (1994/2004), the postcolonial approach points out the fact that colonial encounters do not create fixed identities but rather create hybrid identities. In the perspective of Bhabha theory, hybridity is the creation of new mixed, in between identities as they take place in the place where the colonizer and colonized are together showing the fact that neither of the cultures is a pure and original culture. Superman (2025) is one story where this concept is used. Superman is a hybrid, an alien possessing incredible abilities but was raised in the human culture and ethics and never truly becomes a resident of either Krypton or Earth. Such an ambivalent position

leaves him in the middle of postcolonial identity and belonging conflicts. The concepts of hybridity, mimicry, ambivalence, Third Space are other concepts in the framework of Bhabha which will be discussed in the discussion section.

Other literature on Superman has mainly analyzed him in terms of nationalism, immigration and religious story. *“Superheroes: A Modern Mythology”* A cultural mythological approach was used by Richard Reynolds (1992) to read Superman as a modern savior complex. *“Superman and Me: Gene Luen Yang on the Immigrant Experience”* Gene Luen Yang (2016) interpreted Superman as a symbolic representation of an immigrant community and identity and *“Supergods: What Masked Vigilantes, Miraculous Mutants, and a Sun-God from Smallville Can Teach Us About Being Human”* by Grant Morrison (2011) persisted that Superman was a symbol of American dominance and control at all times. Although these works provide some very important ground, They focus more on political and national ideas rather than showing how colonial and postcolonial power works. On the other hand, this study applies Bhabha’s postcolonial theories of hybridity and the third space to the Superman 2025 movie, which shows the hero involved in global, multinational, and political conflicts. It brings the focus not on Superman as a national or divine icon but on Superman as a postcolonial hybrid who is in between worlds alien and human. This method bridges an important gap in the existing literature because it discusses the previously understudied factor of postcolonialism in the character under modern film adaptation.

This paper relies on critical terms of colonial and postcolonial theory to understand these issues. Said (1978) defines the Other as a way to justify colonial control, and Bhabha (1994) describes hybridity as the creation of new in-between identities that challenge established cultural identities. According to Spivak (1988), it is doubtful that the voice of the marginalized, called the subaltern, can be heard in dominant systems. Concepts like Othering, hybridity, subaltern, resistance, and hegemony are important for understanding Superman (2025): Superman’s alien nature makes him the it, his dual identity makes him a hybrid, and his fight not to be controlled by governments makes him a subaltern. This study is important because it adds to the postcolonial discussion in superhero studies. Using these ideas in the case of Superman (2025), the paper shows how superhero movies can explain current debates about identity, power, and belonging in a postcolonial world. Reading Superman as a cultural story that deals with control and resistance gives a new view of Superman as a hero.

Overall, Superman (2025) deals with issues of power, belonging, and resistance using superhero storytelling while placing these issues in clear contexts of colonialism and postcolonialism. The movie raises difficult questions about whether someone with unlimited power can avoid

becoming a colonizer, or whether they can ever fully belong in a world that both needs and fears them. As shown in the previous discussion, this paper examines how colonial power is represented, how postcolonial identity is negotiated, and how Superman's story reflects struggles in today's world between resistance and domination. Therefore, this paper argues that by showing Superman as both the colonizer and the colonized, the 2025 adaptation highlights the conflicts of hybrid identity and power in a postcolonial world, offering a critical way to analyze cultural conflicts in modern superhero stories.

### Binary Opposition

Alienation	Integration
<p>Superman's battle with who he is and who he could be is reflected in his alienation as a Kryptonian and as a human being. Bhabha (1994) describes alienation not merely as a state of being "<i>homeless</i>," but as a condition of "<i>unhomeliness</i>," where the borders between the private and the public become confused, creating a sense of profound psychic displacement (p. 9). Despite his powers, he feels alienated from society on Earth, as he does not know if he really belongs. His private moments show vulnerability and doubt, proving that it does not take "super" to eliminate feelings of isolation. Lois and other humans see him as a mystery and it has been difficult for him to make real connections.</p>	<p>Integration is illustrated with Superman in his societal positions expected to be a hero. Publicly, he would need to show control, power, and responsibility in order to achieve trust, legitimacy. His heroic activities, media appearances, and intervention in crises are acts of performances to help in his being accepted in human society. Rather than a seamless integration into a host culture, Bhabha (1994) argues that cultural encounters produce a "<i>Third Space of enunciation</i>" (p. 37). This space allows for the emergence of hybrid identities that challenge the "purity" of both the original and the colonial culture. The city, media and government are structures that tell him how to behave as the Youth hope symbol.</p>

### METHOD

This study is done using qualitative research design, directed only by postcolonial theory Homi K. Bhabha (1994/2004), through his theory of hybridity, mimicry and other Homi K. Bhabha theory. This framework was chosen because it directly provided an interface to the central issues that Superman (2025) contends, which reimagined a traditionally Western superhero as both an incredibly powerful being who is an outsider and currently faced with how to be an alien in a global and multicultural world. The film was chosen as the main text as it locates the superhero narrative between global political tensions and cultural interactions of today, and therefore holds great relevance for an exploration of hybrid identity and postcolonial patterns of power. The study used close reading, thematic analysis, and visual analysis of relevant dialogue and scenes which shows literary and visual expressions of hybridity and resistance, particularly formulating Superman's

internal dialogue between his Kryptonian identity and Earth's public life as Clark Kent. The analysis drew out common motifs that included S crest as a hybrid identity of heritage and hope, broken mirrors indicating dissociated identity and finally the skyline of Metropolis as a place of cultural convergence and negotiation.

## DISCUSSION

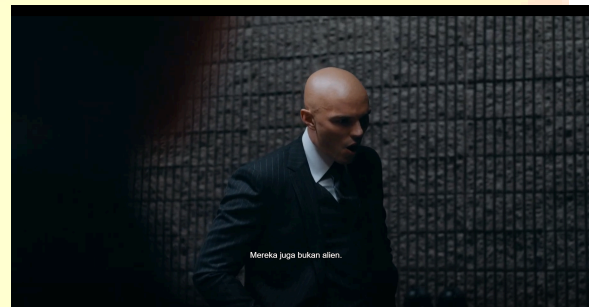
The movie starts off with Superman in the city Metropolis loses to an artificial robot that is created by the villain of the movie Lex Luthor. He is seen struggling to fight the artificial robot named the “*Hammer of Boravia*” and then is seen losing and being smashed to the ground. The start of the film is already different from the Man of Steel film from (2013) of showing Superman the God, Alien, Different kind because of how Superman is portrayed, not as human as the Superman (2025) movie. The scene here is using the angle of a low angle shot but centering Superman in the center, it is showing how Superman is strong but out of place in the crowd. A local hotdog seller even says “*You should not have interfered in Jarhanpur, Superman.*” This line shows the local leader blaming Superman for interfering in their conflict. It highlights the tension between a global hero and a local crisis, showing that not everyone sees Superman as a savior. “*The colonial presence is always ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference.*” (Homi K. Bhabha, 1994/2004), this tells how Superman’s action is questioned by the people, like how he appears powerful but his presence is causing resistance and misunderstanding.

At the same time, this scene captures the reality of the political crisis mainly through the cameras flashing and chosen outfits. A close up shot of the Boravian representative, Ghurkos, shows him wearing a dark, formal suit and a tie with bright colors and a complex pattern, giving an impression of established power. He is surrounded by Boravian military generals in military uniforms, also giving recognition of the nation's strength. The background banner, displaying the nation's colors and symbols. The news headlines on the screen, “*GHURKOS DENIES INVOLVEMENT,*” frame the scene as a geopolitical crisis event and public declaration. In contrast to Ghurkos's unyielding, formal display of state power stands the unseen force of Superman. Ghurkos's declaration, “*The relationship between America and Boravia has been as strong as steel for 30 years, until Superman came along,*” is a powerful move. By adding the metaphor “*strong as*



*steel*," he acknowledges the former stability of the political ties, only to display its gap to the appearance of Superman. Superman, with his powers and alien origin, represents a force of nature, unpredictable, and power that nations cannot control. As Homi K. Bhabha states "*The theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualising an international culture based on the articulation of culture's hybridity.*" (Homi K. Bhabha, 1994/2004). Bhabha is saying that culture and power are never pure or one sided. They are created in between spaces, where different groups, ideas, and identities mix together. This space shows that no culture or authority can ever be fully stable or in total control; it always depends on negotiation with something different or foreign.

Lex Luthor is the man who succeeds in the depiction of the colonized elite, he is standing in front of the US government and is offering his solution to the Superman problem. With Superman as the colonizing Other, he becomes the alien who has imposed his power so forcefully and god-like that human beings have become subaltern and powerless on their own planet. The reaction of Luthor to this is the ideal example of the theory of mimicry by Homi K. Bhabha. Lex Luthor's statement, "Other metahumans do not interfere in other countries' problems and they are not aliens either," reveals a darker layer beneath the surface of Superman's identity. This line creates an atmosphere of mystery and distrust, positioning Lex as a manipulative figure who represents distrust and doubt toward power. The low key lighting and muted tones in the scene enhance this feeling of secrecy and tension. Lex Luthor is not portrayed as a flashy villain but as a realistic power operating in the shadows, he constructs more than just weapons for fighting the colonizer like how he imitates him. He reveals Planet Watch, a military resorting to which is the center of an army. This moment shows the colonized taking on the form and strength of the colonizer, marking the intersection of Bhabha's idea of being "*almost the same, but not quite.*" (Homi K. Bhabha, 1994/2004). Lex indirectly tells the government that he has managed to replicate the colonizer's power, becoming nearly identical to them. Luthor's response to this is the best illustration of what Homi K. Bhabha explains in his theory of mimicry where the colonized subject emulates the language, power and culture of the colonizer but never becomes them totally, that is, almost the same, yet not quite (Bhabha, 1994, p. 86). The colonization inconveniences the authority of the colonizer through



imitation and at the same time shows the falsity of the colonial dominance. According to Bhabha, mimicry is a manifestation of a difference, which is not pure in itself as it is.

The next scene is one of a crucial scene of violation where Lex Luthor has first been able to break into the private base of Superman, the Fortress of Solitude. The contrast is sharp and the movie makes Luthor dressed in a heavy, dark and terrestrial costume. Luthor does not aim at stealing a weapon, but information about Superman to know his enemy inside and out. Once his AI breaks and finds all of Superman's data, Luthor snickers, *"The power of a god is only data. And data... can be*



*copied."* This line shows us his real goal is to rebrand Superman as a villain to the people with the knowledge that he robs. Such an act of infiltration and data theft is explainable with the concept of postcolonial use of mimicry as developed by Homi K. Bhabha. Bhabha states that the colonies tend to imitate the culture, behavior and language of the

colonizer, but never flawlessly and therefore colonization is a partial imitation that strengthens and deconstructs colonial authority since it reveals how unreal and shaky it is.

Clark Kent is the human identity of Superman, he positions himself as a moral voice above politics. He doesn't side with Boravia or America but instead speaks from the principle that invasion and war are wrong. This highlights Superman's role as a humanitarian figure, not a tool of governments. His words carry a deep moral weight, emphasizing that true heroism lies not in blind allegiance, but in defending justice and compassion for all humanity. The medium shot enables the viewer to view not only the facial expression of Clark but also his body language, this gives a view of closeness and honesty. His sitting position is an indication of humility and introspection that supports his internal conflict of being an international icon of hope and a man attempting to do what is right in a complicated



world. The soft and low noise of light envelops him in a warm light, which visually opposes his ethical warmth with the rest of the uncertainty around him. It produces a sense of introspection and the viewer gets the impression that Clark is feeling the pressure of the responsibility of his choices. This scene can be explained by the concept of hybridity that is introduced by Homi K. Bhabha *"When identity lives in-between or third space that is always being negotiated between two worlds"*

(Homi K. Bhabha, 1994/2004). Clark is a representation of this hybridity, he exists between the alien and the human, the global and the local, the savior and the citizen. The Third Space that can necessitate new models of identity and ethical cognition is his fight to speak out of his own moral cause, as opposed to being a nationalist.

*“I am not here to command anybody, Lois.”* The phrase is a direct response to the colonial structure onto which humanity and characters such as Luthor impose on him. He is literally denying



himself the binary situation where he is the ruler (*the colonizer*) and by extension denying to consider humanity to be the ruled (*the colonized*). This intercourse is directly explainable in the concept of the *Third Space* suggested by Homi K. Bhabha. According to Bhabha (1994/2004), this is a cultural space where colonizer and colonized

interact to create a negotiation, translations and new meanings. This is the area that interferes with binary oppositions such as East/West or Self/Other. This Third Space Superman attempts to initiate. He is bargaining a new type of relationship that is shattering binary oppositions, with Lois, through their dialogue. He is neither deity, nor mortal; neither an emperor, nor a slave. His request to humanity to communicate with him in this new cultural space, to say that he will coexist, will protect, is asking humanity to turn his power into a new sense: it is not domination but partnership.

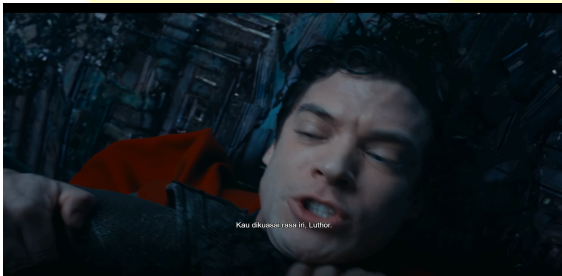
*“It is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation, that ensures that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity.”* Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 37. Superman’s line *“I am not here to command anybody, Lois”* shows him rejecting fixed colonial roles and inviting humans to communicate in a hybrid cultural space where power, authority, identity is renegotiated. This exactly aligns with Bhabha’s idea that meaning is created in the Third Space, not inside old binaries.

The scene shows one of the critical scenes when the citizens of Jahanpur shout in unison chanting *“SUPERMAN!”* as a non-state reaction to the direct military danger of the Boravian Military taking control of the border. By viewing this in the context of Homi K. Bhabha, the First Space of unquestioned authority of the state is that of the military while that of the citizens is the Second Space of the subaltern who has no



institutional power. Their appeal to Superman, though, provides a Third Space of discourse. This is inherently subversion since it does not rely on the traditional political and military framework, but puts a hybrid character into the battle. The alien Superman, being a moral non-state actor, exists between national loyalties. The subaltern population demands his intervention thus exercising its agency through this spectacle of super-human power in order to carry out a public act of rebellion which, structurally, challenges the Boravian military to occupy absolute authority and influence over the geopolitical situation. The citizens are literally turning to a hybrid hero to create a new and tougher ground where their protection takes precedence over the conventional laws of power.

The scene presented in this image depicts Superman lying on the floor after a fierce battle against his own clone who is a creation of Lex Luthor. This scene is emphasized by the fact that in the next line we can see that Luthor is not acting out of any other reason but out of his jealousy of



Superman and his power, purity, and influence. The low shot close up makes it clear how vulnerable Superman is, but he is still looking up, implying that he is strong in morality even when conquered. This visual contrast shows that the fact that Luthor tries to kill Superman through a clone just shows his own inferiority and his infatuation with the need to be more

than the hero that he hates. The low key lighting surrounding the body of Superman also enhances the emotional aspect taking into consideration the darkness of the jealousy of Luthor and the conflict between creation and corruption in the soul. In contrast to previous descriptions of Superman as something invincible and godlike, in this scene of Superman (2025), he is redefined as a human and emotionally charged, defeated, but still capable of raising the hope above human envy and flaws. According to Homi K. Bhabha (1994/2004), "*mimicry is resemblance and threat at the same time*". The cloning of Superman by Luthor is mimicry, mimicking to demonstrate superiority, but rather showing the instability of his authority. The clone is like Superman, although it is an inverted image, which points to the ambivalence of the desire of Luthor to become like and even more than the idol he is. After all, this Superman (2025) scene does not allow defining Superman as a God; instead, it describes him as a representation of moral uprightness, yet the failed imitation by Luthor shows how envy will turn a creation into a corrupted one.

In the later scene, Superman stands before the people, visibly tired and vulnerable after the destruction happening around him. He raises his voice and says "*I am as human as anyone else,*" emphasizing his emotional connection and shared feelings with the people of Metropolis. Unlike

typical portrayals of Superman as a distant and invincible figure, this moment shows him grounded, trying to claim a place among those he protects. The camera uses a medium close-up shot, placing him at eye-level, which removes the sense of superiority and instead creates a sense of equality and understanding. This shift in perspective highlights how Superman is trying to bridge the divide between being seen



as a powerful alien and being seen as part of the community. Homi K. Bhabha explains this complexity of identity when he says, “*Culture is always being remade in the contact zone, in the space of enunciation*” (Homi K. Bhabha, 1994/2004). Superman’s statement reflects this idea: he is negotiating his identity in front of the people, not fully alien nor fully human, but constantly reshaping who he is through his interaction with society. This scene shows the tension and effort of belonging, demonstrating that being a hero is not only about power, but also about being understood.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Superman (2025) movie takes apart the classical heroic character of its protagonist as an invincible, God like implementer of justice in a logical and systematic way, which fits the postcolonial concepts developed by Homi K. Bhabha perfectly. Throughout the story, Superman is depicted as a conflicting character whose existence interferes with the politics of the world and makes people rebel against him, hence he has to live in a split space of his cultural identities. This is made out in the very first scene, in which his intervention is interrogated; to his description to be a combination of identity neither fully alien nor fully human that works in a Third Space. The movie depicts that the real battle of Superman is not the physical one, but the moral one because he balances between being an international symbol and a human being. This main conflict is enhanced by Lex Luthor who represents the colonized elite resisting the perceived dominance of Superman. Luthor utilizes the theories of mimicry as first proposed by Bhabha by trying to steal the power of the hero by way of stealing data and cloning him, mirroring the notion of being much like him, but not the same. This jealousy provokes mimicry as a source of both a likeness and a threat because it is successful in defying the power of Superman but fails at some point to duplicate his moral code. The invasion into the Fortress of Solitude and the birth of the clone are not the methods of defeating Superman physically, but dissolving his identity and revealing the apparent falsehood of his power. In the end, Superman (2025) movie emphasizes the heroic journey as a denial of the dichotomy of the ‘colonizer’ and the ‘colonized’ and instead a collaboration and mutual identity. By

sharing close moments with Lois Lane and proclaiming his own weakness to the world, Superman is actively exploring the idea of forming a new relationship with humanity that would be based on negotiating with it, but not commanding around. His last line, “*I am as human as anyone,*” is the final step in this circle, where he is no longer the remote god of some kind; he is a member of the contact zone, and heroism no longer belongs to him as he is invincible, but to a common cause of justice and compassion.

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