INVESTIGATING THE PROBLEMATIC OF MULTICULTURALISM IN HANIF KUREISHI'S NOVELS

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Abstract: The cultural artefact to identify human-being as the 'Other' has developed a persistent sense of dissimilitude where 'us' receives social recognition, while 'them' lives with a demeaning sense of identity. The mentioned social process employs invention of 'categories' by casting groups, individuals, or objects into the role of the 'other'. In this negotiation, the dominant cultural location vilifies the innate qualities of the 'others' to any positive social recognition. In the concurrent wave of multiculturalism, the function of this 'other' has created a conflict of boundaries culminating into cultural clashes, and strengthening its demand for Cultural Nationalism. By revisiting Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1991), *The Black Album* (1995), and *My Son the Fanatic* (1997) the paper examines the position of 'other' in constructing the British Muslim Identity in the United Kingdom. This article examines Kureishi's characters to be cultural products with an innate 'desire' for equal social recognition. Further the article tries to find how the failure of the 'desire' for identity in the characters results in the creation of negative reality.

Keywords: British Muslim, Cultural Product, Immigrants, In-Betweenness, Multiculturalism, Muslims, Londoner, 'Others'

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1. Introduction

The "demand for multiculturalism is strong in the contemporary world."[1] However, in the diverse cross-cultural-communication, the concept of embracing an inclusive diverse society seems to be partially successful. Despite following democratic governance, majority of the nations are witnessing surmountable clashes of cultural identity in the way of cultural assimilation. In the practice of multiculturalism, especially in native-nonnative relationship, the assertion "love thy neighbour"[2] has gained a different dimension where people now take an intimate interest in the "… very diverse modes [namely ethnicity, race, faith, and nationality] of proximate people,"[3] for social interaction.[4] Britain has remained a forefront of multiculturalism. However, the fact that a lack of thorough examination, especially where the basic contention lies in the question of 'belonging', the crucial point of exploration is racial and cultural identity of the co-habitants, which has led to violent expressions on both the sides in Britain. The inability of

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[1]Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*, London: Penguin Books, 2006, 149.

[2]Sen, *Identity and Violence*, 149.

[3]Sen, *Identity and Violence*, 149.

[4]The Harassment Case of the Saddiques of East London in January, 1982 is one of the many cases of racial harassment in Britain in the last two decades of the twentieth century. The specific reference of this case in the discussion shows what Amartya Sen in his book *Identity and Violence* (2006) mentioned about the problems that multicultural countries are facing with its inflow of the immigrants. "When trouble started," Nasreen Saddique wrote in her diary on 25 January 1982. The trouble was a gang of forty white youths attacking Nasreen's home. The Saddiques had moved into a new house in the West Ham area of London in January 1982. Dozens of skinheads would gather daily … threw stones … pushed excrement through the door … daubed swastikas, gave Nazi salutes and chanted "F~ing Pakis out." The arrival of an Asian family in a predominantly whites' playground area had unpleasant effects. Natives of the area didn't want the 'other' to live in such close proximity. Kenan Malik, "From Street Fighters to Book-burners," *From Fatwa to Jihad: The Rushdie Affair and Its Aftermath*, New York: Melville House Printing, 2010, 36.

the host society to understand the complex nature of immigrants' culture, limited scope of expression for the Muslim South Asian Diaspora, and the "emergence of the politically motivated neo-Nazi movements such as National Front in the 1980s"[5] altogether resulted in the disintegration of the polyvalent nature of the British multicultural society.

Our aim in this article is to renegotiate the position of identity as a conditioned fact ("Cultural Capital" by Pierre Bourdieu[6]) for the colonial subjects and to see how these people suffers from the "lack" of their "desire[d]" (concept of 'Desire' by Derrida[7]) goal of acceptance in the British society. In the process, we will also see how the performative aspect of any conditioned identity becomes effective in creating fringes in the multicultural society, thereby creating a permanent 'lack of belonging' and finally culminating into a diasporic community, especially the Muslim South-Asian Diaspora. The discussion will also bring into focus how the above mentioned factors finally convert into a movement for equal rights in the form of Cultural Nationalism.[8]

2. Britain, South-Asian Immigrants, and Hanif Kureishi

Hanif Kureishi (born in 1954) is a product of such massive reconfiguration of the social setup. Kureishi in his lifetime has seen a number of intense cultural and demographic changes in the British society. Born from an odd mixture of races, (a Pakistani

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[5]Andreas Athanasiades, "Repossessing Islam: Affective Identity and Islamic Fundamentalism in Hanif Kureishi," *Indialogs: Spanish Journal of India Studies* 2 (2015): 55-71 <http://revistes.uab.cat/india logs/article/view/v2-athanasiades> (12 August 2016).

[6]Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed., John G. Richardson, New York: Greenwood Press, 1987 [1979], 241-258.

[7]Cathrine Belsey, "Desire in Theory: Freud, Lacan, Derrida," *Textual Practice* 7, 3 (1993), 384-411.

[8]Cultural Nationalism, an intermediate point between ethnic and liberal nationalism, gestures towards a new way of addressing questions of belonging for diasporic subjects. It is a by-product of the dissociation of the immigrant population from the host society and acts as a motivating factor for separatist movements.

father and an English mother) Kureishi perceives society from the "distinct vantage point of his cultural hybridity and, as importantly, through the distanced perspective of his artistry."[9] His works are the seminal representation of reconfiguration exclusive to the construction of Britain in the context of large-scale of south-Asian immigration in the post-war, postcolonial period. He writes not just simply to debate the presence of the minorities, or to support their rights to equal citizenship; rather, he emphasizes on how the new elements of cultural dislocation are playing its part in the actual settlement terrain. Kureishi's trilogy— *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1991),[10] *The Black Album* (1995),[11] and *My Son the Fanatic* (1997),[12]—is a paradigmatic example of the post-imperial-ethno-English socio-conscious writings. These stories, written between 1990s' to 2000, draw on the ethnic differences as found in the immigrants and the native communities of Britain. 'Quest for identity' becomes seminal in these works also because of the writer's status of a second generation Pakistani immigrant, with affiliation to multiple identities (Pakistani-immigrant, Londoner, Muslim, 'Black British' writer). Kureishi through his writings tries to probe into "… what it means to be British, contesting monocultural constructions of British identity … in defining and shaping contemporary British hybridized culture."[13] In the given paradigm, Kureishi in these texts tries to emulate what it is to be an 'Englishman' without being a native of Britain.

Till date, through its medieval and modern history, Great Britain has witnessed the rise of number of cultural movements. These movements were primarily for the demands against the

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[9]Kenneth C. Kaleta, *Hanif Kureishi: Postcolonial Storyteller*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998, 4.

[10]Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, London: Faber and Faber, 1990, Paperback 2009.

[11]Hanif Kureishi, *The Black Album*, London: Faber and Faber, 1995.

[12]Hanif Kureishi, *My Son the Fanatic*, London: Screenplay Version, 1997.

[13]Ruvani Ranasinha, *Hanif Kureishi*, Horndon, Tavistock: Northcote House in Association with British Council, 2002, 2.

imposed Central Britishness of the Southern England upon the mid-England and the 'Highlanders' of the northern parts of the country. However, in its post-world-war history, the movements of uprising transcended the inner geographical boundary of the country and posed a demand from the commonwealth immigrant population, who at times retaining their distinctive national and cultural affiliations, demanded equal right to the Britishness. If we are to interrogate such hegemonic discourses on the formation of identities in the multicultural setup of Britain, we have to move out from seeing ethnicity, race, and faith as the only identity markers and turn towards the effective nature of the performative aspect of identity in the negotiation.

3. Identity in Social Paradigm

Identities are "Cultural Capitals,"[14] conditioned facts to differentiate and recognize the self in respect of the created binary. The complexities of identities are embedded in its nature of multiplicity, and the problem to identify someone with something specific, is more related to social conditioning of the subject, where the subject identifies "… high status cultural signals … in … social selection [for the objects]."[15] Identities, according to Stuart Hall "… are the points of identification, the unstable points … or suture, which are made within the discourse of history and culture. Not an essence but a *positioning.*"[16] In this social mechanism, the concept employs the collection of symbolic elements such as skills, taste, postures, clothing, mannerism, material belongings, belief-system, credentials, etc. that one acquires by being part of a particular social class in a definite geographical location. These elements act as tools of engagement

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[14]Michele Lamont, and Annette Lareau, "Cultural Capital: Allusions, Gaps and Glissandos in Recent Theoretical Developments," *Sociological Theory* 6, 2 (1988), 154.

[15]Lamont and Lareau, "Cultural Capital," 153.

[16]Stuart Hall, "A Place Called Home: Identity and Cultural Politics of Difference," *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference,* ed. Jonathan Rutherford, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990, 9-27.

to condition the target population. Identity to any individual becomes a conditioned fact for one.

To emulate such process in a practical situation and to relate it with the argument of the article, there is need to look back into Britain's history of the postcolonial era. The crucial point was in the early decades of the postcolonization when people from former colonies were invited to take up jobs in Britain "… to facilitate … [and] redress the country's ageing workforce … [and] partly to meet [up] reputed labour shortage in the range of jobs."[17] Flexibility in the immigration norms, the 'Imperial Act' of 1914, and the 'British Nationality Act' of 1948 extended a right of entry to all the inhabitants of Commonwealth Countries.[18] The inflow was so massive that it changed the demography of the country and, "… cities like London, Leicester or Birmingham … appear[ed] to have no connection with England of Arthur Bryant."[19] Multiculturalism became a face of life, in which the "Church of England has been replaced by mosques or temples … old corner grocers by *halal* butchers and *sari* shops."[20] The immigration policies solved the labour shortage in the newly developing industrialized British Society.

The first generation immigrants had largely accepted their status of the 'other' as a fact of life, because they were conditioned to accept their status as the 'other' colonial subjects. But, their

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[17]David Conway, *A Nation of Immigrants? A Brief Demographic History of Britain*, London: Civitas Institute for the Study of Civil Society, 2007, 1. This acute labour shortage was because of the devastation faced in World War II.

[18]South-Asians became the visible immigrant community in cities like Birmingham, Leicester, Bristol, Liverpool, Bradford, Leeds and Manchester. Their combined number increased from 80,000 to 3 million between the years 1951 to 1991. In Spitalfields, sixty percent of the population consists of Bangladeshi and in Bradford, over half the population was from Pakistan. The district of Saville Town, home to Mohammed Sidique Khan, leader of the July 2005 London Tube-Bombing, consisted of 90 per cent of South-Asian population. Conway, *A Nation of Immigrants?* 48.

[19]Conway, *A Nation of Immigrants?* 66-67.

[20]Conway, *A Nation of Immigrants?* 66-67.

children refused to do so. They saw themselves as British and challenged the dominant hegemony of power in due process. The main driving force behind such uprisings originates from a shared belief of a uniqueness of the cultural identity, a conditioned fact of the process of identity creation, which was common for both the natives and immigrants. The separatists' approach of the second and third generation immigrants reveals generation gap. The two generations seemed clearly divided in their view point, where one held the liberal and secular stand while the other the 'fundamentalist'- "a word newly minted to mean a fanatical Muslim."[21]

To understand such social mechanism in the larger canvas of the neo-colonization we need to focus how the process negotiates to form an identity or any individual. Here we can bring in the explanation by Homi K. Bhabha who talked about how dialogic tools operate for conditioning and creating the 'I' by the subjects for the objects.[22] Bhabha believes that there "… is … [an] emergence of the interstices – the overlap and displacement of domains of difference where in … community interest, or cultural value[s] are negotiated."[23] Bhabha's explanation is based on the interplay of subject-object co-relevance. Bhabha suggests an, "… 'in-between', or in excess of, the sum of the 'parts' of difference"[24] to create his/her own space. In the negotiation, the 'objects' lose their ingenuity of identity and settles their status as 'substandard neo-colonial objects'. For the immigrants 'I' can be seen as the product of double conditioning, first as the direct subject to the Colonial Empire in their native lands, and second, as immigrated subjects in adopted country.

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[21]Hanif Kureishi, *The Word and the Bomb*, London: Faber and Faber, 2005, 55.

[22]'Subjects' signifies the colonial powers, and 'objects' signifies the colonized.

[23]Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, New York: Routledge, 2014 (1994), 3.

[24]Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 3.

4. Identity in the Characters of Hanif Kureishi

Kureishi's protagonists - Karim (*The Buddha of Suburbia*), Shahid (*The Black Album*), and Ali (*My Son the Fanatic*)[25] - best exemplify the process of finding the 'I' as a cultural product. Karim Amir, the protagonist in *The Buddha of Suburbia* lives with the anxiety of in-betweenness. He calls himself a "Londoner"[26], who neither has any direct attachment to his/her parent's native country and culture, nor accepted as a native citizen of Britain and British culture. The identification "Londoner" signifies Amir being out of place:

> … I am an Englishman ['] born and bred, almost ['']. I am often considered to be a funny kind of Englishman, a new breed as it were, having emerged from two old histories… Perhaps it is the odd mixture of blood, of here and there, of belonging and not [,] that makes me restless…[27]

Amir's restlessness is the result of a peer pressure from both the cultures in constructing the 'self' ('I'). Despite being a racial mix (half-English on his mother's side) and oblivious to any other cultures than English, Karim is still seen as just another foreigner in the country. Likewise, Shahid (*TBS*), Pervez and Ali (*MSF*) also express their anxiety of being the 'other': "Everywhere I went I was the only dark-skinned person… ['I had been kicked around and chased a lot']… I began to be scared of going into certain places… ['I kept on thinking there was something I lack']."[28]

The public humiliation of Pervez in the pub tells the same tale of non-acceptance of the host society: "Sudden […] spotlight … on Pervez's face… Comedian … telling Paki, Rushdie and Muslim Jokes. He … [being] the only brown face there…"[29] Pervez accompanying Bettina (a British, sex worker by profession, and friend of Pervez) for a drink was not a site to welcome by the

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[25]Abbreviations are used for in-text reference to the selected novels: *The Buddha of Suburbia*: *TBS*; *The Black Album*: *TBA*; *My Son the Fanatic*: *MSF*.

[26]Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 1.

[27]Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 3.

[28]Kureishi, *The Black Album*, 10.

[29]Kureishi, *My Son the Fanatic*, 69.

Whites. Shahid's outburst in-front of Riaz about his experience as an immigrant, Karim's physiological dilemma of being a 'Londoner' and Pervez's public humiliation to be 'the only brown face' amid the crowd in the pub show the unwillingness of the host society to give the immigrants a proper space in the polyvalent nature of multicultural identity. Their location amid this cultural negotiation makes them the "confused *desi*"[30] who were "… supposed to be English, but to the English … [they] were always *wogs* and *nigs* and *Pakis*."[31]

This "monolithic whiteness"[32] of the British has been a conditioned fact to look for the race based human segregation. The humiliation faced by the characters in the selected texts shows that the British colonial approach towards the non-British has not changed much even in the postcolonial era. The new Empire within Britain thought that the new subject people of whom they think they can deal in the very same way as their predecessors dealt-with in their colonial occupations like "the fluttering folk and wild, the new caught, sullen peoples, half-devil and half child" in existence with the parochial dejection of Kipling's White Man's burden.[33] Even, Eva (Haroon's live-in partner in *TBS*) Bettina (in *MSF*), and Deedee Osgood (Shahid's teacher in the college and also his love interest in *TBA*) are seen differently by the natives for mixing with the non-natives. This kind of racial demagoguery is the reflection of how the immigrants are seen as competitors to the natives and that feels that the resources of their land will be consumed by 'them'. The reflection generates the disseminated picture of the contested face to power, and control that has been the innate nature of the socio-political, economy bound colonial gaze of the West.

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[30]Samana Madhuri, *Polyphonic Identities: A Study of Select Novels of Hanif Kureishi*, Thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University: New Delhi, 2010, 21.

[31]Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 24. Racial slur used to signify the people from the third world countries.

[32]Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood, *Anti-Racism, Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multicultural Identities and the Politics of Representation*, London: Zed Books London, 2015, XV.

[33]Malik, "From Street Fighters to Book-Burners," 40.

Kureishi's representation of the attitudes of the father figures towards the British difference in the selected texts is the reflection of what we discussed previously of creation of identity within the process of double conditioning under the canopy of British colonialism. The first generation immigrants Haroon (Father of Karim, *TBS*), Papa, (Shahid's 'father', *TBA*), and Pervez (Father of Ali, *MSF*) have the exposure to double oppression. Their "… dream of doing well in England"[34] has been an antecedent - conditioned [fact] for being accepted in the host society with a status of a lower-middle-class non-European immigrant. To get accepted in the host society and to climb the social ladder, Haroon banks on the idea of the exotic East and tries to teach "… *yoga* to the English."[35] He takes "this *yoga* thing"[36] very much in business-like sense and tries to sell to the West who more often look forward to the East for spirituality. Shahid's 'Papa' (*TBA*), the travel service entrepreneur, firmly believes that by adopting the ways of the British life his sons will earn acceptance for themselves in the society. In order to assimilate his sons in the foreign culture he takes them "… into the bathroom to demonstrate the only correct way to shave … [and] for bathing demonstration … courtesies, and how to shake hands firmly while saying 'How do you do?'"[37] Pervez (in *MSF*) desires his son Ali to be an accountant by profession and to marry an English girl. And if Ali succeeds in doing so, Pervez's dream of doing well in England will come true.[38] Right from the beginning Pervez is "… both terrified and ecstatic to be in …" the company of the English [in Fingerhut's house]."[39] The engagement of his son with Madelaine serves as an achievement to him as "[a]ll the years … [he] lived here, not a single Englishman has invited … [him] to his house."[40] For Pervez, to be in a relation with the English, and

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[34]Kureishi, *My Son the Fanatic*, 64.

[35]Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 5.

[36]Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 13.

[37]Kureishi, *The Black Album*, 53.

[38]Kureishi, *The Word and the Bomb*, 65.

[39]Kureishi, *My Son the Fanatic*, 3.

[40]Kureishi, *My Son the Fanatic*, 65.

preferably by a marriage bond will elevate his status and will help him moving into the circle of the elite race. The attempts of the father to make Englishman out of the "confused desi[s]"[41] is the reflection of their sense of racial inferiority that they have internalized in time. Haroon, Papa (Shahid's father), and Pervez create their own space of 'liminality' in a hope of cultural transformation, which in reality fails completely.

The attempt of the 'fathers' to assimilate with the English society is the reflection of their moulded psychology of invariable, marking their difference as the 'other'. The anxiety of being the 'other' and the urge for integration in the host society aggravates the process of "… self-oppressive role-play and anglophile mimicry."[42] Their 'love of *yoga*' (Haroon in *TBS*), 'love for Pakistani Cricket Team' (Shahid's Father in *TBA*) 'love for the English food and music' (Pervez in *MSF*) and their propensity to mock the British reflect that the Englishness they have espoused in public life, to some degree are tactical forms of mimicry to deflect racial gaze of the dominant culture. They represent the "brown Englishman"[43] who desires to be the Englishman without any affixations.

The transcultural approach in Kureishi's characters draws on political perceptions of the conditioning of the sense of power and behaviour among people, which is indoctrinated in them by "… deep memory, cultural flow, and the hybridisation of indigenous and imported categories."[44] The acceptance of inferiority by the first generation immigrants later problematizes the intercultural

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[41]Madhuri, *Polyphonic Identities*, 20.

[42]Berthold Schoene, "Herald of Hybridity: The Emancipation of Difference in Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 1, 1 (1998), 109.

[43]Gilbert Bart Moore, *Hanif Kureishi: Contemporary Writer Series*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001, 132.

[44]Subrata Mitra, "Sub-National Movements, Cultural Flow, the Modern State and the Malleability of Political Space: From Rational Choice to Transcultural Perspective and Back Again" <http://heiup.uni-heidelberg.de/journals/index.php/transcultural/article/view/9155/3490> (20 September 2016).

interaction for the second and the third generation immigrants in the country. As a fact, the second and the third generation immigrants were not in direct contact of the Colonial Empire. Rather, they were the products of the neo-Colonial Empire in Britain. Exposed to the years of racial prejudices in Britain, despite being a British citizen by birth, they realized what Edward Said identifies as the negative traits of the European cultural politics: "… [T]he major component in European culture is precisely … hegemonic both in and outside Europe… [T]he idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures."[45]

The young second generation characters of Kureishi still feel this effect of the past colonization in the neo-Colonial world: "All over the world our people are oppressed."[46] They cannot accept the idea of the 'superior' European versus the 'inferior' non-European. They feel insecure in a country which makes them feel inferior. They easily identify their parents as impersonators of the colonial — neo-colonial powers and, therefore, reject their ways.

The indifference in acceptances of the prejudices of the foreign, by the second and the third generation immigrants then can be translated in terms of Jacques Derrida's concept of 'desire'[47] and its practical failure in social mechanism to create a sense of identity. The basic notion of desire signifies an impermanent lack of possession of an object or an objective.[48] But on the contrary, when the desire is not fulfilled, it creates a further strong urge for the desired object. The process never ends and this way, the desire lingers on.

In such social mechanism, this continued sense of desire comes into creation of further reality to fulfil the lack. This idea is carried forward by Andreas Athanasiades who opines that "… [D]esire is already invested in social formation, which … creates … interest

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[45]Edward Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage Books, 1979, 7.

[46]Hanif Kureishi, "*My Son* the Fanatic," *The Black Album with My Son the Fanatic*, New York: Scribner, 2009, 297.

[47]Belsey, "Desire in Theory," 384.

[48]Every time a subject supposedly S desires an object supposedly P, then subject S will try to go to the extent that the object P is achieved.

... creates the sense of lacking ... [and] produces reality, and moving beyond ... desire as 'lack', ... desire constitutes production in the social field."[49] Andreas Athanasiades' views on cultural production of the British imperialism are the representation of the equitized role-play of lack and desire. Their lack of a non-British background (dialogic tool of identity formation) produces a binary of pure versus impure in the colonial, neo-colonial politics (Natives=English= Pure, Immigrants=Non-English=Impure). Even though the constitutional democratic governance of the country does not differentiate its subjects in such categories, the immigrants remain in the periphery of social recognition for their lack of not being English. Either way, their acceptance or rejection of their status does not improve their living situation. Shahid, observing Deedee's indifference to the cause of the immigrants says:

> We're third-class citizens, even lower than white working class. Racist violence is getting worse! Papa thought it would stop, that we'd be accepted here, as English. We haven't been! We're not equal! It's gonna be like America. However far we go, we'll always be underneath.[50]

In another instance Riaz-Al-Hussain (in *TBA*) sees the publication of the book the *Satanic Verses* (though the name was never mentioned in the text *TBA*, and has been referred as the "book") by a British publishing house as an insult to the faith of the people who belong and believe to the Eastern ideology.[51]

Kureishi's contrasting representation of the ruling class and the ruled brings in Bourdie's concept of conditioning, and the imperial gaze of the British to be the custodian of power. In the case of Karim, his employer chooses him to play Kipling's protagonist Mowgli. His hybrid ethnicity (an offspring of an Indian-Pakistani Father and an English Mother) acts positively to get him his breakthrough as a performance artist. The think tanks of the theatre group identify Karim as an Indian, and see him a perfect fit for the role because of his third world affiliation: 'Indian

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[49]Athanasiades, "Repossessing Islam," 55.
[50]Kureishi, *The Black Album*, 209.
[51]Kureishi, *The Black Album*, 172.

black boy in knickers'. Karim's inverse exposure to his levied motherland feeds the imagination of the British colonial mind: 'This is your costume, Mr. Mowgli' … It turned out that on stage … [he] would wear a loin-cloth and brown make-up … [to] resemble a turd in a bikini-bottom.[52] The audiences' views on Karim's knicker "turd in a bikini-bottom" are suggestive of the oriental discourse. Despite Karim's ability to speak "… English with an English accent"[53], he is asked to perform the 'authentic accent': "Shadwell took me aside and said 'A word about the accent, Karim. I think it should be an authentic accent.' 'What d'you mean authentic?' 'Where was our Mowgli born?' 'India.' 'Yes. Not Orpington. What accent do they have in India?' 'Indian Accent.' 'Ten out of ten.'"[54] This trajectory remains same in the lives of Pervez and Ali (*MSF*). In the engagement ceremony of Ali and Madeline, Mr Fingerhut (father of Madelaine) carries an offended look because of his daughter's choice of an Indian boy as life partner. The unwillingness of the police chief in the match is suggestive of the failure of the multicultural idea in Britain. These stances show the non-acceptance of these immigrants in the British multiculturalism.

5. Shuttling between 'Desire' and 'Lack'

The debate on the complexities in the relation between the natives and the immigrants is because of the 'desire' to belong to the country. 'To belong', as for the immigrants community was to get accepted in the land and the society as equal citizens, but for the natives, 'to belong' is to have their own space in the cultural academia. To understand such hegemonic discourse on formation of the British immigrant identity it is essential to look beyond the discriminatory dynamics of the society and to focus on the "re-imaging of desire."[55] In the practical ground of cultural

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[52]Kureishi, *The Black Album*, 146.

[53]Asim Mohd. Siddiqui, "Construction of Identity in Hanif Kureishi: *The Buddha of Suburbia*," *Journal of English Language and Literature* 4, 1 (2010), 1.

[54]Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 147.

[55]Athanasiades, "Repossessing Islam," 57.

interaction, the 'desire to belong' equally constituted production in the social fields. The desire to get accepted and its failure created a reality of 'alienation' and dissatisfaction for the host society in the immigrant communities. Indifference towards the immigrants grew adversely during a longer period with British Muslims being affected more than other immigrant communities. Kureishi recognizes this nature of the social mechanism of 'desire' which he depicts through his characters in the selected texts. Karim, Shahid, and Ali's upbringing in the Western cultural mould, their education, taste for British rock-music, sexual liberation of hedonism and fetish British life-style nothing results in improving their status as the 'other'. The Second and the third generation immigrants face the same humiliation as faced by their fathers:

'You can't see my daughter again,' said Hairy Back. 'She doesn't go out with boys. Or with wogs'… 'We don't want you blackies coming to the house.' 'We don't like it'… However many niggers there are, we don't like it. We're with Enoch. If you put one of your black 'ands near my daughter I'll smash it with a 'ammer! With a 'ammer' (Helen's father to Karim in *TBS*).[56]

'Paki! Paki! Paki!' she screamed. Her body had become an arched limb of hatred with a livid opening at the tip, spewing curses. 'You stolen our jobs! Taken our housing! Paki got everything! Give it back and go home' (A female racist to Shahid in *TBA*).[57]

Result of such ousted racial prejudices draws the second and the third generation immigrants towards cultural fundamentalism. They realized "… Western materialist hates [them] … how can you love something which hates you" (Ali to Pervez in *MSF*).[58]

The suppressed rage against racism and indifference in the second and third generation British immigrants compel them to come out loud with their native identities: for instance Mohammed Sidique Khan who planned and executed the

[56]Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, 40.

[57]Kureishi, *The Black Album*, 139.

[58]Kureishi, *My Son the Fanatic*, 69.

London Tube-Bombing on 7 July 2005; or Mohammed Emwazi, who turns into a British jihadist (Jihadi John),[59] and went to the middle-East to fight for the ISIS against the West. The failure of 'desire', of 'acceptance' in the second, and the third generation immigrants lead them to seek identity through religion. Maurice O'Connor sees such cultural production of the failed desire as a new "… zenith of separatist cultural fundamentalism with a religious mould." Commenting on Kureishi's representation of such youths, he further says that "… seen from the post 9/11 perspective, the relevance of … [Kureishi] is that … [he] represents … the first fictional accounts of the radicalization of those disposed Muslim Asian youths who, while born and bred in the UK, were no longer seen themselves as British."[60] The West ceases to exist as a hope of betterment for the settled immigrants. The disenfranchised Asian youth who had a Muslim heritage now started seeing "Western modernism … eroding their cultural values."[61] To stop such erosion, they took an active stand in protesting against all discriminations and looked forward to create a virtual geo-political boundary with indigenous culture and religion as a shield of a stable identity in the form of promoting cultural nationalism. Aspiring for recognition with such ideological apprehension the young immigrants, especially the British Muslims, did not hesitate to revisit Islam from a radical perspective.

For young radicals, extreme *Islam* worked in many ways. It kept them out of trouble and provided some pride. At the same time they were able to be rebels.[62] For radicals like Anwar, and

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[59]Robert Verkaik, "Mohammad Emwazi: "Jihadi John' Warned Younger Brother not to Follow Him to Syria and ISIS" <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ home-news/jihadi-john-mohammed-emwazi-isis-syria-warned-brother-a6831666.html> (2 March 2016).

[60]Maurice O'Connor, "The Indian Diaspora in the UK: Accommodating "Britishness"," *Indialogs* 3 (2016): 137-150 <http://revistes.uab.cat/indialogs/article/view/v3-oconnor> (2 March 2016).

[61]O'Connor, *The Indian Diaspora*, 143.

[62]Kureishi, *The Word and the Bomb*, 8.

Changez (*TBS*), Riaz-Al Hussain, Chad, Hat, Tahira and to some extent Shahid (*TBA*) and Ali (*MSF*), Islam becomes the 'culture', a 'past' bond to be renewed for asserting their identity. But unfortunately, the plurality of identity of the immigrants comes in their way: neither their attempts of assimilation nor their resistance through religious affiliations help them in coming out of their state of in-between despair. Kureishi's works are introspection on such changing dynamics of the English society observes:

> It seemed to me that … younger kids would be interested in what I was interested in: Bhangra music, pop culture all that stuff. But they had completely rejected all of that, and I was really shocked, because, those kids were English as me. They were born and raised in England, yet they rejected the West.[63]

In the related sense then, we can say that the effective production of 'desire' results in negative cultural production among the immigrants. Sara Upton, elaborating on these lines comments on how the political institutions and theoretical academia failed to convey the society with a direct engagement with the real world that has resulted in the disintegration of the social fabric in the postcolonial Britain.[64] From the immigrants' perspective, this indifference ushers the idea of Cultural Nationalism in a foreign land.[65]

Kureishi's characters' are never considered in the main stream as an equal contributor to the society by the English. Though their birth and up-bringing signifies the British mode of cultural production of subjects, their status of being a 'Londoner' signifies their peripheral position of national identification. Apparently,

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[63]Amitava Kumar, "A Bang and a Whimper: A Conversation with Hanif Kureishi," *Transition* 10, 4 (2001), 127-128.

[64]Upton, Sara. "A Question of Black or White: Returning to Hanif Kureishi's *The Black Album*." *Postcolonial Text* 4, 1 (2001), Online. 29 December 2014. <www.postcolonial.org/index.php/pct/article/download/679/518> (6 June 2016).

[65]The idea ushers a virtual contact of the immigrants with their native land the start identifying as their home after exploring alternatives in the inhabited land.

this created the insider-outsider contact that consolidated into uprising for rights to minority rights, anti-racist movements, cultural fundamentalism, and demand Cultural Nationalism. Such consequences of multiculturalism in Britain necessitated an urge to look into actual social scenario not as an esoteric or marginal exercise, but as something that concerns the global community.

6. Creating a Dialogue: Kureishi in the Context

Kureishi brings to fore the debate of identity/cultural identity where desire plays a prominent role for further production of reality. Kureishi's exploration of this polyphony in the psychological identity construct and crisis of the immigrants shows the embedded stereotyped category of the south-Asian immigrants as 'others' in British eyes. Ania Loomba in support of this transnationalism says that Kureishi "… upholds the lost cause of acceptance in the British society and tries to save the archetypal immigrants from being drowned as an anonymous collectivity."[66] His representation of these characters signifies his personal quest to counter the "… homogenization of [the created] catagor[ies] by representing the characters that are divided on the basis of race, class, gender, generation … sexuality [and nation]."[67] The term "immigrant" is a colonial construct. Immigrant itself contains many affiliations along with the national affiliation. Kureishi's representation of the immigrants and specifically his portrayal of the British-Muslims is from the neo-colonial perspective where 'immigrants' in the West itself stands for a demeaning sense. In the neo-colonial hegemony these people represents the categories of nation, race, class, gender, and so on. These discriminatory levels are on certain points, but together the immigrants represent the category of the 'other'. Though Kureishi has not mentioned the word immigrant expressively, his characters represent individual categories of discrimination at large becomes a colonial product, namely 'immigrant(s)'. The stories discussed here assess

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[66]Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/ Postcolonialism*, London/New York: Routledge, 2005, 137.

[67]Madhuri, *Polyphonic Identities*, 20.

success and failure of post-neo-colonial global project of multiculturalism. Talking about the situation of the immigrants in Britain, Dominic Head aptly sums this point that: "… migrant identities are often fictionalized in postcolonial … [narratives] … and are often embattled and vulnerable in nature."[68] Kureishi's portrayal of such factionalism shows his command to reflect the nature of English duality of "national pride and political suspicion."[69] This sense is mutual for the natives and non-natives. For natives, the presence of the immigrants is necessary for the survival of the growing capitalist economy, but at the same time they are unwilling to provide a proper socio-cultural security. On the other hand, the charm of the Western life keep attracting the immigrants to stay in the country,[70] but the effective discrimination of the society will possibly result in the negative production of desire where they want a plausible native-homeland-cultural dimension.

7. Conclusion

Salman Rushdie in *The Satanic Verses* (1988) has said that "a poet's work is to name the unnameable, to point at frauds, to take sides, start arguments, shape the world, and stop it from going to sleep. And if rivers of blood flow from the cuts his verses inflict, then they will nourish him."[71] Similarly, Kureishi motive in presenting these issues in the text put forward a scope for discussing the role of an artist to make literature more of a practical field of exploration instead of feeding the aesthetic pleasure to the readers' mind. Kureishi asks: "But don't writers try to explain genocide and that kind of thing? Novels are like a picture of life"

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[68]Dominic Head, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modern British Fiction, 1950-2000*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

[69]Kaleta, *Hanif Kureishi*, 4.

[70]Asim Mohd. Siddiqui, "Politicising Literature and Migrant Identity: A Reading of Hanif Kureishi's *The Black Album.*" *Journal of the Faculty of Arts* (n.d.), 117.

[71]Rushdie, Salman, *The Satanic Verses*. New York: Random House Trade, 2008, 97.

(*TBA*).[72] Literature, beyond its aesthetic value has a very significant role to play in representing issues such as identity, estrangement and feelings of discontent especially among members of the Diaspora.

The immigrant question in Kureishi reflects the minority interest in Britain. Kureishi has tried to create a distinctive articulation for the British Pakistanis of his generation whose sufferings (of the indifference of the postcolonial British society) were not properly addressed by the political academia. If such literary production had been taken into consideration from a practical perspective, the realities in the cultural contact zone would have been different. In the texts, Kureishi has not provided his reader with a solution 'what is right or wrong', or how to solve the confusion of identity, but he adds to it a reflection of 'life' by creating a dialogue between the practical fields of social construction of identity. In the postmodern age, identities are reformed by different altered perspectives where the concept of "unique identity"[73] brings in division. Kureishi's vivid representation of the British Muslim immigrants is just not to show the minority interest in the country, but to extend the positive ideas that lies within multiculturalism. His ideas reflect a progressive hybridized behavioural mode of identity across the world. Kureishi advocates cultural diversity as a historical and contemporary social reality, irrespective of where one is located in the world. Amid the multiplied violence motivated by spiritual and ethnic intolerance that threatens to show into a full-scale clash of civilisations, it is time to for a dialogue between the academia and the political governing tools on these issues. Only reading identity in affective terms can be the possible solution to the persistent problem of cultural conflicts.

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[72]Kureishi, *The Black Album*, 21.

[73]Sen, *Identity and Violence*, 16-17.