接合差異：
庫雷西後殖民故事中的晚期資本主義文化邏輯

摘 要

庫雷西的早期後殖民故事—《我的美麗洗衣店》、《郊區佛陀》、《黑色唱片》、《山米與蘿西上床》—同時也呈現了晚期資本主義的各個面向。這是因為在這些作品中，非白人的角色參與了二十世紀七、八零年代倫敦的文化生產與消費，證實了擁有文化資本的邊緣主體也能在不友善的英國社會中找到自己的位置。接合差異讓這樣的立足方式成為可能，因為晚期資本主義不但鼓勵族裔的差異被「表達」，也歡迎有族裔身份的個人和不同的社會團體互相「連結」，其中包含了作為東道主的英國白人社群。

本論文的序論依序討論庫雷西對於資本主義的曖昧態度、評論家對於庫雷西故事中多元議題的探討、作為晚期資本主義邏輯的文化的商品化與商品的文化化、這四個故事中讓後殖民性與晚期資本主義扣連的（文化）差異的接合。第一章以《我的美麗洗衣店》中的次文化成員、亞裔企業、主流生產模式的接合來例示晚期資本主義的霸權。這個霸權確認了大英帝國光輝的消褪，以及一個新的資本主義的帝國的興起。第二章強調表演在《郊區佛陀》中的重要。這是一種讓不同階級與族裔主體展現其文化資本，並在特定的文化生產場域中相互串連的方式。第三章論述《黑色唱片》中消費主義與回教基本教義派的對立。這兩種立場的相互頡抗，促成與轉變八零年代晚期英國的各種認同。藉著小說主角在文學上的努力，庫雷西找到了逃離無深度消費主義，以及令人窒息的回教基本教義派教條的途徑。第四章分析藉著解離與反對他者，接合差異的過程在《山米與蘿西上床》所產生的排他行為。這些鬥爭在不同權力地位的主體爭奪空間時最為明顯。結論檢視了庫雷西強調接合差異是晚期資本主義中的生存策略，以及他批判接合差異過程中，意圖接合的主體忽視他者與自我間的差異性與同一性。作者認為這種忽視會造成人們和世界的複雜性相脫節。

Articulating Differences:

The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism in Hanif Kureishi's Postcolonial Stories

Abstract

Hanif Kureishi's early postcolonial stories: *My Beautiful Laundrette*, *The Buddha of Suburbia, The Black Album*, and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* are also works concerning different facets of late capitalism. This is because non-white characters in these works are involved in different roles of cultural production or consumption in the '70s and '80s Britain, attesting the emergence of marginal subjects with cultural capitals to win them a place in an unfriendly host society. What makes this possible is a process of articulating differences, when in a late capitalist era, their differences of ethnicity are encouraged to be *pronounced* and *hinged* with different social formations, including the host community.

The introduction of this dissertation concerns Kureishi's ambiguous stance toward capitalism, critics' co-presence of different issues in Kureishi's stories, the commodification of culture and culturalization of commodities as the cultural logic of late capitalism, and finally, articulation of (cultural) differences in Kureishi's four major stories where postcoloniality inevitably hinges late capitalism. Chapter One explores a late capitalist hegemony exemplified by an articulation of a subculturalist, an Asian enterprise, and the mainstream mode of production in *My Beautiful Laundrette*. This hegemony also confirms fade-out of Britain's imperial glory and the rise of a new capitalist empire. Chapter Two highlights the idea of performance in *The Buddha of Suburbia*. It is a way by which individuals of different class and ethnicity enounce their cultural capitals and hook together in certain fields of cultural production. The major concern of Chapter Three lies in the antagonism between consumerism and Islamic fundamentalism in *The Black Album*, around which identities in the late eighties Britain are shaped and transformed. Through the hero's literary endeavors, Kureishi seeks a way out of consumerist depthlessness and suffocating doctrines of a fundamentalist Islam. Focusing on *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*, Chapter Four analyzes exclusory practices that can occur when different elements are articulated together by disarticulating or opposing those labeled as others. These struggles are manifest in spatial contestation between different characters in different power positions. The concluding chapter examines both Kureishi's emphasis of articulating difference as a survival strategy in late capitalism, and his critical stance in his stories on ignoring others' differences from and similarities with oneself, which, as the author believes, is a human tendency that disarticulates people from the complexity of the world.

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I would like to express my best appreciation to my advisor, Professor Yu-cheng Li, a pioneer of Kureishi studies in Taiwan. His famous paper, "Expropriating the Authentic: Cultural Politics in Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*," provoked me to explore the intimacy between commodification and Kureishi's characters. His lectures in the class "Contemporary English Novels" at National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU) in 2005 enabled me to concern contemporary Britain from different perspectives. His encouragement for me to finish a dissertation that illuminates a postcolonial writer in the light of late capitalism, his stress on writing to the point, and his toil in reading my chapters along with his other PhD and MA students are unforgettable. I am also greatly indebted to Professor Jung Su, whose courses in 2003, 2004 and 2005, focusing on postwar minority British novelists and contemporary cultural studies, laid the foundation for this dissertation. Her careful reading and judicious comments on my term papers are of great value to my English writing. Professor Kun-liang Chuang, Yin-i Chen, and Shyh-jen Fu, as the other three members of the committee, pointed out key insufficiencies of my early version and helped turn the final version into an organic whole. As for teachers outside the English departments, I appreciate Professor Mau-Sheng Lee's help in organizing the theoretical toolkit for this dissertation. Pointing out capitalism as a temporary formation of human society, he reminds me of the equal importance of ethics, and suggests me to focus on Pierre Borudieu's exploration of cultural production. His courses in the law department at National Taiwan University (NTU), like "Introduction to Legal Science," "Juvenile Law," and "Sociology in Criminal Justice," not only inspired me to finish a chapter regarding the relationship between delinquency and capitalism, but also advanced my understanding of subjectivity constructed in capitalism. Professor Yuan-ling Pei, now in the department of sociology in Soochow University, led some tough reading groups of sociological canons in my undergraduate years. I thank him for having equipped me a capability of surveying heavy documents in an early period of my academic journey, as well as his excellent paper concerning globalization and hegemony of the United States. His emphasis on globalization as "reference without a center" and his methodology of "relational thinking" supports my explanation of Kureishi's Britain as a process of (dis-)articulating differences.

Many friends of mine provided intellectual and spiritual supports for completing this dissertation. Nawit Chiu, my undergraduate classmate and now a successful entrepreneur applying Foucault's disciplinary skill as his governmentality in China,

helped me find late capitalism as the organizing principle in Chapter One, originally a term paper and becoming the starting point of the whole dissertation. His insights on how power and discourse join the formation of Johnny's subjectivity pushed me forward to anatomize Kureishi's texts in a Foucauldian style, which certainly took me a lot of time, yet also led me to new terrains and understanding of Kureishi's world. Smayson Yu (a dried fish), Yun-wen Yu (a fish still alive), Kunchou Tsai (a golden bachelor lawyer hence no more an underdog), Jia-jun Fang, and Yi-Chou Lin (the bear and a lawyer), as my friends in the law department of NTU, provided much emotional support for toughest days in my PhD program. I pay my special thanks to Ni-luo Guo, Yun-wen's girlfriend, whose kindness of borrowing books from NTU's library for me is indispensable for this dissertation. My Junior High classmates Jim Hu and Vincent Wu's contribution are formidable. Jim's mental supports are always workable (like his basketball jumpers), while Vincent is the most reliable engineer to solve problems of my psyche and computer equipments. With his MA degree from Britain, Vincent also brought me his first-hand observation of the British society, confirming my speculation of some negative effects of Britain's social welfare system. Friends in NTNU provide timely helps. Chih-liang Hsu's cheers during my PhD program are heart-warming. Yi-rong and Yu-qui's kindly help of borrowing book from Providence University is much appreciated.

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Introduction

> [T]hey were liberal. And they needed an Asian, and I was the Asian. (Kureishi, "Interview: Hanif Kureishi on London" 40)

> If Blair's 'third way' implies consensus and the end of antagonism, our literature will sharpen and map differences. 'Over-integration', the erasing of racial and religious differences, can become coercive or even fascistic. It can give rise to more racism, anger and resentment. (Kureishi, "The Word and the Bomb" 9)

> After the age had caught up with Gramsci's Leninist analysis of hegemony, the whole cultural area was now being seen as political, as presenting values, assumptions, practices, all seemingly invisible, but which kept late capitalism intact. Part of the state's use of force was the coercive nature of implicit ideas, which were, partly, disseminated by the state's media. Naturally, as the media multiplied, its influence was grasped as being politically significant in many ways, as was, therefore, the analysis of its workings and cultural defiance of its paradigms. (Kureishi, *Plays One* xiv)

Despite Hanif Kureishi's interest in easily-swallowed pop culture, realism as his major literary style, and a concern for ethnic minorities in Britain as conspicuous as his own light brown skin-color among whites, the author is difficult to be tackled in any single theoretical formation. While most of his early works published no later than 1995 either came up with non-white protagonists or tackled racism and conflicts between civilizations,[1] critics cannot help but primarily consider Kureishi's work

[1] These works include plays like *Outskirts* (1981), *Borderline* (1981), *Birds of Passage* (1983), novels like *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990), *The Black Album* (1995), and screenplays like *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985), *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* (1988), and *My Son the Fanatic* (1997). Though premiered at the Cannes Film festival in 1997, *My Son the Fanatic* is originally a short story first

"through the lens of postcolonial theory" (Thomas 5). This approach seems to be tailor-made, for Kureishi's most salient essays such as "The Rainbow Sign," "Bradford," and "The Word and the Bomb," usually foreground the salience of "race, immigration, identity, Islam" in his literary and a contemporary Britain (Kureishi, "The Word and the Bomb" 3).

Through such postcolonial lenses, however, rich implications of the above quotations are easily ignored, and seeming contradictions among them, namely between Kureishi's recognition of his non-white identity as a means to sell to white liberals, and his critique against racism, a homogenizing nationalism, and late capitalist hegemony, are liable to be bypassed. Are Kureishi himself and his works, in so doing, co-opted into a cultural field where racialization and commodification are rampant? How does his anti-racism, based upon his awareness of new market logic of Orientalism, works with or against hegemony of late capitalism? If Kureishi believes himself or ethnic minorities representing a *difference* different from Blair's third way, a hybrid political position aims to transcend right and left, how different are they in British life, and how homogenizing is Blair's third way that is supposed to threaten the co-existence of differences? Must all differences, legal or not in the British context, be permitted, as Kureishi himself asks "how do you live with people who are so different that—among other things—they lock up their wives" ("The Word and the Bomb" 8)? All these puzzles of difference are more complicated in regard to my final quotations.[2] If Gramsci's idea of hegemony in late capitalism is articulated by different social sections, in which ways does different voice and representation

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appeared in the *New Yorker* in 1994.

[2] In cultural studies, the idea of difference is most notably considered in the vein of structuralism and post-structuralism, respectively represented by linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and philosopher Jacques Derrida, to explain how meaning is made possible by differences between signs. Just like Kureishi, I use this term in its habitual sense, and especially focus on how certain activity, phenomenon, and social formation is regarded as culturally different.

articulate or disarticulate in relation to late capitalism, where, as Kureishi points out, "coercive nature of implicit ideas . . . disseminated by the state's media" coexists with "cultural defiance of its paradigms" in a "multiplied" mediascape/society (Kureishi, *Plays One* xiv)?

To answer these questions, some concepts and premises concerning a heterogeneous late capitalism, racial discrimination and minority resistance must be taken into account. We have to clarify whether Kureishi is a marginal subject against a British cultural hegemony entirely different from his position. Except for nationalists, racists, and a complicit government in the backdrop of Kureishi's early works, there are frequently social, economic and cultural forces beyond the author and his characters, which not only shape, connect and homogenize the daily similarity among different coordinates, but also diversify, identify, and encourage their distinctiveness. In Kureishi's works, these forces might be most adequately explained by the function of late capitalism, as a social, cultural and economic system burgeoning after late 1960s and still remaining intact in the early 21st century. Under such circumstances, consumerist and productive creativity related to his main characters is no less common than post-sixties advertisements that call their consumers to break the rule (Frank 24). In *The Conquest of Cool*, Thomas Frank claims a Western cultural revolution after 1960s as hegemony of hip, or hip capitalism rebellious against dull and conformist consumer capitalism. We may also term hip capitalism, with its central idea "[c]ool" as "an oppositional attitude adopted by individuals or small groups to express defiance to authority" (Pountain and Robins 19), as late capitalism, capable of involving rebels against itself to reflect, renew, fluidize, and transform itself. Capitalism in this phase has been capable of joining and empowering resistant movements and minority discourses Kureishi belongs to. This accounts for the author's acknowledgement that "technology and consumerism became our gods"

("The Word and the Bomb" 6). Many counter-hegemonic discourses have been produced, transmitted, and consumed in Kureishi's realistic representation of a mediatized society. Therefore discussions of late capitalism can be a methodology not only shedding new light on postcolonial criticism revolving around Kureishi's notable early works, but also revealing and articulating his concern of lives of different ethnicity, gender, class, age group in a postmodern time.

Here I seek to explore the logic of late capitalism in Hanif Kureishi's four early postcolonial stories. While many critics tend to shed light on postcoloniality, racism, and nationalism in Kureishi's early works, I discover that late capitalism as a motive frequent-appeared is sometimes mentioned but not thoroughly delved through. Kureishi's major minority characters are not only discriminated or exoticized, hence related to a postcolonial and post-imperial Britain whose ethnic relations are characterized by victimization and rebellion of the racialized groups. In public or private sphere, work or leisure, their ethnic backgrounds and different specialties are processed into cultural capitals or economic drives that diversify cultural outputs in British society. Constantly crossing traditional borders of race, class, gender, sexuality, high and pop culture related to their productive or consumptive activities, Kureishian characters, white or not, have raised important issues of postmodernity, consumerism and cultural production. As a result, Kureishi's representation of British society around 1970s and 1980s can be termed, for theoretical expediency, as postmodern and late-capitalistic, the exact keywords by which cultural studies try to characterize a western world after the peak of capitalism and modernism. In a late phase of the ever-evolving capitalism, boundaries between the center and margin are constantly blurred, so as to release more productive and consumptive power of individuals from different groups. Space of the globe, nation, city, family and individual are also involved in a process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, constituting and

constituted by new forms of capital. To deal with Kureishi's concern of a late capitalist society that joins the becoming of postcolonial subjects, I focus on its four facets, namely incorporation of the margin into a mainstream mode of production, cultural production, consumerism, and finally the contestation of space, by exploring Kureishi's four major postcolonial stories—his first two novels, *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *The Black Album*, and first two screenplays, *My Beautiful Laundrette* and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*. In so doing, I explore different types, mechanisms, and results of articulation of differences in Kureishi's works. Such articulation can not only be the logic of late capitalism, which helps a subject selling himself or herself in a market always looking for the cool, but also a first step that the author brings his heroes out of postcolonial restriction, capitalistic oppression and postmodern superficialization. When different individuals are united as a group, and their distinctiveness are ensured, there can be, however, a process of excluding other differences that inevitably victimizes the presumed incommensurable.

Tracking Hanif Kureishi

Born with a Pakistani father and British mother in Bromley, December 5, 1954, Hanif Kureishi has first hand experiences of cultural and ethnic clashes in the postwar England. His hybrid identity makes himself not quite a representative member of the host or diaspora culture. In the course of his maturity, Kureishi is mostly irritated by discriminative practices from the host, for whom he can only be a Paki. On the other hand, Kureishi is a typical second generation "immigrant" writer, a monolingual, native Briton never feels himself a Pakistani. As a minority within minority, Kureishi explores a wide range of peripheral issues, such as homosexuality, subculture, diasporas of different generations, and suburbanites. However, most of his early works concern ethnic main characters living in the 1970s and 1980s Britain, two

decades in which racism against Commonwealth immigrants reaches its peak. The author's own ethnicity and his heroes', in this social milieu, soon wins him labels such as a "postcolonial storyteller" (Kenneth C. Kaleta)[3] and a "black British writer" (Bronwyn T. Williams).[4]

This postcolonial reading on Kureishi is critical and indispensable, as either in the historical background of these postcolonial stories, or since their publication, race and racism are always enormous issues in contemporary Britain. Enoch Powell, the Tory MP in 1968, made a representative and most notorious racist speech in the face of heating debates on the Commonwealth immigration into Britain:

> As I look ahead, I am filled with foreboding. Like the Roman, I seem to see "the River Tiber foaming with much blood". That tragic and intractable phenomenon which we watch with horror on the other side of the Atlantic but which there is interwoven with the history and existence of the States itself, is coming upon us here by our own volition and our own neglect. (qtd. in Hebdige, "Digging for Britain" 135)

Having little sympathy for citizens of lower class and weak communities, some Conservatives expressed their racist remarks more overtly than the Labours,[5] and Mrs. Thatcher "[f]rom the late 1970s . . . increasingly associated herself with the issue of immigration:"

> In January 1978 she appeared on a World in Action programme on immigration and stated that 'people are really rather afraid that this country might be rather swamped by people with a different culture.' She then went on to promise a clear prospect of an end to immigration. (Hudson and Williams 127)

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[3] See his *Hanif Kureishi: Postcolonial Storyteller*.

[4] See his "'A State of Perpetual Wandering:' Diaspora and Black British Writers."

[5] It is noteworthy that some leading Conservatives then in the Shadow Cabinet were infuriated by the speech. Edward Heath, the Conservative leader dismissed Powell from his position as Shadow Defence Secretary, while Margaret Thatcher is more sympathetic to Powell's stance.

These speeches reflect a strong involuntariness to face the multicultural reality of Britain. An old form of British culture, now severely redefined by a world of postcolonial literary outputs and theoretical formations, seems to be the rationale that justifies racist practices against ex-colonial immigrants from the third world.

Kureishi's emergence as a literary figure, on the other hand, represents an culturally hybrid identity preceded by V.S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, his two novelist mentors, and a group of immigrant writers arriving at postwar Britain from former colonies. Being a colored immigrant's son and writing about diasporic lives threatened by nationalism and Thatcherism in his early works, Kureishi is provided with a hyphenated identity, and capable of voicing the postcolonial dimension of contemporary Britain that some "host" citizens still refuse to accept. As a result, he soon turns to be literary critics' fancied writer, fitting in with postcolonial concepts such as hybridity (Homi Bhabha), black Britishness (Paul Gilroy), and new ethnicity (Stuart Hall). Such stress on ethnic difference, or on minority as a hybrid existence against a homogeneous mainstream, leads some literary critics to polarize cultural differences between East and West in Kureishi's stories. Frederic Holmes, for example, claims a consumerist protagonist split by the East in *The Black Album*, just because he partakes in activities of an Islamic fundamentalist group.[6] Kureishi's negative representations of Islam draw attacks in a similar logic, for some Muslim characters in *The Black Album* and *My Son the Fanatic* are with fanatic dimensions that reinscribe stereotyping from the host society.

Even labeling Kureishi as a writer of *Black British Literature* (Mark Stein), "The 'other' in multicultural London" (Lars Ole Sauerberg),[7] a resistant colonized *Using*

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[6] I would discuss Holmes' "The Postcolonial Subject Divided between East and West: Kureishi's *The Black Album* as an Intertext of Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*" more in Chapter Three.

[7] See his *Intercultural Voices in Contemporary British Literature*, p.128.

the Master's Tools (Anuradha Dingwaney Needham), or as one of the writers writing *Postcolonial London* (John McLeod), critics come up with analysis of multiple identities of Kureishi's different characters, far more kaleidoscopic than their titles suggest. On the other hand, ethnicity as the most powerful means of marketing Kureishi as a celebrated writer, is oftentimes ridiculed in his works.[8] Bradley Buchanan in his *Hanif Kureishi* (2007) has pointed out that, "[b]ecause of the increasingly obvious uniqueness of Kureishi's cultural and political position as a fully Westernized child of an immigrant father, recent critics have turned away from viewing Kureishi in terms of postcolonialism" (13). Kureishi's father Rafiushan was once an upper class in India, capable of fleeing the subcontinent upheavals that led to the partition of India and Pakistan. With economic safety and ambition to be a writer, Rafiushan has fashioned himself and Hanif with a great range of European literary legacies.[9] These cultural capitals not only support Kureishi's faith to become a professional writer, an occupation originated in the West together with the rise of capitalism, but also differentiate himself from many ethnic working class or underclass. Paternal culture is not Kureishi's only advantage. According to Kureishi's mother, his literary translation of his maternal family into working class is misleading,[10] as she relates in an interview: "I suppose it's trendy nowadays for an author to pretend they had a working-class background, but Hanif had everything he wanted as a child" (Johnston 9).

To avoid the danger of flatting a diverse range of distinctions by pitting the ethnic/colored against the host/white communities in Britain, critics examine Kureishi's ethnic characters portrayed as miscellaneous individuals, with different

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[8] See Mark Stein, *Black British Literature*, p. 115.

[9] In *Buddha*, Haroon's family background is an interesting parallel to Kureishi's own father, and the protagonist Karim comes from a liberalist, lower middle class family just as his. For more discussions, please refer to Chapter Two in this dissertation.

[10] This mainly indicates Karim's British mother in *Buddha*, characterized as a worker in a shoe store.

political faiths, social identities, and life philosophies. Themes other than racism and cultural conflicts are also explored as Kureishi's fundamental concerns in his early works, such as gender issues, class formations, consumerism, high/low culture disputes, and Americanization in Britain. Some telling examples are as follows. Despite its handy subtitle to highlight Kureishi's ethnicity as an outstanding difference from other British writers, Kenneth Kaleta's *Hanif Kureishi: Postcolonial Storyteller* marks out "universal truths" as the hidden tone "underlying the idiosyncratic activities of his unconventional characters" (16).[11] This universality is also made possible, paradoxically, by "contradictions of a pluralistic society within England" (3), when people find cultural specificity of different groups coexists with a lingering British tradition, and a new born, multicultural national identity is still discernable as British. Kaleta also notices the importance of globalization, as "today's mass-communication empire" (7), fashion "style" (8), "[m]usical trends" (8), American "pop culture" (10), and cinema as "the passport to a global community" (11), all contribute in Kureishi's world of "fin-de-siecle global community" in Britain (12). Bart Moore-Gilbert's *Hanif Kureishi*,[12] a comprehensive study in a series called "Contemporary World Writers," concerns the author in relation to a global as well as a postcolonial context. "[D]ecolonisation," "political re-alignments and economic restructuring on a global scale in a period since 1945" are contexts for him to understand Kureishi as a world writer, whose representation of Marxists,

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[11] As Kaleta claims, "[t]here are no easy divisions in Kureishi's writing, in which non-exclusive groups may one time divide by culture, another time metamorphose by race, split according to gender the next time, and still another time divide by class or generation. In Kureishi's fiction, characters unable to let go of the traditions of the past attempt to live in present-day London" (6). This depiction of complex identity formation reflects universal humanity in two dimensions. While no category can ultimate defines an individual's identity, he or she cannot let go a personal or collective history, those "traditions of the past" that determines a "present-day" character. By "universal identity," a concept so fiercely debased as Eurocentrism by postcolonial studies or as a "grand narrative" by postmodernists, Kaleta probably connotes that the "particular" or "individual" identity is universal, and those universal distinctions are always under structuring forces beyond an individual, those "universal" categories such as gender, race, class, nation, and history.

[12] If not specifically noted, all of my citations from Moore-Gilbert's work are from his *Hanif Kureishi*.

fundamentalism, Americanisation (Moore-Gilbert 5), pop music, and oppositional politics of gender, sexuality and ethnicity (Moore-Gilbert 9-10) are usually orchestrated in London as a world city. Knowing this city is "semi-detached . . . from the nation and its ideas of Britishness, and from the lobal space beyond" (Ball 227), John Clement Ball notices that Kureishi's British-born identity facilitates his understanding of a glocalized London,

> a site compatible with some influential concepts of postmodernity: Jean Baudrillard's 'simulacrum' as the replica of the vanishing 'real'; Fredric Jameson's 'depthlessness' as an aesthetic consequence of late capitalist commodification; David Harvey's 'time-space compression' as the annihilation of boundaries that technology and multinational capital can accomplish. (233)

Ball's highlight of Kureishi's deftness in portraying London as a postmodern city brings into sight Kureishi's authenticity as a Londoner, with an insider's view with which first generation immigrant writers in Britain rarely equip. Acknowledging that Kureishi "writes from the centre" (Thomas 1), Buchanan claims: "Kureishi has to some degree been forced into the role of commentator on the phenomenon of immigration . . . and readily admits that his initial willingness to play this role meant that he profited from being a member of visible minority" (13). That said,

> central features of Kureishi's depiction of English life are arguably not based on stable racial or ethnic identities but instead on the blurring of class boundaries, the rise of feminism, the rise of gay and lesbian movements, and the institutionalization and commercialization of youth culture and popular music, as well as increased postmodern awareness of the arbitrariness and contingency of identity (be it racial, religious, or cultural). (Buchanan 14)

This English life, characterized by so many dimensions of postmodernity (minority movements, boundary crossing, rise of the youth and pop, and contingent identity), also witnesses an era where capital is no more merely related to economy and the bourgeois. As petit narratives gain importance so are cultural, symbolic, and discursive capital related to individuals and subordinate groups. With his recognition of humanity as a complicated, self-conflicting, and decisive determinant, Buchanan handles Kureishi's concern of right and left politics,[13] (anti-)Thatcherism, class antagonism, and hedonism, all salient components buttressing the working of late capitalism, without bypassing issues of race. Seeing that dissemination and variegation of capital have led capitalism from an industrial stage to intervene in, meditate between and interweave different coordinates of identity, many Kureishian characters seize the opportunity to develop their possibilities, among racialization, exploitation, or other forms of inequality, by crossing a boundary loosened for flexible modes of production and consumption. In fact, Kureishi's most noted postcolonial stories usually include middle-class, young ethnic protagonists eager for social climbing or a hedonistic lifestyle. Owing to this trait, Bruce King argues that "it is difficult to understand why postcolonialism should be applied to . . . someone writing about . . . life in England and the difficulties of accepting life's limitations" ("Abdurazak Gurnah and Hanif Kureishi" 93).[14]

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[13] Prime Minister Thatcher remains a powerful image as a New Right representative in *Laundrette*, *Sammy*, and *Album*, while leftist characters, from Terry in *Buddha*, Hussein in *Laundrette* to Brownlow in *Album* look as criticizable as Thatcher regarding their moral consistency. Perhaps Kureishi's (re-)creation of the Right and Left figures aims to show how capitalism remains intact through the antagonism of different ideologies. As John Storey has noticed, "throughout most of the course of the twentieth century, General Elections in Britain were contested by what are now the two main political parties, Labour and Conservative. On each occasion the contest circled around the question, who best can administer capitalism (usually referred to by the less politically charged term 'the economy')—less nationalization, more nationalization; less taxation, more taxation, etc. And on each occasion, the mainstream media concurred. In this sense, the parameters of the election debate are ultimately dictated by the needs and interests of capitalism, manifested as the interests and needs of society in general" (*Cultural Theory* 104).

[14] Even in "Abdurazak Gurnah and Hanif Kureishi: Failed Revolutions," an essay collected in *The Contemporary British Novel Since 1980*, Bruce King claims that to group Kureishi and Gurnah under

Since critics have made comprehensive endeavors in a wide span of different problematics, to what extent and in which way does late capitalism coordinate and redefine the interrelations of different categories are not fully fathomed. Kureishi's works illuminate a changing Britain, where white English men no longer speak for the whole domestic middle class, while no major characters serve in manufacturing industry, a representative form of production in British industrial capitalism. Either soaking themselves in cultural production or consumption, many Kureishian characters rarely "accept life's limitations." Their pursuits of individual lifestyles in work and leisure time, however, are not all positively rendered, just as Kureishi's ambiguous stance toward capitalism in his non-fictional writing. His "moral distrust of capitalism" (Buchanan 24) pushes him to claim "businessmen as semi-criminals" (Kureishi, "Some Time" 136). Translated in his fictional texts, an extreme hedonist like Chili in *The Black Album* is just the victim of a consumerism mainly instigated by capitalist producers. Debuted as early as in 1980, Kureishi's early play *The King and Me* also exposes the narcotic effect of Pop, this time through Marie's escapist indulgence in Elvis Presley's world. On the other hand, the self-empowering creativity of cultural production and entrepreneurship as Asian immigrants' survival strategy lead the author to fabricate numerous enlightening characters, echoing Thatcher's principle of self reliance and economic liberalism. Nasser and his cousin Omar in *My Beautiful Laundrette*, Papa in *The Black Album* all witness the importance of working ethic and creativity in small business, which help them support their family members as outsiders in a hostile host society. Inspired by Bohemian lifestyle of hippy after 1960s, Haroon and his son Karim respectively sell their spiritual and entertaining cultural products in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, while the subculturalists in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* articulate their anarchist community in

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the 'postcolonial' headline in this book is misleading (Buchanan 166).

terms of music and costume innovation. Creativity of the youth culture is with little doubt Kureishi's core value that can stride across political, sexual and class border to liberate individuals from collective restraints. As the author claims, "[f]or a lot of kids, Pop was the only hope for a creative, unpredictable life" (*My Ear* 130), and therefore shall not be degraded as "capitalism in disguise" by "the old Left" ("Requiem" 11). When youth culture and capitalism are reinventing each other since the second half of the twentieth century, Kureishi's alliance with capitalism, despite his subjective reluctance, is inevitable.

Kureishi's intimacy with capitalism accounts for his unavoidable articulation with some aspects of Thatcherism. Overtly criticizing Thatcher's cut of welfare expenditure by Rosie as a frustrating social worker in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*, and the Conservative's homophobia and racism via Omar and Johnny's cross-racial gay love, Kureishi has made Thatcher's promotion of economic liberalism and entrepreneurism creeds for some characters as (would-be) social climbers. He has noticed that

> Those Pakistanis who have worked hard to establish businesses, now vote Tory and give money to the Conservative Party. Their interests are the same as those of middle-class business people everywhere, though they are subject to more jealousy and violence. They have wanted to elevate themselves out of the maelstrom and by gaining economic power and the opportunity and dignity it brings, they have made themselves safe—safer. They have taken advantage of England. ("Rainbow" 30)

As Thatcherism to a large degree reflected a global restructuring of capitalism in a local frame, Kureishi's articulation between the economic and ethnic raises several important questions. If capitalism is deemed as an exploitative system originated in the West, for what reason does the author have his heroes, more often than not with

autobiographical allusions, accumulate their cultural/economic capital and finally transform into yuppies, the hero of postmodern cities? Are not the postcolonial subjects, through such representations, incorporated into the mainstream society and losing their idiosyncrasies? Similar puzzles occur in other characters from the periphery, be they feminists, subculturists, or immigrants of different generation. While most of them enjoy a hedonistic way of life in consumer society, others who insist a different way of life usually do not look attractive, if not promising, in Kureishi's representation.

To understand Kureishi's British society as a distinct configuration, it will be helpful to consult theories of postmodernity and late capitalism that aim to illuminate a sea change of Western society in the same era of Kureishi's postcolonial stories. Below I will appropriate and develop David Harvey's illustration of postmodernity, Fredric Jameson's logic of late capitalism, and Stuart Hall's conception of articulation to analyze how *different* cultural categories in Kureishi's works, such as race, class, gender, and subculture, are *articulated* in a flexible mode of production and consumption. In the following chapters, I will further explore about whether this logic only flattens one's identity, or empowers individuals and communities at certain moments.

Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism

The postwar Britain witnessed a great cultural and economic change. Its demand of cheap labor right after the war brought non-white immigrants from former colonies, mainly the Caribbean and Indian subcontinent. As many host Britons hardly let go of past imperial glories, tensions of cultural conflicts never subside, and are usually heightened by economic recessions and nationalistic stirrings. Through seventies to eighties, ethnic immigrants were accused of stealing "host" Briton's jobs. Despite

racist and national practices in immigration law, people from the former Empire stay, and heterogeneous cultures they brought in ripen into essential parts of Britain now.

Immigration from the Commonwealth is just one of the most conspicuous changes in the British culture, while other changes came in the 1960s are everywhere in Kureishi's novels and scripts.

> [F]ed by new injections of American culture, the easy availability of birth control, and concerns about social and political problems, young people adopted new attitudes, reflected in their love of rock-and-roll, new fashions, the sexual revolution, and support for mass movements. . . . (McCormick 23)

These cultural revolts initiated by the youths are no more simply youth subcultures as they have greatly change the mental and material practices of British citizens, especially when youths in the 1960s finally turn to middles-agers capable of mastering their country. "A self-styled child of the Sixties" (Ramesh), Kureishi comes up with characters appropriating and developing the "uninhibited culture" burgeoning in his childhood (Kaleta 83). Haroon and Eva's hippy hedonism in *Buddha*, Chili and Deedee's pop consumerism in *Album*, and Sammy and Rosie's "[f]reedom plus commitment" as their philosophy of love (*Sammy* 208) are just Kureishi's understanding of stylistic identities as the mature fruit of the cultural revolution. Even in the nineties Kureishi cannot let go this legacy. Buchanan finds ex-rockstar "Rex still idealizes the sixties" (27) in *Gabriel's Gift* (2001), having illusion of the "revolutionary struggle of making the world a better place, with free food and marijuana all round" (Kureishi, *Gabriel* 41). In a more reflexive tone, Jay observes his whole generation in *Intimacy* (1998): "we were the children of innocent consumerism and the inheritors of freedoms won by our seditious elders in the late sixties. . . . We weren't much restrained by morality or religion. Music, dancing and conscienceless

fucking were our totems" (58-59).

The freedom bequeathed by 1960s also welcomes multicultural elements across the globe to hybridize in a local span. A locale-bound list of British culture provided by T.S. Eliot is no longer sufficient, and is added by many globalized and popularized items by Kureishi, including "yoga exercises, going to Indian restaurants, the music of Bob Marley, the novels of Salman Rushdie, Zen Buddhism, the Hare Krishna Temple, as well as the films of Sylvester Stallone, therapy, hamburgers, visits to gay bars, the dole office and the taking of drugs" ("Bradford" 78). Kureishi's 1970s and 1980s London reflects a maturation of revolution in 1960s. Traditionalism and nationalism preached by the Conservative since Thatcher's elective win in 1979 never single-handedly decided the trend of a globalized British culture, which always transgress the boundaries between local and global, low and high culture, so as to fulfill a diverse appetite of post-sixties consumers. With the emergence of musical revolution led by the Beatles and Rolling Stones, and fashion revolution that absorbs cultural elements from the bottom and abroad, Kureishi's Britain witnesses the new empire of "global popular culture" in replace of an Imperial old one. (McCormick 23).

The blurring of national and hierarchical boundaries, as well as the emergence of bottom or peripheral voices such as the female, the lower class or ethnic communities are characterized by theorists as "the condition of postmodernity." In his classic book of the same name, David Harvey finds that the new condition is closely related to shifts in the organization of capitalism and a new experience of time-space relation. Before 1973 Fordism is the representative mode of production, designed by Henry Ford to pay workers with sufficient salary for consuming goods they produce. In other words, it is a producer-oriented pattern of capitalism, aiming to create stable labor and foreseeable consumers. As Harvey claims, Fordism was too rigid to organize and

accumulate capital, and finally transformed into "flexible accumulation" with respect to the labor process and consumption patterns in 1970s. On the other hand, new media and transportation technologies in the postwar era intensify the former process by what Harvey sees as "time-space compression," a postmodern condition that articulates different objects, images, information and people in a simultaneous experience. Since cultural differences across the globe are easier to access, consumers expect to experience more, which further bring about a need to produce daily commodities in various styles, or cultural products with certain distinctiveness to satisfy users with picky appetite. In view of the restructuring of cultural and economic production on the global span, cultural difference is highlighted as a salient parameter to sell goods, services and accumulate capital, while cost control is as indispensable in late capitalism as its predecessor. Immigrant entrepreneurs and cultural workers in Kureishi's stories reflect a postmodern or late capitalist turn in comparison with a relative stable mass production/consumption in the modernity. Time-space compression brings these ex-colonized immigrants in London, either as fortune seekers or cheap labor, while their cultural outputs reflect a de-centered capitalism incessantly absorbs multicultural elements to diversify its production and consumption.

That is how postmodernism, a cultural idea turns to be Fredric Jameson's logic of late capitalism. Harvey's main depiction of postmodernity is mirrored in Jameson's definition of late capitalism. Following Ernst Mandel's periodization of capitalism, Jameson periodizes three phases of capitalism since industrial revolution. Market capitalism, the monopoly stage or the stage of imperialism, and finally, multinational or late capitalism, parallel his "own cultural periodization of the stages of realism, modernism, and postmodernism" ("Postmodernism" 78). In the first phase, markets competed with one another within a country, while the second phase was

characterized by Imperialism, where Western countries expanded and formed Empire by exploiting oversea colonies. "[L]ate or multinational or consumer capitalism, far from being inconsistent with Marx's great nineteenth-century analysis, constitutes, on the contrary, the purest form of capital yet to have emerged, a prodigious expansion of capital into hitherto uncommodified areas" ("Postmodernism" 78). Not all countries in the world have gone through these three phases or have them in the same historic period, yet Jameson's model may account for the historic background of Kureishi's postcolonial stories in Britain, a country as the cradle of industrial revolution, the representative of Imperialism, and an example recording the shift from Fordism to post-Fordism in 1970s. Culture, with its higher form formerly reserved for non-profitable mental activities, is now the raw material for late capitalistic production as well as commodity for consumption. In other words, culture is one of the most conspicuous areas for the expansion of capital. Few writers in contemporary Britain have come up with so many main characters producing, selling and consuming cultures. Featured by a profitable religious guru, an actor, a rock roll star, an interior designer, a entrepreneur who selling his service by aesthetics, an accountant with strong cultural consumerism, and a would-be young novelist hoping to find a work as a reporter, Kureishi's literary world echoes the late capitalist cultural logic, claiming "a prodigious expansion of culture throughout the social realm, to the point at which everything in our social life—from economic value and state power to practices and to the very structure of the psyche itself—can be said to have become 'cultural' in some original and yet untheorised sense" (Jameson, "Postmodernism" 87). The culture logic of late capitalism not merely indicates that everything becomes culture. It reveals a more shocked reality that every culture can be either a commodity or resource for production.

Jameson's demarcation of a late capitalist era is not without challengers. Mike

Featherstone claims that "Jameson is guilty of overgeneralization," and in this way, "differentiation of culture within pre-capitalist societies" can be underestimated in his "well-defined epochs" (58). To evade such defects, Featherstone asks for shifting our focus from "the higher-level relatively abstract systems theorization of capital," to "the way capitalism has been practiced by specific groups, classes, and class fractions" (53). For Steven Connor, Jameson's totalizing periodization of late capitalism "makes no distinction between dominant and oppositional" (47). Furthermore, in Jameson's model of cultural expansion, "there is greatly reduced scope for claiming that within culture there may be ways of thwarting the inexorable rhythms of appropriation and alienation of consumer capitalism" (47). As if he has predicted such oppositions, Jameson explains his stance towards "objection to periodisation, a concern about its possible obliteration of heterogeneity" (*Postmodernism* 5):

> I have felt, however, that it was only in the light of some conception of a dominant cultural logic or hegemonic norm that genuine difference could be measured and assessed. I am very far from feeling that all cultural production today is postmodern in the broad sense I will be conferring on this term. The postmodern is, however, the force field in which very different kinds of cultural impulses—what Raymond Williams has usefully termed "residual" and "emergent" forms of cultural production—must make their way. If we do not achieve some general sense of a cultural dominant, then we fall back into a view of present history as sheer heterogeneity, random difference, a coexistence of a host of distinct forces whose effectivity is undecidable. (*Postmodernism* 6)

In Kureishi's works, we can see how pre-capitalist and early capitalist residual keeps shaping daily experiences of his characters, while a late capitalist turn in 1960s, as I have mentioned above, marked an emergent epoch. Kureishi's orchestration of

characters as part of various social formations also helps exemplify and develop Jameson's relatively abstract theorization. "Distinction between dominant and oppositional," as Connor has asked Jameson to foreground, is vividly and dynamically represented in Kureishi's stories, which at times criticize, and attempt to find ways out of "the inexorable rhythms of appropriation and alienation of consumer capitalism" (Connor 47). That is why I argue, with late capitalism as "a dominant cultural logic or hegemonic norm," the "genuine difference" or distinctiveness of Kureishi's stories "could be measured and assessed."

What Jameson characterizes as expansion of culture is simultaneously the emergence of different cultures originally unseen, oppressed, or marginalized across the globe. Still, when the very idea of culture is revealed in a postmodern proliferation of discourses, simulacra, and commodities, it soon gains its distinctiveness in these miraculous mergers with different materials. An attractive difference in commodities creates the need for consumption, and a difference between identities, social groups or cultures provides reasons for resistance and identification. This is because without difference/differentiation, there can be no referential system of significance and the world turns to be a random play of signifiers resultantly. Antagonism and agreeability between the self and other is a process of articulation and disarticulation, which can never be single-handedly determined by the intention or desire of the concerned subjects. As Stuart Hall maintains, "what we call 'the self' is constituted out of and by difference, and remains contradictory, and that culture forms are, similarly, in that way, never whole, never fully closed or 'sutured'" (145). "Others" are innate in the self, which is therefore an articulation of differences. To understand how different social categories interplay with each other, crosscut each subject positions, and welcome the participation of late capitalism, we have to understand the idea of articulation, which is "not just a thing (not just a connection) but a process of creating connections, much

in the same way that hegemony is not domination but the process of creating and maintaining conensus or of co-ordinating interests" (Slack 114). While articulation "can be understood as a way of characterizing a social formation without falling into the twin traps of reductionism and essentialism" (Slack 112), it helps understand how Kureishi's semi-autonomous characters gains subjectivity and are still subjected to the formation of late capitalism.

Stuart Hall's illustration of articulation might be the most noted and succinct in explaining how unity and difference work together in discursive and social fields. As Hall puts it, "articulate" can on the one hand means to "utter, to speak forth, to be articulate," carrying a sense of "language-ing" and "expressing," and on the other is related to "an 'articulated' lorry (truck): a lorry where the front (cab) and back (trailer) can, but need not necessarily, be connected to one another" (141). Concerning one's expression the first meaning highlights the *difference* of a subject position, while the second meaning implies those differences or subjects can be connected in *unity*. Claiming that "[a]n articulation is . . . the form of the connection that can make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions," Hall highlights the contingency of and heterogeneity within this unity, and asks for a theory of articulation as "both a way of understanding how ideological elements come, under certain conditions, to cohere together within a discourse, and a way of asking how they do or do not become articulated, at specific conjunctures, to certain political subjects. (141).

Hall's theory of articulation also explains a process where a subject is born from articulation between unity and difference within ideological practices. Paradoxically, different subjects find their subjectivity by articulating themselves with a relatively unified social position or ground, for no one makes their "original" identity out of nothing. Discourses, ideologies, political regime and socio-economic practices

pre-exist the birth of any subjects, articulate them with these givens, and therefore they have some source materials to enounce their distinctiveness. For Hall, this process of subjectification via articulation can be illustrated in an Althusserian way: "the theory of articulation asks how an ideology discovers its subject rather than how the subject thinks the necessary and inevitable thoughts which belong to it; it enables us to think how an ideology empowers people"[15] (142). Regarding the ideological effect of articulating people within late capitalism, Storey uses music of the American counterculture as an illuminating example:

> It inspired people to resist the draft and to organize against *Americka's* war in Vietnam; yet, at the same time, its music made profits (over which it had no control) that could be used to support the war effort in Vietnam. The more Jefferson Airplane sang 'All our private property/Is target for your enemy/And your enemy/Is We', the more money RCA Records made. The proliferation of Jefferson Airplane's anti-capitalist politics increased the profits of their capitalist company. . . . The music of the counter culture was not denied expression (ant there can be little doubt that this music produced particular cultural and political effects), but what is also true is that this music was 'articulated' in the economic interests of the war-supporting capitalist music industry. (*Culture Theory* 107)

Insightfully pointing out articulation between counterculture and capitalism, and showing the irony that sales of anti-capitalist albums will be translated into taxes in support of war expenditure, Storey's understanding of "the war-supporting capitalist music industry" is by no means a reductive equation between capitalism and politics. The anti-war movement where Jefferson Airplane is a part helps end the war, while capitalism keeps its evolution, encouraging hegemonic and counter-hegemonic

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[15] This remark surely echoes one of Althusser's famous explanatory definitions of ideology: "*all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects*" (*Lenin* 115).

practices once they ignite production and consumption. As Hall has mentioned above, we have to understand in which "conditions" and "conjunctures" certain ideological elements are articulated to "certain political subjects" (141). It is no coincidence that Kureishi's non-white subjects take advantage of their cultural or economic power to fight back racism under Thatcher's reign, with her economic liberalism and nationalism not so friendly to Commonwealth immigrants. This means in anatomizing Kureishi's postcolonial stories, we have to pay heed to why individuals of similar and different social formations are articulated together, why one is drawn to a certain productive position, why consumption is so pervasive a practice that different subject positions hardly get rid of, and how space serves to be a mechanism of articulation and disarticulation.

Kureishi's rendition of articulation can be concerned in two levels. First, by characterizing internal discrepancies within any social categories, as well as certain similarities among different communities, Kureishi delineated misunderstandings, stereotyping, commodification, conflicts and violence resulting from homogenizing the differences and ignoring the similarities. This is because the process of articulating differences into a social formation, be it race, gender, class, or nation, "requires the establishment of *limits*, and no limit can be drawn without, simultaneously, positing what is *beyond* it" (Selg and Ventsel 174). Antagonistic exclusion of the Other is what follows when different selves are articulated to reach their goal. To put it in simple terms, to cohere "us" you have to exclude "them" either as rivals or not-us (Selg and Ventsel 174). Racism in Kureishi's postcolonial stories is the most conspicuous example, when South Asian immigrants or their descents are named as wogs or Pakis, accused of stealing jobs of the "natives" and disturbed by verbal or physical violence. However, there are more episodes where Kureishi shows exclusion can work in more latent way. In *Buddha* Karim and his father are welcomed by liberal whites because of

their physical differentiation. Hence, despite of their westernized lifestyle, they just cannot be “us” in many occasions and are “consumed,” regarding the exotic service they provided, within Orientalist imaginations. While in postmodern or postcolonial theories the excluded other usually refers to ethnic or sexual minorities, *Sammy* shows an ex-dictator, no matter how powerful he used to be in a newly decolonized nation, can be excluded in the postmodern London owing to his different value system. Kureishi also considers irreducible differences within an articulated unity. In opposition to far right practices of racism, there are so many white characters who not only befriend minorities in Kureishi’s stories, but also support anti-racist activities. A homologous concept such as “black” is also regarded as dubious, when the Anglo-Pakistani Karim in *Buddha* rejects it provided by a black actress. Cross-racial similarities are omnipresent in Kureishi’s plots to challenge the border erected for different unities, when his readers/audiences find inner city residents of different skin colors loot together in a riot in *Sammy*, and yuppies of different generation and ethnicity are busy dressing themselves up with costumes provided by western fashion industry.

At the second level of Kureishian articulation, the author takes articulating differences as a survival strategy especially for his ethnic characters in late capitalism. Here the verb articulate still means to “enunciate” and to “hinge” at once. Late capitalism needs differences *enounced* in both end of production and consumption, for manufacturers and service providers nowadays are busy differentiating their products from others to attract the eyesight of picky consumers. To achieve this goal, different parts of a producing unit needs to be *hinged* to reach a flexible mode of accumulation, as well as to provide differentiated goods and services for heterogeneous consumers. Paralleling this economic process is how social agents produce their identities, cultural belongings and social positions by hinging on the logic of late capitalism. To

enounce their difference, Kureishi's young ethnic heroes usually succeed the economic and cultural capital from their fathers or elder relatives, hence capable of translating postcolonial experiences into distinguished cultural outputs (like the actor Karim in *Buddha* and the novelist Shahid in *Album*). To join the mainstream mode of economic production (like the entrepreneur Omar in *Laundrette* and the accountant Sammy in *Sammy*), these heroes turn to their peer groups, unified either against the cultural barrenness of middle-class Philistines, or to find a way out of an ethnically hostile environment. Readers usually find ethnic protagonists in Kureishi's postcolonial stories deeply involved in postwar British subcultural practices, befriending host whites and minorities with similar fringe lifestyle, and in a Bildungsroman-like process discovering their direction of life. This process of growth is also an adoption of the logic of late capitalism: to know how to pronounce one's difference in a fragmented postmodern society and to connect oneself with different social/human capitals. All these efforts more or less enable heroes to locate their cultural identities in these stories.

Articulating Differences in Kureishi's Postcolonial Stories

Shadows of late capitalism and racism in a postcolonial Britain frequently appear in Kureishi's writings. However, not all his stories explore the articulation of both themes specifically, especially in regard to the productive and consumptive role of ethnic characters. Some early plays are led by white characters: *The King and Me* is a critique of the narcotic cultural industry, while *Outskirts* explores attitudes toward racism varied with social mobility of its characters. Though *Borderline* and *Birds of Passage* involve anti-racist strategies and activities of non-white characters, their touch of late capitalism, in terms of its commodification of culture and human relationship, is relatively light. Accentuation either on white (sub-)culture or

resistance from diasporic communities can be found in screenplays like *London Kills Me* (1991) and *My Son the Fanatic* (1997). In his middle works such as *Love in a Blue Time* (1997), *Midnight All Day* (1999), and the novella *Intimacy* (1998), Kureishi reduces his representation of racial politics and immerses himself largely in midlife crisis, including a retrospect to hedonist consumerism forged in his early life and still dominant in the end of twentieth century.

Thus said, the reason why I choose *My Beautiful Laundrette*, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, *The Black Album*, and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* to discuss here is about their articulation of postcolonial protagonists with an emerging logic of late capitalism, where they are consumerized yet paradoxically gain subjectivity, about how the young author try to find his voice out in the British literary circle, and about how he finally succeeds, as his young ethnic heroes, through putting that logic into practice. Despite of highlighting traumas of racism on his ethnic characters, the author shows how they have been products of contemporary English lives, and how identity of different communities comes from articulation of different, even conflicting components in a late capitalistic society. Theories related to late capitalism are not to controvert the vast contributions of postcolonial or diasporic readings on Kureishi's works, as the author himself oftentimes interpreted his stories in this way. Related with postmodernity and postmodernism, analytical works of late capitalism are to deal with economic, as well as cultural structure through which Kureishi, his characters and critics (including myself) are mediated.

Instead of placing these four stories chronically in this dissertation, I will explore them in a sequence for analytical expediency. *My Beautiful Laundrette* will be first investigated, for it foregrounds Thatcherism as ideological practices through which social, cultural and economic forces are channeled and articulated. The beautiful launderette in this screenplay is in the mean time a small business encouraged by

Thatcher's economic liberalism, and an evidence of a late capitalist expansion of culture into a relatively traditional form of service industry. To elucidate this change in Britain, I take the transition of identity of the white protagonist Johnny as a vantage point. In each period of his transition into a good laborer, prevailing ideologies, working ethic, mainstream values and dominant modes of production help fabricate his identities into the tapestry of late capitalism, transforming his racist past, homosexuality and working class background into magnifiers of productivity.

After going through the renowned enterprise culture run by the Subcontinent immigrants in *Laundrette*, I investigate articulations of difference in the realm of cultural production by *The Buddha of Suburbia*'s four main characters. I argue that the main characters' cultural practices from the margin meet the changing productive logic of 1970s Britain. Different careers of the main characters, such as marketing of Buddhism, performance of rock music, acting of ethnic characters, and interior design, are not only means to produce sensibilities for consumers seeking distinct commodities, but also cultural capital through which they approach identities as cultural celebrities. This sort of cultural accumulation in private and public lives has witnessed how production and consumption entangle and articulate different cultural practices still prevalent in our era.

Recent cultural studies have argued that consumption helps articulate personal and group identities. Consumerism as the defining trait of postmodernity and late capitalism is one of the most important themes in *The Black Album*. In a wide spectrum of ethnic and white characters, Kureishi places fundamentalism and consumerism at each end, presenting a late 1980s London where the formation of identities heavily relies on different attitudes toward consumption. Consumerism does not merely lies upon the symbolic exchange of commodities. Its mechanism depends on the ethic of the (late) capitalism, a dual logic that includes reason/calculation and

emotion/dream. In Colin Campbell's terms, these two logics respectively refer to the working and romantic ethic, maintaining the function of a capitalistic society on the end of production and consumption. Not all subjects are willing to accept the allurement of consumerism. In fear of being articulated into a western culture that inclines to treat them as second-rate citizens, a group of Islamic fundamentalists re-articulates themselves against a demonized West with an ancient belief to eliminate their internal discrepancies. After examining the identity formation of a group of Muslim fundamentalist and destructive effects brought about by addictive consumerism, Kureishi suggests the important balance between working and romantic ethic in the consumer society.

While the previous chapters aim to elucidate articulating differences as a must for survival, chapter four about *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* is mainly about the exclusive effects in practices of articulation, whether what is articulated is labeled as a nation, a family, or a minority group. Space, therefore, becomes a contested terrain where different subjects hook together to obviate others, and incommensurable differences innate within an individual or group are revealed. Moreover, this story attests a continuity lies between capitalism and late capitalism, like the overlap between modernity and postmodernity. Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's triad of conceptualized spaces and David Harvey's dissection of the postmodern condition, I consider spatial contestations of modern subjects represented by characters in this work. Following the route of Baudelaire, Harvey centralizes the experience of modernity as the basis of the contemporary cultural reactions, with various strategies set to orient the ephemeral while secure the immutable at the same time. Juxtaposing this insight with Lefebvre's poignant dissection of different moments of space formation, I try to anatomize how individuals in this screenplay, whether as oppressive governors, the economic-political powerless or the defiant middle class,

contest spaces to ensure a demarcated identity against all the mutability and uncertainty in the post/modern condition. In an analysis conducted by a duet between theoretical and literary discourses, this chapter also renders the dichotomization of the officials and citizens as the spatial oppressors and oppressed dubious. Since in various forms of articulation, different groups find their power in excluding antagonistic others. Lumping together Pakistan and Britain in 1980s as two nationalistic regimes, unjustifiable violence of the oppressed rioters, and exclusive desire of the leftist bourgeois together in terms of their usage of space, I argue that contestation for space in Kureishi's screenplay has exposed how commonly oppressions occur in the private and public realm, and hinted how difficult a utopian solution for space usage is achieved. Difficulties of disarticulation from late capitalism is manifested by a utopian subcultural group in this screenplay, while pronouncing/ensuring one's difference in terms of individuality, community, nationality, or other forms of beliefs usually brings about demarcation and exclusion still rampant in a postmodern society.

Chapter One

Subculture, Ideology, and the Modes of Production in Late Capitalism: *My Beautiful Laundrette*

> My uncle had these launderettes. And he was a Pakistani entrepreneur and he would take me around these launderettes when I was starting to write. And he would say, "You know, you should run one of these, because they're the *future*." "Everyone's got dirty clothes, they're going to want them to be washed. Why don't you think about doing this?" (Kureishi, "Interview: Hanif Kureishi on London" 39, my emphasis)

My Beautiful Laundrette, Kureishi's 1985 screenplay and film of the same name, dismantles the undercurrents that determine and threaten Thatcherite policies in Britain during the 1980s. While Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher tried to drive her nation back to its glory days, many of her fellow white citizens, despite their presumed status as central constituents of the New Britain, lived in the shadow of economic recession, high unemployment and ethnic conflict. In Kureishi's representation of the new multi-ethnic Britain, white protagonist Johnny plays a role no less important than his lover Omar, a critics' favorite because of his biracial origin, bisexual tendency, and entrepreneurial ambition. Development of their interracial relationship represents the struggle of a young white Briton who cannot claim any economic or social advantage from his class and ethnicity. As a working class gay reflecting a facet of London contrary to the stereotype of Englishmen as heterosexual,

gentle and middle-class, Johnny becomes a pivotal character whose identity transition marks a late capitalist hegemony joining postcoloniality, street subculture, and the service industry as the mainstream mode of production. In Johnny's search for a new identity, a racist discourse, through which he vents his past frustration with life, gradually scatters. Forsaking past constructions of whiteness, Johnny makes his interracial employer/lover orient himself to an immigrant mode of production unavoidably articulated with a dominant one, characterized by private ownership of means of production and distribution in a market economy. In this sense, Kureishi not only redirects a delinquent white toward a successful "future" built upon capitalist soil, as Kureishi's uncle suggests, but also marks a restructured Britain politicians and a multi-ethnic populace find themselves adapting to.

I divide Johnny's identity formation into four stages in this chapter, in each of which his subculturist identity inevitably hooks the mainstream. In the first stage, ideological practices of Johnny's far right group leaks their unreflexive acceptance of racist attitudes of the Conservatives in the early '80s. In addition, despite that he lives as a squatter and gang member at the social margin, Johnny finds his Anglo identity articulated with Britain's glorious past, keeping himself from self-destructive activities and conserving him as a part of reserve army of labor. Secondly, Johnny's reaction in his reunion with Omar exposes a sense of inadequacy as a jobless lad and his regret of past racism. Hegemony of late capitalism in the third stage witnesses the utmost force that articulates characters of different ethnicity and class in this screenplay, while in the last stage, Johnny's rejection of violence from his ex-gang group disarticulates his identity from the margin and relocates him mainly in the mainstream.

Subculture and Ethic Structure Endogenous in (Late) Capitalism

As Johnny adjusts to the emptiness and subsequent violence of deviant street subculture, the first part of this study considers his initial identity in terms of both the subculture and ethic structure endogenous within capitalism. This subsection holds that Britain, with the longest history of capitalism, has internalized a self-regulating apparatus (an ethic brake) for its citizens, be street gangs, right wing National Fronts or neo-Nazis. For Johnny and his buddies, this minimum morality keeps them from going to extremes, after they suffer various instances of emptiness, with unemployment as just the most conspicuous.

Johnny's introduction as a gang member, squatter and former Neo-Nazi suggests a subcultural world in sharp contrast to Thatcherite ideals and capitalist manners.[16] To consider this world is to examine a dialectically formative process placing the subculture at the margin and mainstream culture at the center of public life. The idea of subculture could be understood by how this term is coined. To highlight the extraordinariness of a cultural group, the prefix "sub" is added to the relatively neutral "culture," for which the mainstream culture stands as its representative. The prefix "sub" ascribes a secondary rank to cultural activities related with subcultural groups. It implies that in the cultural stratum they are *subordinate*, *subaltern*, or even *subterranean*. Despite this, research motivated solely by this prefix is at risk of appearing one-sided. Subculture, as the word itself suggests, is "subordinate to," i.e., a subdivision or subspecies of mainstream culture. To some extent, these two cultural forms shape and are shaped from different ideologies "set up in what are ultimately

[16] Thatcherism, a term usually explained and defined by Margaret Thatcher's opponents and critics, has economic liberalism and authoritarian populism as its most conspicuous facets. For the former, Thatcher asks her government to keep a free market at work, with policies such as monetarism, privatization, and tax cuts. Paralleling the economic are ideological principles summoning her citizens back to the economically, socially and politically great nation Britain used to be. This, including principles of self-reliance, individualism and enterprise culture in economy, nationalism, and the nuclear family as the foundation of society (in sharp contrast to post-1960s sexual permissiveness), attempts to recapture the past glory of Britain in global politics.

antagonistic relations," being that "no ideology takes shape outside a struggle with some opposing ideology" (Macdonell 33).[17] Like their supportive ideologies, subculture and mainstream culture could not exist without each other. Mainstream culture identifies itself through its conception of subculture as the *other* culture—envisaging it as "disenfranchised, disaffected and unofficial" (Thornton, "General Introduction" 2). In contrast, subculture develops its cultural identity through counter-discourses pointing out mainstream's negation, ignorance, fetishization or commodification of itself. This generates an ideological boundary where it can redefine both itself and its homogenized idea of the dominant center. With the aid of economical, legal, social, and political maneuvering, mainstream culture ensures the survival of subculture, so as to draw a border demarcating the scope of itself. However, the border between subculture and mainstream culture is never clear. Comprised of multiple discourses, but maintaining a capitalistic base structure, individuals labeled as different cultural groups may at times share similar ideologies or taken-for-granted beliefs, which do not impede self-identification with their given cultural attributes.[18] A parallel example, as Diane Macdonell points out, is

[17] My use of ideology here is Althusserian. Rather than treating it as species of false consciousness like some Marxists do, I regard ideology as a distinctive practice that helps people construct their understanding of the real world. As ideologies are like boundaries shaped by interactions of different thinking or discursive practices, a counter-ideology is an ideology that helps its holders make sense of their positions in the world. By relating oneself with certain ideologies, subjects are endowed with practical identities.

[18] The idea of subculture originated from the Chicago School's studies of delinquency and developed in the Birmingham School's "distinction between collectivist working-class subcultures and individualistic middle-class countercultures" (Muggleton 6). For David Muggleton, it is now defined as a "modern" concept with "characteristics of stasis, homogeneity and demarcation," and is thus insufficient in explaining postmodern cultural phenomena. In order to include flux, fragmentation and fluidity of youth cultural membership especially after 1980s, critics nowadays have come up with post-subculturalist terms, such as "tribe," "lifestyle," "club-culture," "supermarket of style," and "scene." The clear-cut boundary between subculture and mainstream culture, and even within subcultures, has gradually broken down accordingly. However, it does not follow that a mainstream-against-margin model or vice versa is no longer workable. In her *Club Cultures* (1995), a study of post-subcultures now as canonical as Dick Hebdidge's studies of Punk in the 1970s, Sarah Thornton maintains the clubbers' antagonistic relation with the mainstream: "Although most clubbers and ravers characterize their own crowd as mixed or impossible to classify, they are generally happy to identify a homogeneous crowd to which they don't belong. And while there are many 'other' scenes, most clubbers and ravers see themselves as outside and in opposition to the 'mainstream'" (99). While

Foucault's interpretation of some liberation movements:

> The resistances of women, of gays and of others, as Foucault outlines them, are libertarian, within bourgeois politics. They aim to change ideological practices and the effects of power linked to discourse, without being particularly concerned about basic economic relations or looking to build socialism. (20)

As for Johnny, his initial living style and related ideologies violate Thatcherite values. Roaming on the street all day and taking refuge in empty houses, Johnny pursues no individual achievement or sound family life. However, his working class background never fails to project a shadow on his life. Since the working class is on the front line of production, members of it are inescapably endowed with corresponding ideologies in capitalism to facilitate its mode of production and consumption.

To scrutinize Johnny as a subcultural lad is to clarify how he differs from and resembles the mainstream culture. Johnny's subaltern identity is marked by his homelessness, unemployment, and gang membership. Except for the physical work Omar and his uncle Nasser later offer Johnny, white main characters in this film are usually unemployed, while those of color are employees or employers. Following Johnny's unemployment is homelessness. Family conditions of Pakistani immigrants are mentioned respectively, as Johnny and his white companions occupy no residence matching the image of home envisioned by mainstream British culture. Kureishi endows Asian characters with various types of housing that can correspond to those in white British culture. Overlooking busy railway lines stretching from the suburbs to

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the margin can be deemed as "Other" to justify superiority of the mainstream self, the marginal self, exemplified by post-subculturists, asserts its hipness or idiosyncrasy against a homogenized mainstream. For more discussion about the evolution from subculture to post-subculture studies, see Andy Bennett and Keith Kahn-Harris' *After Subculture*, and Rupter Weinzierl and David Muggleton's *The Post-subcultures Reader*.

downtown London, Omar and Papa's apartment represents a material Firewall guarding a sense of safety for the immigrant family. Nasser's grand villa and the sumptuous flat of his business associate Salim, on the other hand, function as more than harbors for these ethnic immigrants. They are also symbolic of their success as Asian entrepreneurs capable of enjoying white luxury. Yet Johnny, suffering from no racial discrimination or harassment from the above characters, is unable to seek a permanent residence in his *home*land. In the very beginning of the screenplay, Johnny and his gang-pal Genghis take shelter in a squat surrounded by freezing cold air. As the two are evicted by the legal owner Salim, Johnny asks Genghis to "[move] *house*" (*Laundrette* 10, my emphasis), implying that physical existence of the building cannot provide them a sense of security in the *home*. Genghis's intention to fight (*Laundrette* 10), though ironic since he is weakened by flu and has no legitimate right to stay, reflects the squatters' reluctance to live a wandering life and their hidden wish for a home. The half-involuntary homelessness of the gangs is due to their unemployment and reflected in their constant street roaming. Forsaking a domicile to guard his private life, and reluctant or unable to take working positions that help earn material resources, Johnny stands in marked contrast to the image of an independent, responsible Englishman favored by leading politicians and public opinion, hence reducing himself to a subculture apt to fall into delinquency.

Yet Johnny's subcultural group still varies from other out-of-the-mainstream cultures. His gang is not like ethnic communities excluded from then rampant British nationalism. Nor does it resemble punks and rock bands, sometimes positively represented by mainstream media via their visual and acoustic art. Homelessness and unemployment characterize the material plights of gangs. While subculture and mainstream culture are never black and white, members of a subculture, if not with a positive attitude to their distinctiveness, tend to collapse in the face of a powerful

value system. Pakistani immigrants remain in the margin, yet other ethnic characters in this screenplay seldom face the threat of unemployment and homelessness, consequently maintaining an economic base upon which their ways of life are stabilized and sustained. Racism and its related attacks could reduce their sense of security, but since racists' objects are neither ethnic immigrant lifestyles nor their faiths, their value systems soundly endure. As for subcultural members in the screenplay, their working class heredity deprives them of, or reduces, their access to cultural prominence. What is worse, their shabby living standard contributes little to individualistic consumptions that help to confirm one's distinctiveness in the consumer society. Except for a gang sporting punk hairstyles, street gangs in the film are not showy with regard to apparel and appearance. They also demonstrate no cultural or artistic creativity as rock 'n' roll musicians, whose voices linger in the critical tradition against mainstream culture. The latter two *choose* to oppose bourgeois taste by constructing distinctive lifestyles respected by relatively radical members of the mainstream culture, such as the new middle class engaging in cultural industry.[19] In comparison to the two former groups, gangs in the screenplay are found in a different part of the subculture.[20] Reluctant to accept low working positions in

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[19] In *Subculture: the Meaning of Style*, Dick Hebdige compares gangs and subculture: "Though it is important to distinguish between the delinquent *gang* (small, with a specific local recruitment, a local set of loyalties, and a strong commitment to 'machismo', subterranean values and illegal activities) and the *subculture* which is altogether broader, looser, less strictly defined by class and regional membership and less literally involved in law-breaking, there are obvious connections (e.g. gangs like the Quinton Boys, a group of Midlands skinheads, can exist within subcutures). Moreover, the two terms are virtually synonymous in the popular mythology. Unfortunately, the confusion that follows from this association (about class, violence, etc.) has all too often been re-produced in academic work because, as we have seen, the analysis of subculture grew in large part directly *out of* the study of delinquent street gangs" (180-81). I categorize gang members in this screenplay into the idea of subculture because their ideological stance against the mainstream and immigrants is clear. They differ from other subcultural forms through illegal activities, group actions, and usually class distinctiveness. The screenplay also mentions Johnny's involvement in violence several times (racist or not), including his participation in burglary and drug deals. Gang activity is enough to differ and vex common longing for stability, hence earning them the designation of subculture. The reason why this delinquent group becomes a popular representation of subculture is probably because its illegal behavior angers the multitude most.

[20] In the spectrum of subculture, skinheads (skin) might be most closely related to gangs in this play. Craig O'Hara's comparison between punks and skinheads in his *The Philosophy of Punk* is of much

legitimate production, they prefer lifestyles that identify them with other value systems. Although these gangs apparently have no internal monologue, episodes manifest where they do everything to hide their nihility. When the gang first rumbles together in this screenplay, Kureishi has a youngish *white* busker "lying stoned in the doorway of a boarded-up shop, his guitar next to him." These gangs "know the collapsed BUSKER. He could even be a member of the gang" (*Laundrette* 13). Because of the busker's unwillingness to forsake his musical dream, symbolized by the guitar, he instead becomes a solitary vagrant. His sufferance is a consequence of his refusal to face the disillusionment surrounding his dream. For him, joining the gang means abandoning the possibility of becoming a successful musician, despite that affiliation with the group will help him realize his new identity. Likewise, the gang could be as deflated as the busker if they did not find something, even if it was the wrong thing, to paper over the essential emptiness of their life. The gang members know all too well that they are not likely to follow the route of The Beatles—leaders of a British subculture who became gods of popular culture in the 1960s. Favoring desire rather than artistic effort in the shaping of their cultural prominence, the gang

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reference value: "That they [punk and skin] shared the same musical tastes and often the same haircuts (shaved heads) enabled the media and ignorant spectators to lump them together. This has proven a large mistake because of the growing radical politics of Punks and the equally growing racism and ignorance of Skinheads. The middle and late eighties showed Skinheads to be the enemies of a constructive Punk scene with constant violence at concerts and ties to racist organizations. . . . These original Skins in England's early sixties were not anti-black, but were still tarnished with racism. There was 'an influx of Pakistani immigrants into England in the mid-60's, providing a cheap labor force. Factory owners found it much easier to exploit the ignorant immigrants'. . . . This resulted in the unemployment of many of the Skinheads and their parents. The combination of boredom, poverty, and frustration, provoked Skins to direct their anger at the new immigrant workers. . . . Skins formed bands as well and sang of losing jobs to foreigners and the pride they took in being English working class. While these bands exhibited much less skill than even the earliest of Punk bands, they became quickly popular amongst both the working class and the organizations who saw that they could exploit them. Fascist organizations such as the National Front funded Skinhead bands in order to draw new members and use them as 'soldiers' in acts of harassment and violence. By 1978-79, the English Skinheads had 'their own uniform, music, and a new philosophy based on soccer, pubs, racism and fascism'" (49-51). Gangs in Kureishi's screenplay share racist attitudes with skinheads, exemplified among other things by Johnny's attendance at a National Front's protest against ethnic immigrants. The working class background of both groups further justifies opposition to immigrant workers for class interests. There is also a misunderstanding between punk and skinhead in this screenplay when Nasser considers having his nephew Omar manage a launderette, he worries "that four punks drowned [him] in a washing machine" (*Laundrette* 26).

members find an outlet for their angst in drugs, which allows them build their own fantastic world in place of their jobless and homeless reality. Roaming together is the most characteristic activity of the gang. Their need to be gazed at leaves the gang members in the street. As the passerby fears them, they belittle the ordinary world as weak and find their machismotic self-image at the same time. In view of their insistence for communal identity, and a need for distinctiveness, the ideology of this subcultural group does not lean toward the left, which declares equality and human dignity for all subjects exploited in the age of capitalism. Suffering from working class unemployment and unable to accept New Right discourses held by political Conservatives at that time, they choose the Extreme Right as their core ideology. Gang leader Genghis favors "right-wing newspapers" (*Laundrette* 13), and his lads manifest their racist tendency through frightening ethnic immigrants at night on the streets of South London (*Laundrette* 23). Racism motivates their street roaming. By bullying ethnics lacking social advantages in British society, gang members get to forget their lower class heritage by imagining a cultural superiority predestined for all white Britons.

In the initial scene of the screenplay, graffiti painted on boarded-up windows shows a paradoxical relationship between the ideologies of subculture and mainstream culture. Lacking well-cultivated thoughts in their critique of society, graffiti, supposedly written by Genghis's group, reflects ideologies of the parental culture. As Dick Hebdige notes, "graffiti can make fascinating reading. They draw attention to themselves. They are an expression both of impotence and a kind of power—the power to disfigure" (*Subculture* 3). The impotence of graffiti-writers is inherent in the writing itself. They have no capital to place them in mass media or have them published. Moreover, the three sentences from the subcultural group have little power to disfigure the objects they oppose. The first sentence, "Your greed will be the death

of us all," points to the atmosphere of high unemployment in 1980s Britain. If we refer to the author's own introduction of the script, where he states this film is about Thatcherism (*Laundrette* 5), a New Right ideology reliant on the policy of a free market and sequential elevation of capitalist power, the greedy people mentioned in this graffiti refers to Thatcher and those who benefit from her policies. Yet unemployment is never an economic plight completely resulting from governmental policy. Lacking colonies as stable markets for Empire, and facing competition from low labor-cost countries as producers, Britain has lost its advantage in domestic and global markets, hence suffering from recession even before Thatcher's administration comes to power. The first anti-capitalist slogan attributes resulting unemployment to unnamed persecutors, revealing a lack of substantial understanding of its real enemy. In order to vent the anger of their pitiable predicament, there has to be someone responsible for the gang's condition. Whether they choose to be jobless or are forced to be is never clarified.

Not until the second slogan is taken into consideration does the identity of these greedy persecutors loom. While the lads assert that they "will defeat the running wogs of capitalism" (*Laundrette* 9), the killers of their economic lives are believed to be Asian entrepreneurs. Nasser, Salim, and Omar team up with their business empire which earns them money. As Nasser's daughter points out, Omar is "greedy like [her] father" (*Laundrette* 36). For them, greediness is a just brand for this family business, though it creates working positions for lower class people, be they black or white. Without these "wogs of capitalism," working-class lads have less chance of gaining employment and earning money. Judging from actions and speeches given by the white lads throughout the screenplay, only Asian immigrants are attacked and blamed, while designers and executors of economic policy—the Conservative government—are never cursed. Knowing nothing about the macroeconomic condition

of Britain at that time, Asian entrepreneurs are the sole scapegoat for unemployed lads. This stigmatization is not far from the attitude of Thatcher's government on ethnic immigration. "Over the period 1979-88, the Government steadfastly refused to raise the importance of unemployment in its hierarchy of values. The response was to deny consistently that there was anything the Government could do, apart from attempting to improve the operations of the market" (Ashton 20). With immigrant labor exploited by native employers for its low cost, politicians' remarks divert contested focus from economic to immigration policy. "Resistance against the stigma of lower-class positioning and severe economic pressures led some white Britons to rally to the anti-immigrant platform that politicians like Powell and Thatcher helped to popularize" (Dyer 111). As Johnny has witnessed, there are "people who say Pakis just come here to hustle other people's lives and jobs and houses" (*Laundrette* 41). These two slogans show that a subcultural group can share the same racist ideologies as some mainstream Britons, ignoring a restructuring of production on the global level.

After attributing all faults to Asian capitalists, the gang justifies their reliance on drugs as a spiritual outlet. "Opium is the opium of the unemployed," a superficial paraphrase of Marx and the last sentence of the graffiti, depicting rampant drug use by the gang members. Opium was once a colonial device exported to China by the British Empire to raise capital for its development and expansion. In the face of economic challenges induced by a newly globalized world, drug users find quite different reasons for their abuse. While one's identity is determined through one's position as a consumer and a producer, these lads, unable to work as laborers and hoping to forget their consumption of the nation's welfare budget, deify the drug. As a necessity of the unemployed, drug abuse veils reluctance to enter the field of mainstream production. This is because the cost of buying is no less great than that of

of finding a job, not to mention the risk brought on by their illegal means of "gathering." When their desire is out of control of the disciplinary logic of capitalism, drug abuse dominates them, further hampering their recognition of the environment outside their squat. As the first and second slogan of the graffiti overlap with ideologies of ruling politicians, the third one exposes its writer's escapism. By attributing all evils to greedy Asian entrepreneurs, the lads find themselves morally acceptable in their drug abuse and its related crimes. The graffiti in *My Beautiful Laundrette*, with all their intention of accusing their dominant persecutors, either fall back to the ideological soil of mainstream culture where Thatcherism is a part, or resemble parries that justify their escapism.

Having long belonged to the group led by Genghis, Johnny shares the same ideologies as his gang pals, including racism. Yet he also befriends the biracial Omar whom he's known since the age of five and then falls in love with him. Johnny's previous shift from Omar to the gangs is a turning point no less important than his reunion with Omar as a lover. His shift of identification is observed in terms of the characteristics of adolescence. A teenager, if not disciplined enough by surveillant apparatuses like the family or school, is apt to be misled and drawn down other fetching roads. Omar recalls Johnny's glory days when "[he was] the one at school. The one they liked" (*Laundrette* 29). With peers that looked up to him, Johnny could easily organize his clique, and even a gang with deviant members. At an age characterized by a most impetuous temperament, the teenager Johnny finds the Neo-Nazi group provides him a purpose—the goal of defending his dignified homeland from colonized immigrants. Battle cries of the group and mutual intensification among members further his belief that the route he chooses is something more serious than his intimacy with Omar. Therefore, a racist youth like Johnny could hate ethnic immigrants as a whole despite former intimate relations with

his ethnic friend/lover. Lacking knowledge to examine socio-economical conditions of the time, speeches by racist politicians to those who support them, guide Johnny's impression of the colored. In his 1986 essay, "The Rainbow Sign," Kureishi mentions the origin of Johnny's character—an actual school friend nicknamed Bog Brush, or B. B. The young Kureishi had joined B. B. and his fellows in their "roaming." They also attacked shops and pilfered things. After he learned of their racist activities, he withdrew. Kureishi's recollection shows how much hurt results from collective racist violence: "The lads congregated to hunt down Pakistanis and beat them. Most of them I was at school with. The others I'd grown up with. I knew their parents. They knew my father" (11).[21] Racist attacks disintegrated Kureishi's comradeship since he could not ultimately forsake his kindred minority status in Britain. Contrary to this, Johnny chooses to lacerate his ethnic friend in the screenplay in the excitement brought on by hate, a feeling of racial superiority, and immature ignorance of conflicting standpoints that leave him with the white lads. While Johnny is surrounded by family members and school buddies of the same ethnicity, Omar's single voice has trivial importance.

Since delinquent subculture is a branch of mainstream culture, it inherits the same ethic structure endogenous to capitalism. The gang group to which Johnny belongs is composed of members with working-class origins—the class of the masses at the bottom of the social hierarchy in capitalistic society. Therefore the ethic these lads hold do not totally escape the value systems of their parents. An ethic, like an ideology, is beyond the rational formulation of consciousness. As Althusser points out,

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[21] This reminds me of one of my good friends whose parents are immigrants from China after the Nationalists (Kuomingtang, or KMT) retreated to Taiwan. In his childhood, he learned fluent Taiwanese because if he was unable to do so, he would be scolded as a "Mainlander," a term labeled Chinese immigrants moving in Taiwan after 1949, yet deemed derogative by some grass-rooted children in his childhood. Yet these kids, whose ancestors stayed in Taiwan for many generations, do not forsake their friendship with my friend. The way my friend's childhood buddies despise groups of different language, yet make a friend of him at the same time, is not far from the attitudes and double standards of B.B. and his gangs to the immigrant community and young Kureishi.

> . . . ideology has very little to do with 'consciousness'. . . . It is profoundly *unconscious*. . . . Ideology is indeed a system of representation, but in the majority of cases these representations have nothing to do with 'consciousness': they are usually images and occasionally concepts, but it is above all as *structures* that they impose on the vast majority of men [sic], not via their 'consciousness'. They are perceived-accepted-suffered cultural objects and they act functionally on men via a process that escapes them. (233)

People do not always learn a ethic consciously. Many are placed in an ethic structure and come to believe these principles of action. The middle class kids in this film learn representation, images, and concepts of their identity in a structure composed by mainstream culture and subcultures. This structure has its own logic of ethic which tells the lads what to do if they are to stay within or overcome their present condition. Despite being labeled as subcultural members, no delinquent lad can shake off this set of ethic by creating a different one. Though they *perceive* and *suffer* from it, they still have to *accept* it. Britain, with the longest history of capitalism, has internalized a self-regulating apparatus for its citizens. It acts like a brake, hindering society members from complete destruction. Otherwise, production and consumption that supports capitalistic structure would cease to work. Ethical subjects, however, would not be set into action merely by the abstract logic of capitalism. They are in need of perceivable guidance as their motivation. Thatcherism is an ideology constructed unconsciously, to a certain degree working upon British citizens beyond their awareness. On the one hand, it upholds personal freedom and laissez faire. On the other, it asks people to uphold their self-respect and responsibility, for they inherit the cultural glory of the British Empire. Guarded by these ideologies, the ethic-brake of British capitalism in this screenplay prevents all characters from killing one another and bringing about complete self-destruction. For these white

British lads, they do not reject the dole from public welfare merely because its provider is a governmental organization belonging to the mainstream culture. They will not resort to beggary because of their own dignity. When Johnny sighs that the lads "were just like [Omar]," an ethnic youth at the bottom of British society, Genghis rejects his idea, saying "[Johnny doesn't] believe in nothing" (*Laundrette* 13). Genghis's negation of their group's class inferiority results from Thatcher's nationalism. Because of their delinquent behavior, the lads receive worse evaluation in public opinion than the ethnic minority, yet their self-esteem holds their identity as an ideal Briton in their imagination. That is why the mainstream ideologies are still part of them. While these squatter lads are dispersed by Salim, Genghis forsakes fighting the wogs as the proprietor of the building. He dares not profess the squat as his own house because he, rather than the immigrant Salim, is a native Britain. Genghis knows all too clear that the legal ideology of his country stands against him. To preserve his own body and dignity from hurt, he can only accept Johnny's help to go out.[22] Body-preservation, as well as self-respect, is an indispensable ethic for the reproduction of an individual in capitalism. Similar to this, the gang members stop attacking Johnny after they hear the sound of police sirens in the last scene (*Laundrette* 67). Their fear of the police, i.e., representatives of the state apparatus, is not out of conscious calculation. It is rather an outcome of their self-regulating apparatus. If they are put in prison, their assertion of racial dignity at the expanse of the bullied minorities, or the delinquent lifestyle they uphold as a result of capitalistic oppression, would just be mere phantoms.

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[22] Although in this scene Genghis catches a cold, is "too weak to resist," and could only "[curse] violently" (10), we should suppose that he would not curse the landlord by asserting his own right of property. If this is so, Kureishi must jot down significant lines like this. In this sense, Genghis's inability to fight and his cursing do not violate the hidden structure of the legal system.

Accident and Turning Point: Micro-Politics in an Encounter

In the second stage of Johnny's identity transition, an accident becomes a turning point that initially jars Johnny's identification with the gang lads. With the sudden appearance and enticement of his Pakistani lover Omar, a fissure appears in Johnny's emotional bond with his street comrades. This is to say, micro-power in the logic of desire collapses Johnny's identity configured within the ethnic and class context. Shortly after Omar learns about the opportunity to run Nasser's launderette and be a candidate for his successor, he drives off in a car besieged by Johnny's racist pals. Omar's desire for reunion with Johnny is so strong that he disregards Salim's demand to drive away. He gets straight out of the car and walks toward Johnny. Johnny, as a non-participant "not really part of the car-climbing and banging" (*Laundrette* 23), feels "embarrassed" as Omar walks toward him (*Laundrette* 24). His embarrassment is also found in an earlier street scene where he avoids being seen (*Laundrette* 13) by Omar. The two similar responses reveal Johnny's regret over his past racist activities. In their conversation after this accidental encounter, Johnny indicates there are more things on his mind than his words:

> Omar: It's me.
> JOHNNY: I know who it is.
> OMAR: How are yer? Working? What you doing now then?
> JOHNNY: Oh, this kinda thing.
> . . . .
> JOHNNY: What are you now, *chauffeur*?
> OMAR: No. I'm on to *something*. (*Laundrette* 24, my emphasis)

Allowing Omar to see his awkward situation, while his fellow gang members continue to frighten Salim and his wife, Johnny cannot avoid his old friend finding

out about this part of his life. While attainment of a job is always out of the question, "this kinda thing" hardly goes beyond mere roaming, taking drugs and attacking immigrants because of their race. To hide his present misery Johnny fights back with cynicism. He supposes Omar to be a chauffeur, a job not beyond his working-class heritage. Yet Omar's answer drowns him in deeper despair, for he is "on something," probably higher than being a driver. After Johnny is asked about his residence, revelation of his tragic homelessness becomes another stab insulting his former sense of superiority:

> OMAR: . . . Still living in the same *place*?
> JOHNNY: Na, don't get on with me *mum and dad*. You?
> OMAR: She died last year, my *mother*. Jumped to the railway line.
> JOHNNY: Yeah. I heard. All the train stopped. (*Laundrette* 24, my emphasis)

Johnny does not foresee mention of "mum and dad" bringing about another trauma. Because of the "anti-immigrant marches through Lewisham" Johnny attended on August 13, 1977, Omar's dad became afraid of the outdoors. The venting of his frustration on Omar's white mum finally led to her suicide (*Laundrette* 43). That a fellow white, a true Briton in the ideology of Neo-Nazism, died as a result of their parade against blacks, is the most ironical tragedy for Johnny. Omar's questions about Johnny's condition, his terse recapitulation of his family tragedy, his appearance with a mystical economic prospect, and his decisive identity as Johnny's former lover are enough to drag Johnny from the gang and back to his friend's side. With mention of former intimate relations between Johnny and his family, Omar exposes Johnny's inferiority in social status and moral standpoint. What awaits Omar is economic possibility in adulthood. For the post-adolescent gang, there is only the lurking of a

nihilistic abyss. Like naïve dreams everyone has in adolescence, Johnny's past racism is destined to fall in upon itself since no possible economic solution provides nutrition for its survival.

(De-)Construction of the Public and Private Field: Trinitized Hegemony

In the third stage of his identity transformation, Johnny becomes involved in a small-enterprise empire built by Omar and his uncle Nasser. As a result, his identity becomes related to that of a trinitized structure of late capitalism, with deviant subcultures, postcoloniality and capitalism as the mainstream mode of production. While the working class subculture in Kureishi's screenplay is against immigrant entrepreneurs, and as the capitalist mode of production is accused of imperial exploitation of non-white colonies and countries, subjects of these three categories seem to be ever-conflicting with one another. However, they are still articulated together in many respects so that the audience does not find it strange as the plot moves on. Exploited most greatly in industrial capitalism, the working class is a productive unit usually getting along well with the capitalist. Despite the fact that many the ex-colonials in postcolonial Britain are disadvantaged laborers, discontented with a domestic colonialism in tandem with global capitalism, they choose to stay in the hope that economic and cultural superiority of the imperial centre helps reverse their economic and political inferiority. Having once been colonized by the British Empire, and participating in the capitalist mode of production, the colonized internalize Britain's capitalism as their perception of economic life. It only awaits enough funding for them to demonstrate their ability to manage a modern business. Working class subculturists and the domestically-colonized in Britain are both

marginalized by mainstream culture. Despite this, the former may be articulated with dominant white ideologies of the privileged class, attributing their unemployment to immigrant workers. The social marginality of both may create another articulation (and hence disarticulate a racist youth from a far right ideology) where different marginalized groups in a capitalist mode of production can rid themselves of social categories like “wog” or welfare parasite.

In other words, with profitable work the underprivileged are articulated into an ideological practice that endows them with a positive image. This brings a work paradigm still manifest in consumer society:

> The essential characteristic of work-based society then, is that a particularly robust and resilient work paradigm has become the primary and principle object of people’s activity. . . . this paradigm is *hegemonic* in the sense that it *articulates* a set of shared ideas and beliefs about what work is and what its purposes are. In terms of its own function within the social structure, the productivist work ethic aides hegemony by uniting in the mind what is already united in action. If people willingly act together in the same labour process, and if, as we have argued, work is a means to an end, then the work ethic provides a means of articulating in an intellectual or ideational way, the shared purposes of work. In this sense, the work ethic is part of what Durkheim called the ‘collective or common consciousness’, ‘the totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the average citizens of the same society [having] specific characteristics that make it a distinctive reality’ (Durkheim, 1933: 79-80). (Ransome 26-27, my emphasis)

The ideology of work, as an unconscious construct, is “uniting in the mind what is already united in action.” With practices in a certain apparatus, the material existence of work “*hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects*” (Althusser, *Lenin* 115). As a result, belief in a capitalist mode of production as a must-do way of life, like ideology, “*represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real*

conditions of existence" (Althusser, *Lenin* 109). Not just exercised by an Althusserian ideological state apparatus (ISA), communal groups like family, church, or school, are practices of work where Foucauldian bio-power is transmitted through various forms of discourse in different spheres, endowing the subject with subjectivities that keep a capitalist mechanism in work. From these discursive and bodily practices emerges the hegemony of work. As an ethic of capitalism, it participates in interpersonal relationships and jointly redefines national and class antagonisms. Therefore Johnny, despite his whiteness and former fascism, receives Nasser's patrimonial beneficence and seeks his future in Omar's marketable launderette. Nasser, Omar and Johnny are united in a mutually beneficial relationship, reflecting how deviant subculture, postcolonial enterprise and the capitalist mode of production are entangled with one another. The overlap between work and private relationship is the rule of survival for Nasser's small business among large-scale corporations. Favored and preached by mainstream society, work ethic solidifies and defines Johnny and Omar's long-term love. Nasser and Johnny's quasi father-and-son relationship, on the other hand, is a private affinity not as conspicuous as that between the lovers, yet of equal importance in this Asian enterprise. Johnny cannot bring his ability, physical or intellectual, to full display without the trust and endorsement of Nasser.

Postcoloniality, reflected in the British experience of Omar's father Hussein and Nasser, illuminates a love-hate relationship between the colonized and colonial capitalism. Modern capitalism and counter-capitalism, both stemming from Britain, attract Nasser, Hussein and other Pakistani elites into the imperial center, and then disillusion them with colonial sediments. To stimulate the British economy, the government imported cheap labor from its former colonies that seemed to tolerate all sorts of dirty jobs white youth took less and less interest in. As Anver Jeevanjee asserts:

> [i]n the early fifties, rural workers from India and Pakistan came to work in the UK. The greed for cheap labour was so great that there was complete disregard of the social consequences of transferring large, orthodox, non-English speaking, rural communities into a hostile white urban atmosphere.

Together with this cheap labor is the native elite class of the subcontinent. These upper-class Indo-Pakistanis, with the 1948 British Nationality Act that allows Commonwealth and colonized people receiving citizenships, head toward the Imperial center for an upgraded life in the first world.[23] In doing so, they seldom think of, or just ignore, any possible racism they may encounter in British society. In their homeland, Nasser belongs to the elite class of businesspeople and his brother Hussein, Omar's Papa, is an intellectual and journalist. Under colonial education, which focuses on British culture and socio-economic training, they gained paradigmatic knowledge of capitalism and anti-capitalism. Capitalism in South Asia was introduced by the British Empire for its own benefit. Anti-capitalism originating from Marx's observation of labor and production in Britain, proliferated when it reached the subcontinent via English translations of Marx's works. Britain's relatively sound environment of investment is the major factor keeping Nasser there. As he laments, "[Pakistan] has been sodomized by religion. It is beginning to interfere with the making of money. Compared with everywhere, it [Britain] is a little heaven there" (*Laundrette* 66). Writing *My Beautiful Laundrette* in Karachi in February 1985, Kureishi clearly knew about how a rigid Islamic regime might mar the free

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[23] The British Nationality Act of 1948, following the independence of India and Pakistan in 1947 was the most liberal. "The status of 'British subject', previously shared by all citizens of the Empire, was divided into two categories. 'Citizens of the UK and Colonies' included both British born and bred and the populations of dependent territories, 'Citizens of newly independent Commonwealth countries' were recognized as such, but given freedom of entry to the UK, full civil rights on arrival, and the right to register as a citizen of the UK and Colonies after four years" (Sarre 133).

functioning of capitalism. In his non-fictional work, *My Ear at his Heart* published in 2004, Kureishi takes his cousin Nusrat as an example in depicting a stay-or-go dilemma puzzling the Pakistani higher class:

> If you're the dissenting type, or just want ordinary freedoms, you might have to make the difficult decision about whether to stay or leave. Both have their disadvantages. My cousin says he's afraid of working as a waiter or taxi-driver in the West. Not all Pakistani doctors, businessmen, computer gurus and accountants who leave are able to make it abroad. (56)

Nusrat had recognized racial discrimination in the British employment market, because various forms of discrimination and conflicts were well known in his era. Yet an early generation of Commonwealth immigrants, after 1948, thought little about this. Socialist theories Papa learned in India gave him no advantage in his attempts to secure job equality in the Imperial centre. The more he opposes the capitalistic system, the more he is crushed by it, especially when his ethnic background is much more a disadvantage than his class identity. As Nasser poignantly questions, "[w]hat chance would the Englishman give a leftist communist socialist" *Laundrette* 21)? Nasser, who has no "chronic laziness that runs in [his] family" (12), knows quite clearly what Salim says: "[Pakistani immigrants are] nothing in England without money" (*Laundrette* 48). Since becoming rich is the only way to maintain his status as a respectable person, Nasser has to be a better capitalist than "native" Britons in the birthplace of modern capitalism. Running the small business empire he created becomes a model not only for his clansmen but also for Johnny, a white labor-rookie not knowing well how capitalism works.

Lacking enough capital to compete with local British industry and transnational corporations, Nasser chooses the small service industry as his career path. When

demands differ in late capitalistic society, providers divvy up the market via price and quality services. Having no fixed capital to provide luxurious services, Nasser makes necessities of the social life his means of accumulating money. As his motto goes, "[i]n this damn country which we hate and love you can get anything you want. It's all spread out and available. That's why I believe in England. You just have to know how to squeeze the tits of the system" (*Laundrette* 17). Though white Britons may be the source of racism that irritates Nasser, they can however be lured by the low prices offered by Nasser's business, willingly pulling out their wallets, and fueling his economic tank. Services mentioned in Nasser's business empire include a parking garage, apartments for rent, and a laundrette where Johnny is an employee. What is common among each of these businesses is that Nasser owns the land they sit on, saving him money on the cost of operation. Parking, housing and laundering are daily necessities for urban people. Along with his garage, Nasser provides his customers "clean-the-car" service (*Laundrette* 14), an attractive plus leaving similar parking lots at a competitive disadvantage. For his real estate business, Nasser obtains cheep apartments to rent to students, poor immigrants and other lower class people who cannot pay too much. The laundrette, though it is the only failure under Nasser's management, is rented out to his nephew Omar for a minimal fee. After its renovation, the laundrette begins to pull in money, for low-class residents around it find its lavishness consoles their material insufficiencies. Nasser's business craft, in this sense, bears witness to a formless global capitalism where excellence in management and marketing is no longer delimited by Imperial hierarchies.

On the managerial end of Nasser's empire, Asian entrepreneurs consolidate their business apparatus through a correspondence between private and public interpersonal relations. Though immigrants often suffer from alienation and discrimination at the hands of white Britons, they find a sense of security in their clanship. This sort of

group is quite different from Johnny's former gang. While gang members are busy seeking amusement and consuming dole and drugs, Asian immigrants are diligently making themselves small-scale capitalists so they can survive in such a hostile society.[24] This alternative way to success, in contrast with working in a white-dominated British company and trying to climb the social ladder, is explained by Philip Sarre in his "Race and the Class Structure:" "The growth in numbers of Asian businesses [in Britain] is both an expression of a desire for upward mobility and an indication that there are problems with the 'normal' route to upward mobility via education and a better job" (Hamnett et al. 152). The racial barrier is not only for Omar, who does not accept his father's suggestion of social climbing via education, but also for Salim and Nasser, whose ages and ethnicities cannot allow them to be employed as cheap labour. Therefore, "small business" provides these Asians "an avenue to independence and possible self-advancement." Also, "[s]elf-employment allows the owner to avoid exploitation by an employer and to enjoy some ownership of the means of production" (Hamnett et al. 152). Nasser's little kingdom is mainly composed of his clan. Salim and Zaki help consolidate his business boundary, while his nephew Omar is trained up to be his successor since he has no son. Nasser's paternalism for Omar is vital for Johnny. By providing the laundrette and a car for Omar, Nasser becomes his father and chief at the same time, empowering him to hire Johnny for all the dirty work. As long as whites do not endanger them, like the deviant youths damaging Omar's launderette, Asian entrepreneurs will not reject them as laborers or coworkers. Moreover, they are able to further develop affiliative bonds

[24] Whether the hostility of some "native" Britons stimulates the productivity or baffles the immigrants' motive power to join the job market depends case by case. It varies with the immigrant's economic and cultural capital, as well as his or her personal disposition. Though Nasser's success in the screenplay does not tell the whole story of South Asian immigrants in Britain, his business evinces that "the Asians have shown every sign of being an irresistible force while British racism has proved very close to an immovable object" (Hamnett et al. 153).

across the national-ethnic boundary. When the audience first sees Nasser "[i]n the middle of the room like a fat king," an unnamed Englishman and an American called Dick O'Donnel are around his bed, "shouting and hooting and boozing and listening to Nasser's stories" (*Laundrette* 20). This blending of private and public, white and colored, also occurs in Nasser's relationship with Johnny. Satisfied with "Johnny [having done] all the physical work on it [the laundrette]," Nasser's charitable paternalism illustrates how he incorporates the private into the public through the logic of late capitalism, revitalizing an emotional facet of the work environment: "I wish I could do something more to help the other deadbeat children like him. They hang about the road like pigeons, making a mess, doing nothing" (*Laundrette* 44). Having experienced various ethnic hindrances as a minority, Nasser is willing to promote Johnny from another marginal space. This quasi-filiation is a micro-political variation of Omar's love, elevating work from a realm of business to a duty embedded in tightly-bound human relations, which further upgrades the quality of labor. On the other hand, members allowed into Nasser's grand family have to fit in with his working attitude. Youths who are "doing nothing" violate Nasser's ethic in organizing an industry composed of his chosen familial members. Nasser's influence on Johnny doubles as he is both his sponsor and boss.

Nasser's task for Johnny is nicknamed "unscrew," which means to unscrew the doors of tenets unable to pay their rent. This work involves several pivotal components of capitalism. First, despite new technologies that save human labor, there are always dirty jobs awaiting the working class. Finding Johnny "[looking] like a tough chap," Nasser assigns him physical work in his business empire: "I've got some bastard tenants in one of my houses I can't get rid of" (*Laundrette* 37). Delay of rent payments violates Nasser's turnover and accumulation of capital. To keep his real estate profitable, Nasser cannot wait for time-consuming legal processes and instead

employs Johnny to boost productivity of the space. Nasser's apartment exemplifies well the intimacy between space and capitalism. In addition to bringing in rent payments, a rental apartment also *produces* tenants as labor power (or labor power in reserve, like students) in the capitalist mode of production. While earning a salary to reside in a space of their own, tenants are reproduced as labor power in the private space, regaining energy to keep a standard performance at work. Legal order protects the rights of both landlord and tenet. As the latter pays rent periodically, the landlord has to limit his or her rights of ownership to keep the rented place in proper working order for the tenet. If a tenet violates their contract, i.e., their lease, the landlord is able to take back the rented space, even with force. This right is called "self-help" in private law, and its rationale in capitalism is to keep the contested space in productive condition that not only earns the landlord capital, but also provides a space for legal tenets to sustain their living condition for further production. Squatters hamper the free circulation of capital in that rentals and space as commodities are just variant forms of capital guarded under the logic of law. Salim's description of the squatters on his newly-bought real estate neatly represents this logic: "There are no people living here. There are only squatters" (*Laundrette* 9). The squatters, as impediments of legal personal property, are non-existent in the legal contract by which Salim buys his house. In the logic of capitalism, they are no longer human beings, but stumbling stones along the chain of supply.

Johnny's unscrewing of a Pakistani poet according to the commands of Nasser vividly illustrates how Asian entrepreneurs invoke the Western idea of professionalism. Nasser's private industry incorporates the postcolonial/immigrant mode and the mainstream mode of production in that it sufficiently employs a racially blind ethic in a capitalistic society. Based upon this, Nasser collects the widest range of customers on the same level of consumption, attracting both white and ethnic

clients with lower class background. The former are attracted by low prices, while the latter, except for their limited budgets, may choose Nasser's apartment for a similar diasporic background. While Johnny is disturbed by his rough removal of a tenet with the same skin color as his boss, Nasser tells him: "But we're professional businessmen. Not professional Pakistanis. There's no race question in the new enterprise culture" (*Laundrette* 41). This ironical statement ruthlessly exposes the myth of nation as an imagined community.[25] Neither white Britons nor Pakistan immigrants respectively form their group with members that would never have conflicts with one another. It is only when group or individual benefit is in danger that one seeks to stand with so-called "my people." The becoming of a community is also that of an ideology, always finding the boundary of itself up against a collective oppositional Other. In most cases, it is the ideology of private property that speaks louder than a stranger who claims a right to use your house because of similar ethnicity. Just imagine why it is ridiculous in the common sense if this case occurs in Pakistan, without white Britons to be an ideological enemy to relate Nasser with his tenet. To sustain the law of private property, Nasser and Johnny, as employer and employee, have to expel the "nonhuman" squatter, otherwise they will not only lose rent payments from the squatted room, but may suffer more costs as other tenets copy the poet's mode.

After Nasser provides the vacated room for Johnny at the expense of his management of other tenets (*Laundrette* 41), a mechanism of surveillance emerges from a combination of working and residential place. Having a legal place to live demonstrates Johnny's capability of earning money. From being "unscrewed" to "unscrewing" the others, Johnny leaps up from the meanest class—the vagabond

[25] That Pakistani immigrants in London shall stay together and help each other without any reward is an exotic and hence racist imagination. A similar ideological practice occurs when a Pakistani student calls Nasser a "Collaborator with the white man" (*Laundrette* 50).

squatter—to the working class with legal usage of a room. When Johnny leaves the laundrette due to his alcoholism, Omar is able to find him because his return to *home* has been predicted. The idea of home as simultaneously one's asylum and confinement is an explanatory note of the joint between private and public terrain. In Johnny's room he controls the activities of other "home members" in the same apartment, yet he is also kept in his boss' sight in the laundrette, being that the apartment and the laundrette belong to the same proprietor.

As co-managers of the laundrette, the private and public relations between Omar and Johnny reflect how late capitalism allows love and exploitation to coexist with each other in a single space. Although Omar exploits Johnny as revenge for his past racism, low salary, high quality of labor and trustworthiness are of the highest concern. He needs Johnny's strong body to fight against white invaders of the laundrette (*Laundrette* 30). Except for doing the dirty work, Johnny's body is also symbolic of his homosexual love with Omar. As the two nakedly hold one another, Omar's skin color, in the regular actions of lovemaking, is deprived of its implication in imperial semiotics. Omar and Johnny's love creates a nuclear family bond facilitating the family entrepreneur no less efficiently than Nasser's paternalism for them. As lovers they care little about exploiting or being exploited, working full-time to achieve business goals that equal their vision of love. Astonished by how much work Johnny has done for the laundrette, Nasser could only doubt "[h]ow will [Omar] pay him?" (*Laundrette* 34). A successful businessman like Nasser knows the cost of renovating and running the laundrette. Propelled by love rather than income, Johnny finds efficiencies that reduce costs and perfect production.[26] When Salim tells Omar

[26] It is an interesting parallel between Johnny as an ex-gang member and Asian Britons in this screenplay. Both are marginal in Thatcher's Britain and in the service of Nasser's family business. "Most Asian small businesses rely on family labour, yet many of these groups retain an overt patriarchal form more extreme than is common in white British society. In effect, a self-employed man running a shop may be employing members of his on family on terms which would be seen as

"[d]on't fuck [Nasser's] business," Omar wittily answers him back, "much good can come of fucking" (*Laundrette* 35). Sexual intercourse between he and Johnny has become payment and a stimulant for Johnny's hard work. For Johnny himself, his labor gradually reduces a sense of guilty brought about by his racist history, and materializes his future with his lover.

As in most love stories, Johnny's devotion to Omar fluctuates. With memories of love and hate, their relationship as business associates is largely dependent upon their love relationship. Nasser's will to marry his daughter Tania to Omar, a business strategy to place Omar first in line for his inheritance, sways Johnny away from firm belief in their love to fondness of his former lads (*Laundrette* 48). Tania, on the other side, recognizes Omar's willingness to marry her originates not so much from love than his covetousness for Nasser's industry. Losing the least chance of inheriting his father's empire and still loathing some women's "parasitical" reliance on men, a plight of Nasser's mistress Rachel (*Laundrette* 46), Tania turns her heart toward Johnny. For her, he is just as repressed by Omar as she is by Nasser. In a scene where Johnny frisks with Tania in Nasser's detached house, a playful love between the business outsiders is sharply contrasted with Omar's serious talk with Salim. When the bicycle Johnny and Tania ride on collides with Salim, the blast fuse of conflicts within the clan is ignited. Salim's accusation against Nasser's patriarchy over the extended family reminds Nasser to marry Tania to Omar. While Omar assents eagerly, Tania "[would] rather drink [her] own urine" and decides to go away from her family (*Laundrette* 59). However, Johnny's refusal to elope with Tania exposes his

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unacceptable in the formal labour market. As a result, the business may be able to accumulate capital and expand in a situation where a white-owned business would be seen as unprofitable. In the short term, the situation seems unjust to an outsider, but in the long term the family may achieve considerable affluence" (Hamnett et al. 152-153). Johnny's status in Nasser/Omar's business is similar to that of other Asian employees. Yet to say he is severely exploited is not just. Given that people with his educational and class background, no matter which ethnic group they belong to, have difficulty finding a job in the 1980s recession, Johnny's situation overall is still much better than many working-class or under-class then in London.

embeddedness in the econo-sexual context of Omar's family business:

> TANIA: . . . I'm going to live my life. You can come.
>
> JOHNNY: No good jobs like this in London.
>
> TANIA: Omo just runs you around everywhere like a servant.
>
> JOHNNY: Well. I'll stay here with my friend and fight it out.
>
> TANIA: My family, Salim and all, they'll swallow you up like a little kebab.
>
> JOHNNY: I couldn't just leave him now. Don't ask me to. You ever touch him? . . . I wouldn't trust him, though. (*Laundrette* 63)

To stay or to go is not a big question for Johnny. The laundrette has become his only hope. Eloping with the daughter of its ultimate investor would only cut his last lifeline. After having a cozy room and a working place as evidence of his new identity, he is reluctant to return to a drifting lifestyle. It is with Tania, not Omar, that he would live life "around everywhere" like a vagrant, much worse than being "like a servant."

After Johnny is hired by Omar, his former gang buddies struggle to reclaim his British identity, one of the few positions the lads imagine to be advantageous. Kureishi ironically exposes blindness of the deviant subculture to the logic of capitalism in a scene where Johnny has a short conversation with his former buddy:

> On the other side of the laundrette, GENGHIS, MOOSE and three other LADs are kicking the laundrette dustbins across the pavement. . . .
>
> JOHNNY straightens the dustbin and starts banging the rubbish back in. . . .
>
> GENGHIS: Why are you working for them? For those people? You were with us once. *For England*.
>
> JOHNNY: It's work. I want to work. I'm fed up of hanging about.
>
> GENGHIS: I'm angry. I don't like to see one of our men groveling to Pakis. They came here to work for us. That's why we

> brought them over. OK? . . . Don't cut yourself off from your own people. Because there's no one else who really wants you. Everyone has to belong. (*Laundrette* 37-38, my emphasis)

Once a star at school, Johnny carries greater psychological burdens than the other lads. When all day-dreams and passion are worn down by tough realities in his post-adolescence, Johnny is tired of engaging in non-productive activities. Genghis's assertion sounds ironical. On the one hand, he claims that his comrades flock together *for England*, and on the other, the readers/audiences only find them roaming and kicking dustbins across the pavement. After a working class gang like Genghis' highlights Pakistani immigrants as workers for Britons, the irony reaches its pinnacle. Genghis supposes himself to be in a position served by minorities, completely ignoring the reality that, with or without them, he is also positioned at the bottom of British economic hierarchy. To promote production and consumption, the logic of late capitalism encourages all patterns of commodification as well as production, luring people of various ethnicities to become producers. As long as an individual has capital and entrepreneurial talent, immigrants like Nasser, Salim and Omar become employers rather than employees.

Despite their white skin, the delinquent youths of working-class origin are labor power in preparation for capitalism. In the initial stage of their delinquency, the working class youths cannot find money from their parents and choose either to get it on dole, or earn a larger amount via illegal means. Upon feeling nihilistic about a life supported by social welfare, or start to fear the high risks that come with illegal earnings, they tend to revert back to working-class living. As Walter Miller points out, juvenile delinquency does not appear in the rejection of the middle-class system, but

is originated from the value system of the working class.[27] By concentrating on "the value system of the juvenile gang," Miller "underlined the similarities between gang and parent culture, arguing that many of the values of the deviant group merely reiterated in a distorted or heightened form the 'focal concerns' of the adult working-class population" (Hebdige, *Subculture* 76). Deviancy is not a value but a common practice ensured by reciprocity within the gang. This is why the lads suffuse their value systems with racism, comradeship, and anti-capitalism without sufficient background knowledge. Anti-capitalism derives from observations of their parents' pains—their complaints of intense physical labor and low salary. Racism and comradeship could also be analyzed in the context of a sense of crisis particularly belonging to the working class. Unable to keep their parents from being exploited, the lads replace the chief enemy of laborers with minorities. These ideologies reiterate the grumbling of ordinary white British workers, who gather together to vent their anguish over jobs taken by immigrant workers. Their comradery is developed in this context. Coming together over a collective enemy, they immerse themselves in an ideology that conceals a weak sense of social existence degenerated by class disadvantage, unemployment, and homelessness. Except for inheriting the racist ideology of their parents, risky activities engaged in by these gangs also imply intimacy between a deviant subculture and the mainstream. "[Matza and Sykes] found embedded in youth culture those subterranean values (the search for risk, excitement, etc.) which serve to underpin rather than undermine the day-time ethos of production (postponement of gratification, routine, etc)" (Hebdige, *Subculture* 76-77). For their working class parents, the search for risk and excitement are escapes from heavy labors, resultant of a capitalist division between work and leisure. The lads, on the

[27] For more of his arguments, see his "Lower-class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency."

other hand, take pleasure-seeking to be their main activity and elevate it to be a value in their collective way of life. If the search for risk and excitement loses its legitimacy in time and space, a self-aware lad like Johnny would rather oscillate back to his working class identity. The lads have no special skills except for their bodies being capable of dirty work, which they witness as the most understandable and workable approach to a legitimate salary. Because of his unemployment, aimless roaming, regret over his part in racism, and his marginal identity as a homosexual, Johnny is willing to accept the help from Nasser's private industry marginalized by the former Empire. Moreover, since this little business empire is constructed within a capitalistic structure, Johnny takes it as a step toward upgrading his social class. As "a bloke of outstanding competence and strength of body and mind to look after [the laundrette]" (*Laundrette* 34), Johnny is much more than a victim at the hands of Omar and Nasser's exploitation. He participates in Omar's back-stage maneuvering, and is very likely to be an independent manager in a branch store once Omar's capital accumulates and his enterprise domain is expended.[28]

Gradually incorporated into the new trinitized system of postcolonial enterprise, deviant subculture and the mainstream mode of production, Johnny finds the joy of working. "Athletically and enthusiastically singing at the top of his voice," Johnny's axe smash the old structure of the launderette, "[demolishing] existing structure" symbolic of the fabricated British glory and his impetuous past (*Laundrette* 34). In

[28] Johnny and Omar's intimate relationship continues after the end of the screenplay, as Kureishi has both appear in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* (237). In *Buddha*, Kureishi records how South Asian immigrants expands their business territory, which may tell Johnny's future story: " . . . shops . . . all over London in fact, were modernizing rapidly, as ambitious Pakistanis and Bengalis bought them up. Several brothers, say, would come to London; they'd get two jobs each, in an office during the day and a restaurant by night; they'd buy a shop, installing one brother as manager, with his wife behind the till. Then they'd get another shop and do the same, until a chain was established" (171). Once Omar's launderette expands into a chain store, Johnny will be the most trustworthy storekeeper. The successful route of social climbing for Asian employees also suits Johnny, as Sarre observes, "becoming employers" makes possible former wage labourers "climbing the ladder from petty bourgeois to small capitalist class positions" (Hamnett et al. 152).

Johnny's reorientation of himself as a laborer finding pleasure in work, his work ethic reveals its true identity as hegemony articulating delinquent subculture, postcolonial subjects and the service industry as a mainstream mode of production in late capitalism. Max Weber's illustration of this ethic in early capitalism is still useful in analyzing this screenplay:

> In fact, the *summum bonum* of this ethic, the earning of more and more money, combined with the strict avoidance of all spontaneous enjoyment of life, is above all completely devoid of any eudemonistic, not to say hedonistic, admixture. It is thought of so purely as an end in itself, that from the point of view of the happiness of, or utility to, the single individual, it appears entirely transcendental and absolutely irrational. Man is dominated by the making of money, by acquisition as the ultimate purpose of his life. Economic acquisition is no longer subordinated to man as the means for the satisfaction of his material needs. This reversal of what we should call the natural relationship, so irrational from a naïve point of view, is evidently and definitely a leading principle of capitalism as it is foreign to all peoples not under capitalistic influence. (53)

Whether Johnny begins working to make up for his past follies or to express his sustained love for Omar, after the passage of days, his work will become "an end in itself." In singing at the top of his voice while he works, the entanglement of racial complexity and his non-mainstream love are ignored, just as his future promotion and the salary of this menial work are temporarily suspended. At this point, Johnny the ex-gang member has been reborn as a youth meeting the requirement of an entrepreneurial culture.

Although Thatcherism seems to be a dominant discourse in the 1980s, it does not grasp all the logics that guide the British economy. Not seriously considered in Thatcherite doctrines, the mutual reliance of employer and employee is one of the

most essential logics of late capitalism—very different from the emphasis on maximum exploitation of the laborer in industrial capitalism. In *Beyond Thatcherism*, Christopher C. Harris indicates that:

> individual action is also regulated by moral sentiments. Just as people do not obey the law simply because of fear of punishment, they do not work simply for monetary reward. They accept responsibility to others with whom they are related through their work, and take pride in what they do independently of the monetary reward for it. If they did not, if they acted at all times purely as greedy, acquisitive, selfish individuals, all cooperative activity in production would be impossible. . . . By emphasizing those Victorian values with competition, Mrs. Thatcher risks eliminating the other values—duty, loyalty, dignity, responsibility—on which capitalism has equally depended for its success. (15-16)

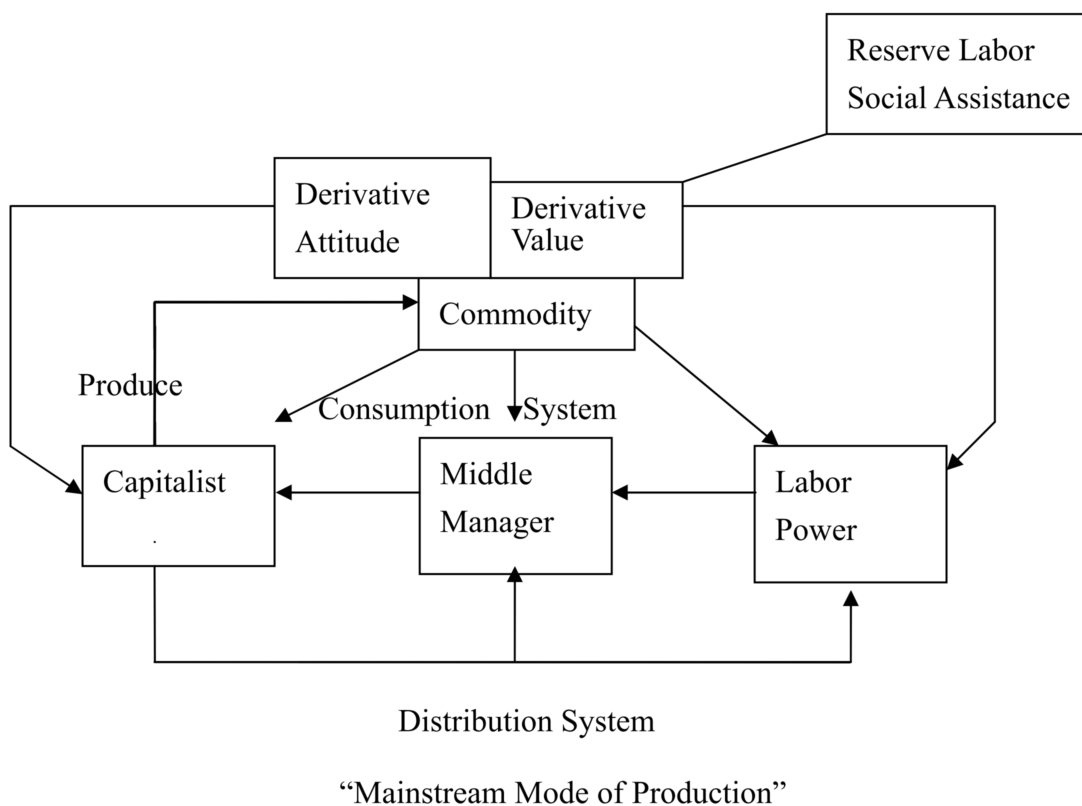
Although Omar hires Johnny to do the menial tasks, they cooperate rather than oppose with each other. While Omar is fond of dreaming and scheming,[29] Johnny contributes by finishing all the projects. Before renovation of the laundrette, it is Omar who thinks a laundrette could be as luxurious as the Ritz. In a scene summarizing the process of reconstruction, "JOHNNY . . . is smashing one of the broken-down benches off the wall while OMAR stands there surveying the laundrette" (*Laundrette* 34). Rather than blindly obeying Omar, Johnny doubts Omar's illegal approach of raising funds, though he cannot refuse because he too wants the launderette to succeed and prosper. While critics like Rebecca Dyer find Johnny is being exploited by Omar, reverse colonialization occurring in the Imperial center (Dyer 99-100), Johnny's role as a consultant and co-manager of the launderette

[29] *Dreaming and Scheming* is a collection of Kureishi's essays. Omar's brainwork on the laundrette, in this sense, can be seen as Kureishi's translation of his artistic endeavor into a culturally oriented enterprise culture in late capitalism.

and his sustained intimacy with Omar are probably of more importance for them both. Working hard to collect investment capital and designing the interior style of the laundrette, Omar needs a person able to handle executive jobs, and sometimes provide salient suggestions. This is why Johnny becomes the only person Omar can rely on, when Salim, whose money earned in drug deals stolen by Omar, threatens to "instruct [Nasser] to get rid of the laundrette" (*Laundrette* 48).

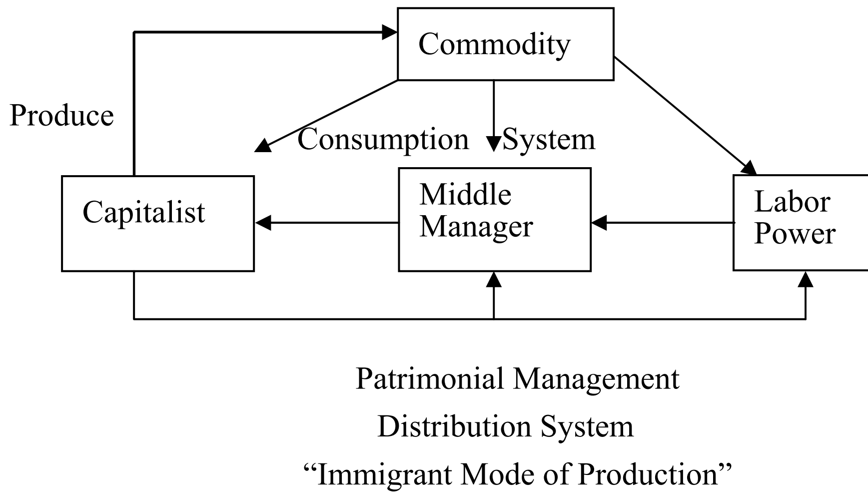
At the end of this stage in Johnny's development, there is need for discussion about the production and consumption structure in late capitalism. Roughly speaking, production is mainly constituted of various kinds of capital, capitalists, working classes, and commodities. As to relations between production members, capitalists, middle managers and workers, they are organized in a top-down hierarchy, stabilizing and facilitating capitalist mechanisms. This mode of production does not undergo a fundamental change in late capitalism. In late capitalism and the immigrant mode of production in this screenplay, capital must be transformed into commodities or services via productive units like capitalists, middle managers, and the working class. The difference between these two modes lies in the distributive system. While a typical corporation distributes wealth according to its article of association, an immigrant family industry like Nasser's relies on the patriarch to distribute its income. Concerning the relationship between production and consumption, industrial capitalism drives consumption via a burst of productive power, locating consumption at the end of the distributive system. In this phase, family is the basic unit of consumption, and basic purchases are necessities for its subsistence. Consumers in late capitalism, however, turn their focus away from daily essentials and toward the pursuit of image and trend. No longer a trade between material objects, the idea of "consumption is an active form of relationship (not only to objects, but also to society and to the world), a mode of systematic activity and global response which founds our

entire cultural system" (Baudrillard, *System* 199). With mass production made possible by industrial capitalism, consumers' appetites grow as reduced working hours and low prices of necessities—thanks to ever-modernized management skills and technology— enable their responsiveness to marketing strategies. The mainstream mode of production, and the immigrant mode (exemplified in this screenplay) as a branch of the former, can be diagramed in terms of production, consumption, and distribution as follows:[30]



"Mainstream Mode of Production"

[30] Since these two modes share the same relation with consumer society, I chart the structure of consumption only in the mainstream mode of production.



With multifarious experiences of consumption, the consumer society is a new way of life that unites productive and distributive systems. When highly individualistic lifestyles in late capitalism seem to fragment a relatively coherent value systems in the former days, the consumptive structure, or the system of objects as Baudrillard terms, relocates multiplex attitudes/desires of consumers in new value systems, which in term set into action the mainstream mode of production. Atop the mode of production in the above diagram, the consumer society nets seemingly conflicting ideologies, discourses, values and attitudes together. Homosexuality, for example, has been treated in the past as out-of-order sexuality in need of punishment or rectification. At present though, dressing styles of homosexuals are appropriated for the fashion industry and, for some celebrities in the entertainment industry, homosexual identity becomes capital symbolic of their personal idiosyncrasy. This partly explains why a film focusing on trans-racial and homosexual love, with handsome actors playing the protagonists, was met with box office success. Outward disorder in the consumer/postmodern society is a process through which values of individuals are relocated. The consumer society does not alter the basic structure of production. It fuels the productive process as consumptive needs stimulate different

forms of productive forces. In turn, this process is incorporated into the main structure of production.

In such a consumer society, the beautiful laundrette is an image favored by certain attitudes. Customers do not frequent it merely for washing their laundry. They spend time there in order to consume the feeling of laundering their clothes in a Ritzy and luxurious place. Even Genghis, despite his hostility against the "Pakis," cannot resist its seduction on opening day. The sub-cultural lads deem it as some high-class location that only Genghis and Moose, two leading members of their group, are qualified to get into (*Laundrette* 45). This shows that flexible attitudes of consumption can be translated by and articulated with hierarchical values. On the other hand, consumerism articulates diverse ethnicities together. Video games in the laundrette are just some of the devices that make these two far-right gang members bypass their racial attitudes in order to enjoy excitements in an immigrant industry.

For Genghis, the laundrette is a place where different attitudes are stirred and then consumed. For Johnny, it's a workplace where flimsy attitudes toward life are precipitated into firm values. Though a site of conflict between diverse groups, the laundrette becomes a harbor of refuge for his values. After the derelict laundrette is renovated, Johnny enjoys the fruit of his labors, as well as his renewed identity as a paid laborer. The stable relationship between production and consumption is evident in the interior space of the launderette—an antithesis of rootless life and racist ideology, propelling Johnny into a positive status quo he can be proud of, and affirming a deep-rooted value of the mainstream culture long baptized by capitalism: to be a useful person. This value was once opposed by the gangs, and shook by Tania's proposal of elopement, yet it endures even after the storefront is damaged by the gangs. Johnny's homosexual eroticism gains economic backing as the laundrette opens and remains profitable. Like a prisoner who accepts biblical emphasis on a

working mentality and diligently exercises his or her body for workshops in jail, Johnny envisages his future with Omar and industriously puts his labor efforts into the laundrette. A combination of mind and productive power draw Johnny out of a street subculture without much of a future. Moreover, they allow him to picture for himself a career in manual labor, and sketch a new familial type constituted by homosexuals. Imperial glory originally asked its people to be useful. Only by becoming part of the productive force can Johnny meet this requirement and realize the values of the British working class. The fourth phase of his identity transition hence comes into being, witnessing his decisive incorporation into the laundrette as a shelter of this value system.

The Break between Past and Future:
Embracing the Mainstream

The ending of this screenplay bespeaks the last stage of Johnny's identity transition. On the one hand, protecting Nasser's cousin Salim from further assault, Johnny severs his relations with street gangs. On the other hand, and because Johnny's bond with his subcultural past is now broken, he engages himself in his erotic and productive relationship with Omar. As illustrated in the laudrette's fusion of public and private, the alternative eroticism of homosexuality becomes a stimulus for the capitalist structure, thereby buttressing the productive aspect of late capitalism via a family mainly based upon genuine love (rather than survival of community as in an earlier era). The lads attack Salim not only because of his ethnicity, but because his economic superiority comparatively exposes the predicament of these gangs. The way Salim drives his car against Moose, then a pedestrian, resembles an upper class attack on the lower class with a symbol of its advantageous wealth. As class exploitation

mixes with racism, Genghis wants Salim to die. This illustrates why Omar's beautiful laundrette loses only a piece of one of its French windows during the gang's attack—the major target was not the laundrette. Despite his denouncement of Salim's drug deals with the white youths, Johnny saves Salim in the end. His rescue reflects the long history of humanitarianism in Britain, as demonstrated in Britain's Race Relation Act (1976). Though trying to decrease the number of new ethnic arrivals, the British government cannot simply write these people off as being non-human. Though discrimination is not rarely seen in daily reality, racist discourses and activities are strongly criticized by some major media outlets, government officials, and academia. Ironically, in asserting themselves to be legitimate Britons, these far-right lads are not conscious of humanitarianism as part of past British glory. As revenge for Johnny's betrayal of the gang, Genghis severs his comradeship with Johnny by hitting him cruelly. This attack leaves Johnny in a brief state of bewilderment. Unable to accept the loss of his white buddies, Johnny would have drifted away from his present identity if it were not for Omar's consolation. His private guidance of Johnny's attitude towards life parallels his attribution of works for Johnny. Being that capitalism demands professionalism and a strong work ethic, "[a]lways running" elsewhere cannot help a worker cultivate necessary production and reproduction skills (*Laundrette* 68).

After Johnny is baptized by blood, the last scene of the screenplay shows Omar and Johnny "washing and splashing each other in the sink in the back room of the laundrette, both stripped to the waist" (*Laundrette* 69). As a strong symbol resonant with the launderette, water washes out the bloodstains on Johnny's body as well as his past trauma, exercising its redemptive power in the fourth stage of his identity transition. Omar and Johnny's water play, indicative of their sexual love, is foiled by the back office of the laundrette. It is a public meeting space where they do not have

to worry much about exposing their secret relationship. A Foucauldian heterotopia in late capitalism, the back office, is equipped with a one-way mirror providing hidden surveillants with a view of the launderette. This not only ensures secrecy of the lovers' forbidden encounters, but also sustains productive activities in the laundrette at the same time. The laundrette itself, together with Omar as its manager, has become Johnny's spatial identity, rewriting and rewashing him as a productive white in Britain.

Chapter Two

Performance, Cultural Capital and Social Mobility: *The Buddha of Suburbia*

> " . . . I would have thought that outsiders like us would have had trouble gaining acceptance. The whites are very insular, surely they won't admit people like us into their world?"
>
> "Oh no, there's nothing more fashionable than outsiders." Riaz seemed puzzled. "Why is that?"
>
> Shahid shrugged. "Novelty. Even someone like you, brother, could have a wide appeal if the media knew of you. Think how many people you could address." (Kureishi, *Album* 185)

When Riaz, a Pakistani immigrant and bewildered leader of an Islamic fundamentalist group, asks Shahid, a highly westernized member of his with the same ethnicity, about how to make his religious claims present in a white-dominated society, the latter stresses the importance of being *novel* as an ethnic Other in front of the media. This dialogue, comically seasoned by a sharp contrast between a conservative religious extremist and a market-sensitive yuppie, shares the same undercurrent that flows through many Kureishi's stories which revolve around postcolonial themes. Kureishian non-white protagonists usually adopt, or are anticipated to make, the best use of their exotic identity when appearing in the Western mediascape. This recalls Graham Huggan's salient work *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins*, including his discussion of Kureishi under the chapter entitled "Staged Marginalities." Given the existence of racism, not every marginal non-white, or postcolonial outsider, is successful in marketing themselves in the literary world as well as daily reality. It is

therefore necessary to first consider some salient issues: Under what conditions are subaltern ethnicities marketable? In which way does a traditional variant of social identity, like class, facilitate or hinder the racially marginalized? How should postcolonial subjects behave, or *perform*, themselves before novelty-seeking media? Is such a postcolonial performance an exceptional or representative case of postmodern performativity, given that the performative is omnipresent from the theoretical formation of J. L. Austin, Erving Goffman, to the postmodernist Judith Butler? If performing oneself results in a reified or commodified identity, to what extent has one been fetishized?

Kurieishi won the Whitbread Award for his first novel, *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990). This novel calls attention to various kinds of performances relating to ethnicity and class formation. In so doing, this novel articulates differences I have attributed to the logic of late capitalism in the introduction. While class and ethnic difference can be *enounced* for social mobility in jobs like director, actor, religious mentor, interior designer, rock star, and even road-sweeper, *Buddha* implies that efficacy of this enouncement depends on the *conjuncture* of individual identity with social relations in a new culture economy. Discussing how performances work in the work and non-work spheres, this chapter examines how ethnicity and class, conventionally embodied in social agents, may be re-performed as cultural capital, which in turn helps the regionally and ethnically marginalized enter privileged fields of cultural production.

The structure of this chapter is divided into a theoretical section with subsequent case studies. First, as 1970s Britain witnessed a postmodern turn, understood by Fredric Jameson as the expansion of culture and the emergence of late capitalism, I examine performativity and theatricality as marketing devices and determinants of commodified subjects. Second, relating Judith Butler's account of subjectivity as

performance to the theory of Pierre Bourdieu, I argue that ethnicity and class as cultural performances are subject to the interplay between habitus and semi-autonomic cultural fields. Finally, this chapter examines the highly theatricalized personal and occupational behaviors of four main characters as suburban social climbers, along with other characters related to London's theatrical world. Due to a late capitalist need for ethnic Others, Karim and Haroon's private performances are transformed into cultural capital, which in turn empowers their acting and religious business respectively. As white suburbanites, Eva and Charlie can attest to a constant desire for differentiated cultural performances, as seen in Eva's interior design business and Charlie's identity as a punk star. To foil those suburbanites, I explore daily performances of some white Londoners, who either occupy an upper middle class envied by suburbanites, or try to make the best use of their working-class origins. Examined in an era claimed to be post-racial and highly mediatized, social mobility of these characters is evidence that class and ethnicity still powerfully condition performative identities.

Performance, Performativity and Cultural Capital in Late Capitalism

Britain in the 1970s, a post-emancipation era seeking to mediate between late 1960s revolutionary sediments and its own disillusionment with tough socio-economic realities, can be categorized in the budding postmodern condition, via a series of terms like "industrial society," "information society," or "late capitalism." The last of these is the theoretical model I use to illuminate ways of cultural production related to this novel. As Fredric Jameson claims, "in postmodern culture, 'culture' has become a product in its own right; the market has become a substitute for its self and fully as much a commodity as any of the items it includes within itself" (x).

In other words, the "fundamental feature of . . . postmodernism [is] the effacement . . . of the older (essentially high-modernist) frontier between high culture and so-called mass of commercial culture" (2).

This commodified and aestheticized postmodern culture might be best reflected in dramatization of daily life. "[T]he media rush in with a host of 'temporary master narratives.' . . . Anchors intone, while reporters sensationalize ordinary life. The arts themselves take a back seat because ordinary life is framed so 'artistically.'" In such a media society people receive "hundreds of fragmented stories and compressed dramas" (Schechner 131). Main characters as cultural workers in *Buddha* witness and join this process of postmodernization, when more and more things become culture and capital for sale at once. Critics and readers both are also impressed by performative or dramatized events in this novel. As if names of novels, plays, magazines, TV series, bands, lyrics, thinkers, singers, writers and commodity brands are not enough to show how the world has been transformed into fragmented micro-dramas, the protagonist-narrator weaves these raw materials into his performative narrative, reprocessing them to create a world where he performs himself for other characters and his audiences.

The dramatization of postmodern culture, from business, sports, rituals, everyday life and the performance arts in its narrow sense, invites us to consider multi-layered meanings in the very keyword "performance." In *Performance Studies*, Richard Schechner has a succinct yet useful answer to "What is Performance:"

> In business, sports, and sex, "to perform" is to do something up to a standard—to succeed, to excel. In the arts, "to perform" is to put on a show, a play, a dance, a concert. In everyday life, "to perform" is to show off, to go to extremes, to underline an action for those who are watching. (28)

While everyday life and art permeate one another, the realm of business translates both into various forms of capital, deciding whether performers gain prestige or money. This does not mean that performance is more economical than art or daily life. Nor does it mean that art and daily life are mere reflections of a material base. In fact, through all phases of capitalism and human history, cultural performance has redefined and enriched the idea of capital, something best exemplified by Pierre Bourdieu's concept of "cultural capital." For him, this illustrates the spiritual, emotional and desirous dimensions in modern and postmodern capitalism. Just as performance in business, sports and sex are raw materials for media representation, practices in everyday life can be reprocessed into cultural capital to gain social agents success and excellence.

When main characters as cultural producers are engaged in the professional field of cultural production and leisure lives, it is critical to understand how performances are performed differently in different fields—that is, how different levels or dimensions of performance interact, impede, or rely on one another to participate in the culture of late capitalism. Distinction between performativity and performance, as Judith Butler shows, provides a useful theoretical framework for understanding why leading actors and actresses in *Buddha* sometimes seem endowed with a certain subjectivity or initiative in their performance, while often appearing trapped in changing social contexts. In her 1993 essay "Critically Queer," Butler asserts performance is "a bounded 'act'," while performativity is "*a reiteration of norms which precede, constrain, and exceed the performer and in that sense cannot be taken as the fabrication of the performer's 'will' or 'choice'*" (24, original emphasis). Performance is thus " theatrical in the sense of miming or hyperbolizing existing signifiers" (Lloyd 202). When certain signifiers are appropriated and re-signified

under certain conditions, performances are like theatrical activities, occurring in a certain time and space, with referents that characterize them. As the performer is able to hyperbolize or imitate a person, situation or object, performance becomes "an expression of the 'will' or 'choice' of the performer" (Lloyd 202), gaining him or her a certain degree of subjectivity. In comparison to the grand power relation that performativity represents, the idea of performance resembles Foucauldian micro-power a social actor may put to use.

Butler's most notable example of performativity is gender, "an identity tenuously constituted in time—an identity, instituted through a stylized repetition of acts" ("Performative Acts" 519). "Hence, gender is an act which has been rehearsed, much as a script survives the particular actors who make use of it; but which requires individual actors in order to be actualized and reproduced as reality once again" ("Performative Acts" 526). Therefore, there is no "preexisting identity" ("Performative Acts" 528), except for inscribed performatives, like known scripts, according to which gender roles are rehearsed repetitively. Performances in this sense are related to performativity: "Surely, there are nuanced and individual ways of *doing* one's gender, but *that* one does it, and that one does it *in accord with* certain sanctions and prescriptions, is clearly not a fully individual matter" ("Performative Acts" 525, original emphasis).

It is a naturalized gender identity that Butler criticizes most, along with the possibility of escaping from that essentialization she follows with interest. As acts/performances are themselves "internally discontinuous, . . . the possibilities of gender transformation are to be found in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a different sort of repeating, in the breaking or subversive repetition of that style" ("Performative Acts" 520). Therefore, even performativity related to social-constructedness and uncontrollability beyond individual anticipation, invites an

inevitable changeability for identities. Similarity and difference between performance and performativity remind us, in studying how ethnicity and class are (per)formed in *Buddha*, that intentionality and social construction must be taken into consideration.

Given that different theorists have unique power in ways of explaining certain social phenomena, it is useful to introduce Pierre Bourdieu's idea of habitus, performative/performativity, the field of cultural production, and various forms of capital to supplement and balance Butler's performative theory.[31] For Bourdieu, a "field" is "a structured space of positions in which the positions and their interrelations are determined by the distribution of different kinds of resources or 'capital'" (Thompson 14). Major fields considered by Bourdieu are ones we can easily recognize in our everyday worlds: economic and political fields, (i.e., fields of power), and various cultural fields. A field of power requires high levels of economic capital and low levels of cultural capital, while the field of cultural production asks for the opposite arrangement of capital. Though each field is to a certain degree independent, they are also "*systems of relations*" (Bourdieu, *Reflexive Sociology* 106), since the field of power funds cultural production and the latter must either find creative strength in criticizing the field of power, or resemble a cultural industry in Adorno's sense, dominated by the powerful. Discrepancies in the cultural field also find expression in the antagonism and interdependence between the "alternative" (Bourdieu's "small-scale or restricted production"), and "mass or large-scale production," e.g., the "pop 'mainstream'" in the realm of music (Hesmondhalgh 217).

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[31] I indebt a lot to Terry Lovell's insightful paper: "Thinking Feminism with and against Bourdieu," which "argues that a positive engagement between Bourdieu's sociology of practice and contemporary feminist theory would be mutually profitable. It compares Bourdieu's account of the social construction of the human subject through practice with Butler's account of subjectivity as performance" (Lovell 11). As Lovell claims, "Bourdieu's strength lies in his insistence upon the well-nigh permanent sediments and traces which constitute embodied culture, but he draws attention away from those other areas of social space where the constructedness of social reality may be tacitly acknowledged or exposed. Butler, like a number of postmodernists, particularly valorizes these, often 'less serious', spaces–of play, masquerade, carnival – *because* it is here that cultural constructions become visible as such and therefore open to challenge and to situationist-style political interventions" (16).

If the idea of field seems to be too objective or determinist in explaining the identity formation of social players, Bourdieu's habitus provides a useful tool in mediating between subjectivism and objectivism. Habitus, defined most simply in *Reproduction in Education* as 'the system of schemes of . . . perception, thought, appreciation and action which are durable and transposable" (35), also represents *dispositions* of social agency acquired in the process of socialization. In response to fields as systems of social *positions* taken by social agents, habitus is not only a subjective "structuring structure" of the agent, but a "structured structure" internalizing distinction between social class within individuals (Bourdieu, *Distinction* 170). Based upon this, habitus thus includes distinguishing characteristics of performance and performantivity. It reflects the agent's entanglement with performativity, a position with "the force of social institutionalization behind them which *mere* performances lack" (Lovell 15), while the arbitrary and voluntary dimensions of performance are marked by habitus as a personal disposition. Social mobility in *Buddha* is determined by how characters (i.e., social agents) take advantage of their habitus, and perform their cultural or economic capital in certain fields of cultural production. Karim and his father Haroon are both restricted and find their power in their ethnicity as habitus, defined by the dominant whites in Britain, while Eva's sociability as a hostess and sensibility as a middle-class, liberalist woman help market her interior designs. Class and ethnicity are two variants that at times impede or facilitate the accumulation of capital. The way they are staged in this novel witnesses the functioning of a culturalized late capitalism burgeoning in 1970s Britain.

Performers in the Field of Cultural Production

Karim, the narrator and hero in *Buddha*, tells a story subtitled by "in the suburb" and "in the city," respectively laying stress on performances in everyday life and professional theatre. Having not yet entered the work field, Karim as a teenager accumulates different sorts of cultural capital with a habitus crosscut by ethnic and class practices in the suburb where he resides. Some critics are aware of the intimacy between performance and a space like the suburbs. Exploring "Suburban Space in *The Buddha of Suburbia*," Susan Brook explores "an alternative idea of the suburbs as sites of surface and of display, where the boundaries between public and private are both installed and constantly undermined" (210). Judith Butler's notion of performativity has now been spatialized by many geographers. While "spatial relations are *both* metaphoric and material," like Butler's performative body gaining sexual identity through repetitive practices and transgression, the suburb is a "metaphoric and material space . . . embodied in individual bodies," endowing Karim with a structure of performativity that helps to shape his habitus (Curran 381).

Suburbia as an idea, with all its heterogeneous referents in reality, "can refer to upper-middle-class exclusivity and to lower-middle-class monotony" (Brook 212). Born in a lower-middle class[32] family and associating himself with neighbors and relatives of similar background (though with a certain degree of financial difference), Karim is most influenced by this class heritage in the beginning of the novel, yearning to get rid of his class bondage by socializing with upper-middle class Eva. Karim's father, Haroon, is a "badly paid and insignificant" clerk in the British civil service (*Buddha* 7), while his mother is a salesperson in a shoe store. Without too much

[32] Rita Relski's succinct yet clear description of the lower-middle class is helpful: "The lower middle class is one such example of a messy, contradictory amalgam of symbolic practices, structures of feeling, and forms of life. It usually includes both the traditional petite bourgeoisie of shop owners, small businesspeople, and farmers and the 'new' lower middle class of salaried employees, such as clerical workers, technicians, and secretaries. Such positions pay little more and often less than blue-collar industrial jobs. The lower middle class often feels itself to be culturally superior to the working class, however, while lacking the cultural capital and the earning power of the professional-managerial class" (35).

knowledge or interest in pursuing fine arts, Karim's parents never "went out [in the evening], [for] there was nowhere to go, and Dad never socialized with anyone from the office. . . . Mum and Dad went to the pictures maybe once a year, and Dad always fell asleep; once they went to the theatre to see *West Side Story*" (*Buddha* 46). "On an aesthetic level, the lower middle class . . . is despised by everyone: by the defenders of elite culture for its irredeemably bad taste . . . and by radicals for its moral and artistic conservatism" (Felski 41). In this sense, the lower-middle class suburbanite is an "'uncool' identity," which "cannot be assimilated into a discourse of progressive identity politics" (Felski 41). As a teenager in post-1960s Britain, Karim's hedonist yearning for changeability is revealed in his criticism of the suburbs: "people rarely dreamed of striking out for happiness. It was all familiarity and endurance: security and safety were the reward of dullness" (*Buddha* 4).

Karim's ill feeling of his home is largely responsible for his stigmatization of the suburb. Karim's mother, Margaret, audience to Haroon and Karim's lighthearted and bantering speeches, impedes comic interactions and reduces potentially entertaining effects in their daily dialogues. "[Haroon] loves to tease, but Mum wasn't a satisfactory teasing victim, not realizing you were supposed to laugh when mocked" (*Buddha* 5). Thus said, if performance is regarded as an act that defamiliarizes the mundane world with hyperbole, exaggeration, parody or irony, then migrating into London, famous for its cultural performances in multivalent forms, seems to feed Karim's insatiable appetite for novelty. An antithesis to the suburb, London is imagined by Karim, then in the suburb, as a carnivalesque place where excitements are continually staged:

> . . . I fantasized about London and what I'd do there when the city belonged to me. There was a sound that London had. It was, I'm afraid, people in Hyde Park playing bongos with their hands . . . There were kids dressed in velvet cloaks who lived free lives; there were thousands

> of black people everywhere, so I wouldn't feel exposed; there were bookshops with racks of magazines printed without capital letters or the bourgeois disturbance of full stops; there were shops selling all the records you could desire; there were parties where girls and boys you didn't know took you upstairs and fucked you; there were all the drugs you could use. You see, I didn't ask much of life; this was the extent of my longing. But at least my goals were clear and I knew what I wanted. I was twenty. I was ready for everything. (*Buddha* 121)

As Kureishi mentioned in an interview, his "London isn't going to be like anybody else's London. It's a playground, it's a place where I can imagine, where I can play" (Kureishi, "Hanif Kureishi on London" 37). Karim probably knows his London is just a fabrication. Yet in continuously imagining it as a playground, Karim directs a scenario of London whose effect is not far from performative acts enforced by social conventions. His longing for a dramatized city may not leave him with the new identity of "Londoner," yet these incessant mental practices, like discourses, initiate his action and exhibit a power of transformation.

Though representative of everyday dullness, the suburb is rich with various kinds of performance, and has its own performativity inscribed in residents' daily life. Since the lower-middle class has "nothing to declare" (Felski 41), many suburbanites turn to performances stressing "surface and façade" (Brook 210). Karim says his mother "could never hang out the washing in the garden without combing her hair" (*Buddha* 188), revealing that a stress on appearance becomes the greatest value and requirement of perfomativity inscribed in bodily action. If to dress up in everyday life means creating/constructing a performative difference to contrast with the ordinary self, then house renovation, a recurrent image in *Buddha* with subtle delineations, expresses suburbanites' obsession for differentiating one's identity via the house as its extension:

> All of the houses had been 'done up'. One had a new porch, another double-glazing, 'Georgian' windows or a new door with brass fittings. Kitchens had been extended, lofts converted, walls removed, garages inserted. This was the English passion, not for self-improvement or culture or wit, but for DIY, Do It Yourself, for bigger and better houses with more mod cons, the painstaking accumulation of comfort and, with it, status – the concrete display of earned cash. Display was the game. How many times on a visit to families in the neighbourhood, before being offered a cup of tea, had we been taken around a house – 'The grand tour again,' sighed Dad – to admire knocked-through rooms, cunning cupboards and bunkbeds, showers, coal bunkers and greenhouses. (*Buddha* 74-75)

The attempt to reach a certain degree of theatricality is manifest in this description. Superficial, Kitsch, or pretentious as it may be ("the painstaking accumulation of comfort and . . . status," "not for self-improvement or culture or wit"), this display/game aims to translate the home owner into a leading character and the visitors into audiences. A decorated interior and exterior are then both settings and main characters for this show at the same time.

Karim's family cannot afford such a luxurious display of identity. Yet a preference for display and performance as suburban performativity sparks Karim's desire to go through surfaces for more pleasures. For Susan Brook, Kureishi's suburb "arguably emerges as a space of camp and artifice" (214). Karim's daily performance, for many readers and critics, might be more attractive than his acting in London theatres. A hybrid between a Pakistani father and white British mother, Karim suffers greatly from the then-rampant racism practiced by some white suburbanites. To claim something better than the cultural barrenness of petit bourgeois and his disadvantageous ethnicity, he immerses himself in bisexual adventures and cultural consumption via stylish costumes, novels, and pop music. This maelstrom of cultural explosions provides performances from TV, print media, radio and recordings, adding fuel to Karim's

performative identity. Geographical proximity to London makes Karim's suburb a rehearsal room related to those "authentic" cultural productions in the metropolis. This might be best exemplified by a scene in the beginning of the novel, where Haroon exercises in preparation for impersonating a guru, asking his son to read to him from a yoga book bought in London. Karim, on the other hand, "imagined [himself] to be on the stage of the Old Vic," a renowned theatre in London, and "declaimed grandly" (*Buddha* 5). Exposing the future careers of the father and son in London, Kureishi illustrates the point that everyday performances can be rehearsals for professional and theatrical ones.

Performances shape identity and record "*a reiteration of norms which precede, constrain, and exceed the performer*" in the cultural position of performers. Karim's accumulation of cultural capital, via his daily consumption, to a great extent from the supply of Haroon's lover Eva, has endowed him with different facets of identity in accordance with the future need of theatrical performance. London's cultural output, as influential performances, impels Karim to "study the *Melody Maker* and *New Musical Express* to keep up" (8), while any fashion industry in India or Pakistan has no appeal for him. Being that Western European and American cultures are significant imports for Britain, "sometimes [Karim and his girl friend] were French . . . and other times we went black American. The thing was, we were supposed to be English, but to the English we were always wogs and nigs and Pakis and the rest of it" (*Buddha* 52). Again, Karim and Jamila, his girl friend in the first half of the novel, are subject to the identity politics inherent in a globalized cultural industry, yet their Indo-Pakistani heredity makes their daily performance as Britons unthinkable for some racist "natives." In various cultural performances, an uneven distribution of power occurs in the global continuum of representation, providing cultural performers identity/character options, while at the same time relocating them in a performativity iterated by a structure not

easily shaken.

As narrator of *The Buddha*, Karim's verbal skills reflect invaluable capital gained from socialization, a process that can occur as early as in a phase of family education. Karim's cultural consumption is not the only means by which he accumulates cultural capital. Such capital can be further divided into three subtypes: embodied, objectified and institutionalised (Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital"47). Objectified capital, e.g., works of art, can be owned via purchase; institutionalized capital, usually understood as academic credentials or qualifications, is an official recognition of one's ability for the labor market. Cultural capital in an embodied state is "in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body" (Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital" 47). As a result, it has everything to do with one's habitus as ways of thinking and personal traits. Linguistic capital, defined as the mastery of and relation to language and culture shaped by "unequal social-class distribution" (Bourdieu, *Reproduction in Education* 115), is a component of the embodied capital found in Karim's lingual usage. Susie Thomas poignantly points out "the most pervasive comic effects in *The Buddha* is the use of the unnecessary detail" and "the frequent use of 'as if' similes" (85). His imaginings of himself declaiming on the Old Vic stage, as I mentioned before, creates a comic atmosphere by contrasting a theatre symbolic of high culture with his father's ludicrous yoga position in a mundane domestic scene, where his "balls and prick [fall] forward in his pants" (*Buddha* 4). Cited by Thomas, the "as if" similes in *Buddha* also help create comic effects by "generat[ing] a stream of bizarre comparisons" (Thomas 85). Haroon's domestic impotence, for example, is reflected in his clumsiness when changing Karim's diaper when he was still a toddler: "as if I [Karim] had the plague, he [Haroon] threw water at my legs while holding his nose with the other hand' (*Buddha* 26). Staged humorously in this novel way, Karim's comic depictions are raw material to be reprocessed and re-staged in his acting career.

As far as the narratology is concerned, “as if” similes serve a comic function “help[ing] to create the novel’s distinctive ambience of possibility; they are a reminder of an alternative, hypothetical reality” (Thomas 85). The alternative reality or possibility brought out by this narrative skill also reflects the performative self of the hero, whose juxtaposition between the referent and parallel, two repetitively used signifiers with their signified, creates a different reality in various times and spaces. Relating other people’s behavior in another reality one believes to be illustrative helps one impersonate the Other. For example, excited at his guru debut in Eva’s house, Haroon kisses his family “as if we’d recently been rescued from an earthquake’” (*Buddha* 3). Not knowing what is in Haroon’s heart exactly, Karim’s depiction of his father creates a vivid picture when translating the inner to the exterior. Repetitively practicing this method of portrayal further enables him to creatively perform off-stage life in the theatre. In this sense, “as if” similes are mental practices foreshadowing Karim’s stage roles as his relatives and friends; they help endow superficial daily realities with flesh and blood that suspend the audience’s disbelief.[33] In a play directed by Pyke, the famous and radical director in *Buddha*, “it was me [Karim] the audience warmed to. They laughed at my jokes, which concerned the sexual ambition and humiliation of an Indian in England” (*Buddha* 220).

Karim’s linguistic capital is a part of the cultural capital passed down to him by his father. Bourdieu argued that, except for economic factors, “cultural habits and . . . dispositions inherited from” the family are fundamentally important for individual success (Bourdieu and Passeron, *The Inheritors* 14). Karim’s self-claim: “I was the nosiest person I’d ever met” is not incidental (Buddha 38-9). His familiarity with pop culture may be ascribed to the power of cultural marketing, yet his acquaintance with

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[33] For more discussions about “as if” similes and narrative strategies in *Buddha*, see Susie Thomas’s *Hanif Kureishi*, 85-86.

canonical literature is clearly shadowed by Haroon's. Not every second-generation Commonwealth diasporan can engage in discourses surrounding cultural celebrities, canonical writers and their works as if they are his or her close friends. Karim calls Changez, an immigrant fresh-off the boat, "Not-Flaubert" given that "he has a similar grey moustache, two double chins, and not much hair" (*Buddha* 78). At Eva's party, Karim has no difficulty recognizing big names "like Dvořák, Krishnamurti and Eclectic" (*Buddha* 12). Without official training in acting, he prepares Sam Shepard's *The Mad Dog Blues* for an audition (*Buddha* 138). Haroon, a first generation Indian immigrant who wants to discuss "Byron in local pubs" and enjoys Chekov, Pink Floyd and Nat King Cole is responsible for his son's cultural capital. Kureishi's reflection on his father's conversational style with his brothers tellingly illuminates this novel with some autobiographical undertones:

> . . . when dad took me to London to visit Omar [Omar Kuerishi, a distinguished Pakistani writer], the other brothers and their friends, the conversation, aided by alcohol, was lively and loud. . . . It was so full of jokes, witticisms, filthy stories and political comment about both Britain and Pakistan, and gossip about sport – a extemporary surreal flow – that I saw that conversation was not the exchange of information, but a masculine pleasure, an exercise in imagination and knowledge even. (Kureishi, *My Ear at His Heart* 30)

Karim must have gained a great deal from impromptu speeches like this, or Eva, Haroon's mistress and oratorical speaker, would not find him "with [his] father's wonderful but crushing wit" (*Buddha* 9).

Karim's daily performances also create a self-image attracting others with similar tastes, which to a certain degree forwards mutual understandability and reliability salient for theatrical cooperation. While an actor may be cast for faithful

impersonation of a character, a common knowledge background and way of communication ensure a successful production process. Without theatrical experiences, Karim's family education, cultural consumption, and Eva's endorsement of his self-training, lure the theatre director Shadwell. Although he tells Karim he has been "cast for authenticity and not for experience" for the role of Mowgli, the Indian protagonist in Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (*Buddha* 147), Shadwell's choice of an amateur of mixed blood, among so many second-generation "immigrants" more directly related to India, tellingly exposes the importance of authentic cultural capital. Here, personal disposition, familiarity with humanist thinking and style of expression contribute to theatrical performance as importantly as professional training. As a cultural field in need of low-level economic capital and high-level cultural capital, professional theatre erects a barrier of entrance for cultural inferiors, despite that some of them, in this case, may look more Indian than Karim.

Shadwell, is a white British director who has chosen to produce an adaptation of *The Jungle Book*, written by a novelist notorious for his sentiment of British imperialism in its heyday. The adaptation then becomes a target around which critics explore Orientalism, marginalization, cultural politics, and racialization. Shadwell's desire to create an authentic Indian image on stage drives him to smear Karim with "shit-brown cream," for his skin color is not dark enough, and to have him mimic an Indian accent. Because of this, Berthold Schoene claims that:

> What Kureishi exposes here is the contrived nature of concepts of ethnicity which accentuate difference while eradicating all traces of potential sameness. . . . It is symptomatic of panic of the erstwhile hegemonic English self that Shadwell should try to remold Karim's cultural unintelligiblility into something more clearly recognizable, using ample lashings of 'the brown muck' (BS 146) of Orientalist differentiation. (121)

In addition to Schoene's analysis of an Orientalized representation of a contrived ethnicity, Yu-cheng Lee learns Shadwell's "demand for authenticity [of Mowgli's Indianness] is governed by a logic of marketplace" (4). Moreover, this "stereotyping of minorities" continues "marginalization" of subordinate subjects, which, like Schoene has asserted, "is a fear of transgression" (Lee 5). Moore-Gilbert has pointed out, "It is Shadwell, not Kipling, who is responsible for Karim's demeaning mock-Indian accent and the director's choice that Karim go on stage looking 'like a Black and White Minstrel' " (125). Staged in the late 1970s, a postcolonial era when Britain's economic downturn stirred "colonial nostalgia" (Lee 5) in some Britons, Shadwell's *The Jungle Book* echoes "Raj revivalism" despite his left liberal stance (Moore-Gilbert 124).

However, just as the director's intention never single-handedly determined the actor's performance, nor the success, failure, or social impact of the play, Karim's on-stage identity shall be considered in a far more complicated context, along with neo- or post-colonial practices. First, given the textual structure of Kipling's *The Jungle Book*, formerly relegated to the category of children's fiction, or read in a Disney-fied version, this work is now often discussed because of its imperialist connotations in the field of literary criticism. Depicting a man-cub raised by wolves in the Indian jungle, the story is seen to include "racialized and interrelated images of Indian children and animals contribut[ing] to an imagining of Englishness as a site of power and racial superiority" (Nyman 205). A world composed of jungle, animals and a nearby village appears to perfectly reflect the dichotomy between civilized colonials and uncivil natives. Moreover, the animal world is further divided into two main categories, the good and the bad. The former, like "trust worth wolves, . . . rational brown bears, and reliable mongooses obey naturalized hierarchies and social

contracts," and hence model a colonized and obedient subaltern under British rule. The latter, like native snakes and degenerate monkeys, or worst, Shere Khan the tiger, "whose message consists of anti-colonialist rhetoric combining notions of man-eating and racial difference," are rebels against the colonizer and/or Western rationality (Nyman 208).

A clear cut world it may look like, but Mowgli's identity as a human being with access to culture—a demonstration of his rationality, and belonging to a cosmopolitan animal world, a space critically equated with the colonized Other—renders the above Manichean reading of rational/colonial self and animal-like/native other insufficient. Choosing an Indian boy to be his hero, the text outplays Kipling's colonial mindset claimed by postcolonial critics, for by doing so, Indians are demonstrated to be born with rationality, something which seems even more universal given good animals are rendered so and obey to Law of the Jungle. Despite its imperial shading, all of these ambivalences contribute to *The Jungle Book*'s success as children's Bildungsroman—which disciplines children via adult rationality. Karim, a teenager in the beginning of *Buddha,* is familiar with Mowgli and "certainly, has no objections to Kipling's text in itself" (Moore-Gilbert 125). In an earlier episode, Karim imitates Mowgli hunting Shere Khan in his pursuit of Jamila, reflecting his identification with the hero as an imitable subject. A hero characteristic in Bildungsroman, Mowgli's acceptance and use of rationality, as well as his double identity attract metropolitan audiences, especially children, to identify themselves with him. Kipling's Orientalist imagination carves out a third space where Indians gain their humanity and subjectivity, mirror images for both Anglo-British and non-white audiences to identify with.[34]

[34] For more discussion of interrelation between *Buddha* and Kipling, see Moore-Gilbert's in-depth analysis in his *Hanif Kureishi*, 124-127.

Shadwell's casting of Anglo-Britons as animals and Karim as Mowgli also helps to redefine the Imperial order. Despite his Indian accent and appearance, in loin cloth and brown muck, Karim plays a role symbolic of human civilization in the animal world. When the Anglo-British performers (as animals) speak their lines in British English, a Mowgli with "authentic" skin color and Indian English reverses a colonial binary between civilized colonizer and animal-like natives. As the plot unfolds, Indian accent and brown skin color resemble nothing more than simple indicators of the story's backdrop. The sharp contrast (also some parallels) between an animal world and human civilization will in many times draw audiences out of the colonized/colonizer binary into a fanciful natural world where white and non-white performers imitate animal sounds and movements, against an all too familiar civilization. Kipling's animal world therefore incites human desire for an uncivilized nature, and continues to mitigate Shadwell's accentuation of ethnic "difference" or the authenticity of India (Schoene 121).

Shadwell's ideal of Mowgli stems not merely from colonial desire for a "hegemonic English self" (Schoene 121), but also a need for alternative cultures to fill cultural emptiness in the post-1960s Western self. Like those suburbanites who venerate Haroon's Buddhist teaching and are desperate for the exotic India, Shadwell accumulates his cultural capital as a director via alternative or radical practices. As Karim observes, "He was being totally homosexual . . . except that even that was a pose, a ruse, a way of self-presentation" (*Buddha* 133). Together with a performed gay identity, an East self formerly deemed as oppressed Other turns out to be privileged in the high-culture circle. To achieve this, he learns "Punjab or Urdu," "though sounded like he was gargling" (*Buddha* 140), and familiarizes himself with locations such as "Bombay, Delhi, Madras, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Trivandrum, Goa, the Punjab" (*Buddha* 141). Another way to demonstrate his identity is to side himself

with the marginalized and victimized, a position of subjectivity he fits Karim in. This postcolonial performance, probably a cultural taste gaining fashion in London cultural circles in the late 1970s (incidentally, Said's *Orientalism* is published in 1978), elevates the minority onto a higher stratum of cultural hierarchy by merely accentuating their cultural differences—a sort of differentiation not far from some postcolonial studies where ideas like victimization, racialization, and discrimination help shape an oppressive Eurocentric self and oppressed Orientalized Other. Learning that Karim can speak no language from India and has "never been there" (*Buddha* 141), Shadwell suggests he pilgrimage there, as "if it's the last thing you do in your life" (*Buddha* 141). Stereotyping as that may be, Shadwell's interest in Karim/India reveals a postcolonial British identity in need of fertilization by its ex-colonials, among other global forces. He correctly recognizes that Karim, though "from Orpington," cannot sever himself from "a breed of people two hundred years of imperialism has given birth to" (*Buddha* 141). While Karim's ethnic complexity sells him on Shadwell's need to realize his leftist doctrines, the director knows Karim's body meets the marketing strategy for white audiences. As Mariam Fraser points out in her "Classing Queer: Politics in Competition," "[t]he accent on visibility politics since the 1960s – encapsulated in slogans such as 'Out and Proud' or 'Black is Beautiful' – bears witness to the belief that visibility is a source of power" (114). Skin color on stage helps aestheticize the mundane into "a privileged visible signifier of difference" that gains Karim cultural capital and paradoxically spotlights his subjectivity in his role (Ranasinha 74). This evidences that intentions of commodification and stereotyping do not necessarily lead to negative results, especially for non-white immigrants prejudiced by some mass media. After the show, Karim "liked being recognized in the pub . . . and made [himself] conspicuous in case anyone wanted [his] autograph" (*Buddha* 158).

Among critics' heavy discussions on Shawell's (mis-)representation of Mowgli, Karim's reaction toward this casting, as well as his self-image, are rarely discussed. Before exploring Karim's resistant mindset against Shadwell's theatrical representation of Kipling's original, whether a Mowgli speaks in Indian English is inevitably mocked, as Moore-Gilbert believes (Moore-Gilbert 125), is arguable. If imitating different tones is part of the fundamentals for an actor, an accent can be mocked when its user is characterized to serve as a foil to cultural supremacy of other communities. Without such a prerequisite, Karim directly reaches a conclusion: "Being a human zoo was acceptable, provided the Indian accent was off the menu" (*Buddha* 147). His double standard is conspicuous. As if mimicking an animal is free from identity politics, Karim deems animals as commodities worthy of fetishizing, while Indian English, practiced by so many people either in Britain or other places, is regarded as a low caste among other English accents around the globe. It is because Karim, as an amateur actor, combines his debut character with his cultural belongingness off-stage, that his repulsion with Indian selfhood is revealed. A new resident in London Karim compares his old suburban identity to Haroon's colonized hometown, a town he has never been to: "In London the kids looked fabulous; they dressed and walked and talked like little gods. We could have been from Bombay. We'd never catch up" (*Buddha* 127-28). In a similar case, when "enjoying the fighting at Millwall Football Ground," Karim "forced Changez to wear a bobble-hat over his face in case the lads saw he was a Paki and imagined I [Karim] was one too" (*Buddha* 98). That Karim tends to mock his Aunty Jeeta's accent is perhaps the fittest example in this novel showing of how a colonial accent is not only marginalized, but ridiculed and debased (*Buddha* 26). That said, if Shadwell represents a stereotyping of non-whites on stage in the postcolonial era, Karim holds, and helps solidify, colonial mentality. Karim's racist discrimination of Indians (with their accent, skin color, and

culture), is much more negative than Shadwell's and white suburbanites' fascination with the East, revealing his own cultural elitism that help justify imperialism and racism against immigrants in Britain. This is why Karim phrases his feelings on the costuming like so: "I feel that together we're making the world uglier" (*Buddha* 146). This aesthetic judgment stems from a hierarchical division of dressing and pronunciation between different nationalities.

Different responses from the audience on Karim's performance of Mowgli unveil that meanings related to performance and the performer's identity are highly subjective. This condition is complicated when spectators sorted out for response are from different ethnicities, generations, and have different relationships with the performer. Haroon deems the whole production as a "Bloody half-cocked business," for "That bloody fucker Mr [sic] Kipling pretending to whity he knew something about India!" Knowing well his son's detached connection with India, he also criticizes "an awful performance by [his] boy looking like a Black and White Minstrel!" (*Buddha* 157). Likewise, Jamila is of the opinion that "the play is completely neo-fascist," being that Karim was "just pandering to prejudices" by having "the accent and the shit . . . smeared over [himself]" (*Buddha* 157). Changez's reaction, on the contrary, is not far from comments on Disney's 1967 production of *The Jungle Book*, which can easily be found on movie websites (Karim may probably enjoy this version, as he tells Shadwell he has seen the film): "Fortunately, Changez had chuckled all through the show. 'Good entertainment,' he said. 'Take me again, Eh?'" (*Buddha* 157). The latest immigrant from India to Britain, Changez's response supports that the usage of Indian accent and darkened skin color of Mowgli succumbs to Kipling's storytelling. Theatrical elements like visual, acoustical, and choreographic effects, as well as Mowgli's stage movement and that of the animal characters, help reorient the metropolitan audiences to a wild nature where India has

little importance as the show's background. A first generation immigrant like Changez, Haroon's conception of his hometown is quite different: "We old Indians come to like this England less and less and we return to an imagined India" (*Buddha* 74). Staying in Britain and experiencing a taste of racism over twenty years, Haroon idealizes and absolutizes India to the extent that any description of India, even Kipling's 19th century jungle the young Haroon as a metropolitan has never been to, is falsified by his mechanism of authentication. Jamila's comments, obviously related to her background knowledge of colonialism, recognize yet endorse the prejudice: Indian accent shall not be staged for it is inferior.[35]

Karim's switch between Indian accent and "suddenly relapsing into cockney at odd times" (*Buddha* 158), compels most critics to "note that Karim is not merely a victim but subverts the stereotype" of Indians (Thomas 70). It is noteworthy that Karim's performance, subjective and subversive as it may be, is deeply embedded in performativity that shapes daily identities of audiences and himself, and is further related to dramatic effectiveness required by theatre. First, accent changes are widely used in acting to create variety and draw laughter. Despite the fact that Shadwell aims to pepper his jungle with exoticism, Mowgli's Indian accent from start to finish neutralizes the audience's sense of freshness. This is why Shadwell asks Karim to add "animal noises" when he speaks with different animal characters (*Buddha* 147). Second, the audience's laughter proves an intersection between performativity as ground knowledge and the specific performance they perceive. If Shadwell's stereotyping of Indian accent represents a hegemonic practice of colonial imagination still lingering in the post-colonial era, why do these white spectators laugh at Karim's

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[35] Having not experienced Britain's imperial racism against himself, Changez enjoys the play in the same way as people all around the world laugh with Disney's production of *The Jungle Book*. Near the end of this novel, Changez calls Karim's impersonation based upon himself as a "white people's thing" (*Buddha* 274), since then he might have born enough "unfriendly cold England" (*Buddha* 101), or catered to Jamila's anti-colonial stance.

dropping of the stereotype? Should not these white people feel strange and amazed, rather than laughable, being that a person with Indian appearance speaks in Cockney? The fact is, a social milieu channeled through daily speech between Britons of different ethnicities, understood by Butler as her idea of performativity, enables Anglo-Britons to recognize a populace of second-generation diasporans in London. These diasporans, whose daily usage of English without their parents' accents is *performed* so repetitively that no one finds it strange. Suspending their disbelief, audiences know well the distance between staged character and the actor, laughing wholeheartedly when disparities between staged and "real" identities are ironically juxtaposed. Under such circumstances, an oppositional agency like Karim can be located "as a reiterative or rearticulatory practice, immanent to power, and not a relation of external opposition to power," for "[t]he subject who would resist such [regulatory, constraining] norms is itself enabled, if not produced, by such norms" (Butler, *Bodies* 15). Moreover, Karim had to take the initiative in shifting the accent and recalling Anglo-Britons back to the reality that non-white subjects are as complex as themselves and have joined a heterogeneous British culture. Before stepping onto the stage, Karim's cultural capital is not involved in the chain of production and supply, and hence his subjectivity is easily weakened under the shadow of Imperial glory. With two different accents, Karim helps create a postcolonial performativity among those created by diaspora writers in Britain. Karim's non-white skin color, along with his performances, are reproducible cultural capital authenticating and elevating his subjectivity, paradoxically, via a process of commodification.

This Foucauldian exercise of power is also seen in the relationship between actor and director. Since success of a play relies on the chemistry betwen contributions and interactions among crew members, the director must include creative space for actors. Shadwell has no objection to Karim's shift in accent because

it works well. No wonder during the production, Karim

> started to make little demands of Shagbadly [Shadwell]. I required a longer rest; and could I be driven home by someone, as I felt so tired? I had to have Assam tea (with a touch of lap sang souchong) available at all times during rehearsal. Could that actor slide a little to the right; no, a little further. I began to see that I could ask for the things I needed. I gained confidence. (*Buddha* 150)

Karim's identity as the only ethnic actor mentioned in Shadwell's theatre has gain him a certain amount of culture capital and de-racialized his body in some cases. Later, Karim is invited to Shadwell's production of *Molière*'s *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* (The Bourgeois Gentleman), a play, without race issues that satirizes social climbing by poking fun at pretentious bourgeoisie and snobbish aristocracy.[36] Ironically, Karim refuses this opportunity to continue his route of social climbing by joining the well-known director Mathew Pyke's production, involving himself in a new circle of racilization.

Kureishi's own engagement in fringe theatre leads Karim to engage in Pyke's world of alternative theatre. As to what the novelist does in portraying Shadwell's troupe, issues of identity politics shed light both on and off stage. The critical difference lies in Pyke's radicalism and apparent politically corrected liberalism, which may leave more space for Karim to represent his non-stereotyped identity.

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[36] It is much more than interesting to envisage which costume or accent Shadwell will have Karim put on in Molière's play, as well as the future development of Karim if he chooses to stay with Shadwell. According the director's realistic strategy, Karim has no need to put on any accent, perhaps except for a French one. Yet without his physicality or paternal culture as his selling point, and experience and high publicity as an actor, Karim has little chance to take a major role in this play. Also, Shadwell can look far less dangerous and more considerate than Karim's next director Pyke. Tyring to detain Karim in his production, Shadwell claims "We all love you here" (*Buddha* 165). His seemingly exaggerate criticism of Pyke is later verified as the plot develops. "You [Karim] haven't the experience to deal with Pyke. You'll be mincemeat within three days. You've got no idea what a tough fucking bastard Pyke is. He's charming, all right All interesting people have charm. But he'll crucify you!" (*Buddha* 165).These are just a few examples to illustrate human relationship is too complicated to be racialized completely.

Having the sweet taste of fame by playing Mowgli, Karim has no idea that Pyke, unearthing him in Shadwell's small production, is partly attracted by his ethnicity as Shadwell is. Inviting Karim in a production "revolving around [class as] the only subject . . . in England," Pyke offers Karim the role of "someone from his background" to "give the play a little variety" (*Buddha* 170). Again, Karim's cultural heritage, of which his physicality is a part, is the most salient, if not the only raw material for white directors. Pyke's casting rationale shows that even in an alternative field, difference and distinction are critical in marketing because they are "fascinating" to audiences weary with stereotypes repetitively foreground by the mainstream (*Buddha* 170). Based on this, fringe directors need original experiences of gay and lesbians, marginalized women, minority ethnicities, working and under class for them to fashion a camp story with cool Others against straight, null, and usually oppressive classes.

Karim's choice of minority characters, this time out of his own free will, evokes debate about whether a collective black identity against whites' representations, or individual freedom of expressing a dark side of reality is at stake. Karim's first attempt to stage Anwar, his uncle who once forced his daughter Jamila to marry Changez via a Gandhian hunger strike, is opposed by Tracey, an African-British actress in the same troupe:

> 'I'm afraid it [Karim's Anwar] shows black people –'
> 'Indian people –'
> 'Black and Asian people –'
> 'One old Indian man – '
> 'As being irrational, ridiculous, as being hysterical. And as being fanatical.'
> . . . .
> 'And that arranged marriage. It worries me. Karim, with respect, it

> worries me.'
>
> . . . .
>
> 'Your [Karim's] picture is what white people already think of us. That we're funny, with strange habits and weird customs. To the white man we're already people without humanity, and then you go and have Anwar madly waving his stick at the white boys. I can't believe that anything like this could happen. You show us as unorganized aggressors . . .'
>
> . . . .
>
> 'But this sounds like censorship.'
>
> 'We have to protect our culture at this time, Karim. Don't you agree?'
>
> 'No. Truth has a higher value.'
>
> 'Pah. Truth. Who defines it? What truth? It's white truth you're defending here. It's white truth we're discussing.' (*Buddha* 180-81)

Tracey's argument, in light of the damage racism has on non-white Britons, is quite understandable. This leads Gayatri Spivak to claim Tracey's political maturity in opposition to Karim's naivety ("The Burden of English" 293). Arguments as such may be based upon two premises. First, white audiences are supposed to be a homogeneous whole easily disregarding diaspora and post-colonial contexts attached to Anwar's deeds, hence believing them symbolic of all "blacks." Second, ethnic characters are better performed without unfavorable traits, and by doing so, racist, derogative, or stereotyped attitudes toward minorities can be eased or rectified. However, a close reading of Karim's answer renders Tracey's homogenization arguable. Anwar's protest, reflecting certain patriarchal elements in Muslim society, is based on the script of civil disobedience developed by Gandhi, representative of the best elements of Hinduism. Waving a stick at white boys, Anwar's action clearly illustrates the plight of non-white immigrants in Britain. This performative stance, when juxtaposed with his "behaving like a Muslim" (*Buddha* 64), is "presented as performance" to deal with his cultural dislocation (Ranasinha 69). Complicated and

specific as Anwar's case is, how could a white audience relate it to other immigrant cultures from East Asia, Caribbean, Africa, i.e., the so-called "Black and Asian people?" Is Gandhi's co-presence with the staged Anwar not strong enough to expose the diversity of Indian culture? Tracey's indictment of Karim's "white truth" is also ironic when Pyke, as a white director, agrees with her, asking Karim not to "restrict [his] range either as an actor or as a person" (*Buddha* 181). While "emancipation of individual identity from perceptions of allegedly innate ethnic propensities and characteristics" is not an easy task for audiences (Schoene 123), a requirement of ethnic roles to be politically correct can be in danger of flattening representations of ethnic subjectivity into another stereotype, hence failing to remind white audiences of the complexity and humanity of non-whites they encounter in daily life.

Karim's choice of Changez as his persona, after his model of Anwar is rejected, raises questions of performance ethic, survival strategy of the minority, and habitus that empowers the performer and shapes the audience's response. When playing ethnic characters is the sole condition for his first performance in Pyke's production, Karim faces a moral dilemma because Changez rejects his impersonation: "If I defied Changez, if I started work on a character based on him, if I used the bastard, it meant that I was untrustworthy, a liar" (*Buddha* 186). This moral knot occurs not only with workers in the theatre, but in all cultural productions involved in translating identities of Others into marketable works. Like Kureishi, who continues to stage real people in his novels, films and plays, Karim has little choice for social mobility if he stops selling his acquaintances. Fortunately, Karim's farcical performance, though stereotyping and ridiculing Indian immigrants, is eased a bit by Pyke's plotting:

> 'There it is,' Pyke said. 'Tariq comes to England, meets an English journalist on the plane – played by Eleanor, no, by Carol. This is real

> quality, upper-class crumpet. He is briefly among the upper classes because of her, which gives us another area to examine! Girls fall for him all over the place because of his weakness and need to be mothered. So. We have class, race, fucking and farce. What more could you want as an evening's entertainment?' (*Buddha* 189)

Developing Karim's version of Tariq, the renamed Changez on stage, Pyke plots an encounter between the colonizer and formerly colonized to reveal the insecurity of a first generation immigrant. No longer a powerless Other for exploitation, or a threatening native in colonial imaginations, Tariq in the postcolonial era is as loved as Haroon is by white women. Partly because of this, "Tracey's face was well and truly shut" after Pyke illustrated his adaptation (*Buddha* 189). Tariqu/Changez's identity as an outsider further draws the attention of audiences tired of local perception of themselves:

> The other actors had the loaded lines, the many-syllabled political analysis, the flame-throwing attacks on pusillanimous Labour governments, but it was me the audience warmed to. They laughed at my jokes, which concerned the sexual ambition and humiliation of an Indian in England. (*Buddha* 220)

Although Pyke's script is not positive enough for many non-whites still misrepresented in Britain, Karim's ridiculous version of his immigrant friend is ameliorated by Pyke's usage of an ex-colonized character to satirize the British upper class. Moreover, Karim's performance endows subjectivity (telling jokes) and the victimized condition (his humiliation) with a minority character. The overall outcome of this production, as Eva comments, is far beyond racialization of the immigrant: "It was about this country. . . . About how callous and bereft of grace we've become. It blew away the self-myth of tolerant, decent England" (Buddha 228).

To Karim's surprise, his performance as such does not irritate Changez in the auditorium. This is because one's appropriation of another person's character can never fully represent the original, if it ever exists, and the performance outcome is always a creation of a new (temporal) self. As Changez comments, "I am glad in your part you [Karim] kept it fundamentally autobiographical and didn' try the leap of invention into my character. You realized clearly that I am not a person who could be successfully impersonated" (*Buddha* 231). We should not reduce his refusal of imitability into some psychological mechanism of self defense. As Richard Schechner's notable performance theory goes,

> In theatre, actors onstage do more than pretend. The actors live a double negative. While performing, actors are not themselves nor are they the characters. Theatrical role-playing takes place between "not me . . . not not me." The actress is not Ophelia, but she is not not Ophelia. (Schechner 72)

Similarly, the character Tariq is not Changez, nor is he Karim before his involvement of the role. However, since Tariq is "fundamentally autobiographical" of Karim as Changez puts it, the creation of a new character is shown to be entangled with part of an always heterogeneous self, constantly altered and reaffirmed by habitus as a structuring and structured construction. The importance of self in performance is mentioned in Pyke's abstruse remark:

> What a strange business this acting is. . . . you are trying to convince people that you're someone else, that this is not-me. . . . [But] when in character, playing not-me, you have to be yourself. . . . Paradox of paradoxes: to be someone else successfully you must be yourself. (*Buddha* 219-20)

To create a successful performance, Karim must unearth those parts of his selfhood composed of interactions with Changez. These include images of first generation immigrants from India that have imprinted on his mind, as well as social agency empowered by his own subjectivity. The process of rehearsing Changez inevitably requires and allows Karim to reorganize his piecemeal selves into a new and holistic one:

> I uncovered notions, connections, initiatives I didn't even know were present in my mind. . . . I saw that creation [of an identity] was an accretive process which couldn't be hurried, and which involved patience and, primarily, love. I felt more solid myself, and not as if my mind were just a kind of cinema for myriad impressions and emotions to flicker through. (*Buddha* 217)

This is why Kipling cannot help but create Mowgli with a complex identity, for the author himself has been hybridized by discourses and experiences that prevent his mindset from merely being imperialist.

Kureishi's perspective on the performance of ethnicity in *Buddha*, while continually manifesting both the contrived nature of race and dangers of stereotyping, looks optimistic after Karim was "given a part in a new soap opera which would tangle with the latest contemporary issues: they meant abortions and racist attacks, the stuff that people lived through but that never got on TV" (*Buddha* 259). Karim is also aware that taking this role will come with economic, cultural and symbolic capital: "If I accepted the offer I'd play the rebellious student son of an Indian shopkeeper. Millions watched those things. I would have a lot of money. I would be recognized all over the country. My life would change overnight" (*Buddha* 259). Because of the rapid development of electronic media, endeavors for racial equality are more likely to be represented despite the prolongation of other racialized and misrepresented

information. For example, the anti-racist parade, after Changez is attacked, is more likely to be reported throughout the country. Also, the need for representations of a changing ethnic structure around the audience's daily life helps incur more dramatic roles for non-whites in the information society. The more accessible the information is, the more intellectually hungry audiences ask for cultural producers to represent the ethnic status quo in Britain. This is why, despite "commercial and critical success" of Raj Revival cinema in Britain (Moore-Gilbert 73), representations of contemporary Britain always find their consumers in a diversified market. From staging the Imperial boy Mowgli to the first generation immigrant Changez, finally as a perhaps London-born son of an Indian, Karim gradually gains a role close to his real self. As Jung Su claims:

> Karim sells exoticism to gain himself a new right of representation. . . . In other words, in the process where Karim strives for a space he belongs in the metropolis, he acquires the right of cultural criticism by negotiating legitimacy of authenticity with the mainstream and making concession timely. (100)

Exoticism is a salient yet never the only determinant of Karim's success. His performance of Mowgli, Changez and the rebellious son either conveys the subjectivity of these roles, or acutely criticizes Britain's intolerance. This accounts that seizing the chance of playing exotic roles is the first step toward changing misconceptions of minorities. Finally, Karim's concession not only gains him the right of representation, but also improves his social mobility that redefines his minority status in Britain.

Karim's journey into London also foregrounds a world of theatre around which class identities are hinged and displayed both on and off stage. This is perhaps

because most workers in this sort of high end cultural production are white Britons with a politically left-leaning tendency, whose respect for oppressed classes and ethnicity usually seems to sharply contrast with their privileged cultural and economic status. Shadwell and Pyke's fascination with alternative culture is just the tip of the iceberg in their leftist performance. Being that theatre is a cooperative artistic form in need of production members with different specialties, Kureishi orchestrates his class symphony through daily performances of actors, directors, and audiences. In doing so, *Buddha* not only records Karim's social climbing and class consciousness made possible by these characters, but also details how white characters try to locate themselves in postcolonial and late capitalist London, equally through social and cultural mobility.

A "star of the flourishing alternative theatre scene" and "one of the most original directors around" (*Buddha* 159), Pyke occupies a leading position in the sub-field of small-scale production, "having a relatively high degree of autonomy, but never full autonomy" in the field of cultural production (Hesmondhalgh 214). This sort of theatrical production, on the basis of Pyke's fame and his avant-gardeness, demands radical performances continually practice off-stage to shape on-stage characters. For example, his verbal plays reach far beyond the language Karim uses in his suburban family:

> Pyke's morning began with breakfast and essential gossip around the table, the cruelty and extremity of which I'd never experienced before. My mother would never have let us talk about anyone like that. Pyke attacked other directors ('He couldn't direct air out of a puncture'); writers he didn't like ('I would gladly have handed him over to Stalin for reeducation'); and critics ('His face would make pregnant women abort on sight')". After this we'd get up and play tag, or have piggyback races, or play 'What's the time, Mr Wolf?' (*Buddha* 168)

This advantageous cultural production, despite being rarely enjoyed by those with political or economic power, is endorsed and receives funding for its high cultural and symbolic capital, respectively defined as "accumulated prestige or honour" and "knowledge, skills and other cultural acquisitions" (Thompson 14). Pyke's methodology of training aims to defamiliarize accustomed ways of looking at the world, provoking Karim "to think of what the suburban commuters in our street, who were paying for us through their taxes, would have made of a gang of grown-ups being pop-up toasters, surfboards and typewriters" (*Buddha* 168).

In such a small-scale production backed by national capitalism (i.e., funding via taxpayer dollars) and endorsed by his symbolic capital ("one of the most original directors around"), Pyke is a cultural elite with power to determine the social, economic, and cultural success of his subordinates. In this novel he is the director for whom actors "ached to be remembered: upon such memories an actor's life depended" (*Buddha* 159). Based on this, Pyke successfully exploits actors' life experiences. "Each of [his actors] had to tell the rest of the group the story of [their] life" (*Buddha* 168). Karim's impersonation of Changez is but one example of Pyke's ability to maximize his cultural capital and creative capability. His intervention in the private lives of his troupe further shows that not everyone in the postmodern era can have a blurred boundary between public and private, on- and off-stage, work and play as they wish. Eleanor, Karim's favorite actress, turns out to love him in accordance with Pyke's suggestion. His delight at being invited to Pyke's house ends in humiliation at the sex party, where "England's most interesting and radical theatre director was inserting his cock between [Karim's] speaking lips," and Eleanor was expressing her desire to make love to Pyke (*Buddha* 203). Even Karim's counterattack is delimited safely and enjoyed by the director: "I gave his dick a South

London swipe – not viciously, nor enough to have my part in the play reduced – but enough to give him a jolt. When I looked up for his reaction it was to see him murmuring his approval" (*Buddha* 203). With economic and cultural capital, Pyke has his favored lifestyle and class identity under control, just as he directs the on- and off-stage real life dramas of his troupe. On the one hand, Pyke's upper middle class is enough to have is son go to costly public school "[f]ull of media fuck-wits with parents who work at the BBC" (*Buddha* 200). On the other hand, his leftist identity is reaffirmed when he unhesitatingly gives Karim a check to support a far-leftist party. Pyke's ambition "to becoming a brilliant director and to sleeping with as many women as [he] could" (*Buddha* 190) tellingly illustrates a circulation of symbolic and cultural capital. His fame and power as a director enable him to recruit more "chic" actors and actresses. Making love with them also helps him unearth more private stories for his directing. In comparison with Pyke's theatrical maneuver, Karim's borrowing of Changez's character is of trivial importance. Pyke's frankness in his manipulation of others' lives and his sexual adventures with different ethnicities and genders as daily practices, are highly contrasted and comically foiled by Shadwell's pose. Eager to be a first-class director, Shadwell struggles to make an affectation of his alternative identity, "being totally homosexual" (*Buddha* 133), or imitating how "he thought geniuses worked" in his "tense and chaotic rehearsals" (*Buddha* 168).

If Pyke is the character who most resembles Karim's ideal self, one who fucks "girls and boys" in London (*Buddha* 121), Eleanor is the very sex/love target through whom he can affirm a successful class and ethnic upgrade. However, in Eleanor's case, Karim is given a lesson again about the uneven structure of class, as well as daily performance of some in the upper-middle class. Mistaking stereotyped appearance for nature, like those interpreting his Indianness, Karim "was misled by my ignorance of London into thinking my Eleanor was less middle class than she turned out to be"

(*Buddha* 173). This illustrates that performance of class identity is much easier than that of a seeming immutable racial body. When different social thoughts are easily accessible to the (white) upper-middle class, and when they are quite aware of attacks against them, being criminals of imperialism and class exploitation, a part of them turns to the left, absorbing language and life styles of the masses to ensure their political correctness. "Eleanor dressed roughly, wearing a lot of scarves, lived in Notting Hill and – sometimes – talked with a Catford accent. [Karim's lower middle class] mother would have been appalled by Eleanor's clothes and manners, and her saying 'shit' and 'fuck' every ten seconds "(*Buddha* 173). Like Gene, a black actor who committed suicide, and Heater, a member of the working class welcomed by left wing actors, Eleanor is also in contact with people from the powerless class and race. Her anti-racist stance is all too clear when Karim asks her to donate to a leftist party, one Eleanor calls "an all-honky thing" and "not a Party for black people" (*Buddha* 238). However, if social inactivity is stereotypically attributed to the upper middle class as one of its defining traits, Eleanor is obviously a case still rooted in her class habitus. Her patronage of the minority seems to stay on the level of love relationship and verbal performance. As many in Pyke's troupe join an anti-racist parade, she is on a date with the director. Bradley Buchanan points out her feminism as "sadly incoherent" in her defense of her affair with Pyke, "a tyrannical and exploitative man" (49): "I can't have people – men – telling me what to do. If Pyke wants me to be with him, then I must follow my desire. There's so much for him to teach me" (*Buddha* 226). Her fascination with Pyke evidently exposes her desire for upward mobility via sexual attraction. That said, Jamila's criticism of Eleanor acutely outlines her privatism: "these people, actresses and such-like vain fools. The world burns and they comb their eyebrows. Or they try and put the burning world on the stage. It never occurs to them to dowse the flames" (*Buddha* 176).

Eleanor's class habitus, compared to Karim's lower-middle class origin, reveals how social inequality is reproduced. Eleanor's upper and upper-middle class world carries linguistic capital more powerful than Kairm's. "[F]rightened of their confidence, education, status, money, and . . . beginning to see how important they were" (*Buddha* 174), Karim recognizes "[t]he easy talk of art, theatre, architecture, travel; the languages, the vocabulary, knowing the way round a whole culture . . . was invaluable and irreplaceable capital (*Buddha* 177). Observing Eleanor's world from a social climber's angle, Karim discovers these distinctions are as evident as the difference between first and second languages: "For Eleanor's crowd hard words and sophisticated ideas were in the air they breathed from birth, and this language was the currency that bought you the best of what the world could offer. But for [the suburban middle class] it could only ever be a second language, consciously acquired" (*Buddha* 178).[37] Acquiring her cultural capital, like learning a mother tongue, Eleanor represents performativity of her class that Eva the social climber can imitate by deliberate performance: "Eleanor's set, with their combination of class, culture and money, and their indifference to all three, was exactly the cocktail that intoxicated Eva's soul, but she could never get near it. This was unforced bohemia; this was what she sought; this was the apogee" (*Buddha* 174). Sadly, for those stay in the lower level of the social ladder, their inferior class status can be verbally and pretentiously reproduced by themselves. Ridiculing "bookish public school kids" as effeminate (*Buddha* 178) in his school days, Karim and his schoolmates emphasize their lower middle class or working class roughness as advantageous habitus. In this sense, accentuated performance in daily life contributes to reproduction of inequality and

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[37] To cross the lingual border between different classes is much easier than between different languages. That Karim uses "second language" as a trope for the cultural capital of upper or upper-middle class reflects his own superiority as the son of an Indian immigrant with a high cultural background. Because of his relatively advantageous class position, he is unaware of the fact that some non-white immigrants' incapability of speaking English deteriorates their minority status.

blinds performers' perception of their status quo with its dazzling appearances. Eleanor's appearance disillusions his teenage naivety, carving out a third space for him to see through the upper and lower-middle classes via the perspective of a class outsider/insider. His criticism of the high end cultural circle as empty is equally acute: "after a couple of hours with [Eleanor's] crowd I felt heavy and listless. Life had offered these people its lips, but . . . it as the kiss of death." As a result, he concludes that "the ruling class weren't worth hating" (*Buddha* 225). Yet the power of Eleanor's circle is too strong for Karim to resist, even when he sees it critically. "[S]urely one of the most egotistical . . . characters in contemporary British fiction . . . in his willingness to use others to get what he wants" (Brook 221), Karim decides to lose his accent because Eleanor describes it as a "street voice" like Cockney, though without any derogative intention. This further supports that Karim's hate of the Indian accent is class-based. His abject aversion to Cockney proves he despises anything that may be categorized, even by snobs, nationalists or racists, as being on a lower hierarchical level. Karim's mindset, disclosed during his social rise, explains why Pyke would go to such an extreme to assert that class is the only subject in England.

Terry and Heater, two supporting characters with white working class origins, parallel Karim's minority status by illuminating that, under certain conditions, an authentic oppressed identity is marketable. For Terry the actor, Pyke's success stems from "a lot of reformist and flatulent 'left-wing' politics! It's plump actors pretending to be working class, when their fathers are neuro-surgeons" (*Buddha* 160). However, even a "working-class Welsh man-boy" like him (*Buddha* 146) cannot remain immune from understanding class on the performance level, which means the complexity of a certain class is abstracted and reduced by the narrator's representation. Karim's suburban experiences with other members of the working class in the same school enable him to doubt Terry's verbal performances of class:

> [Terry] did believe the working class – which we referred to as if it were a single-willed person – would do somewhat unlikely things. 'The working class will take care of those bastards very easily,' he said, referring to racist organizations. 'The working class is about to blow,' he said at other times. 'They've had enough of the Labour Party. They want the transformation of society now!' . . . I wanted to tell him that the proletariat of the suburbs did have strong class feeling. It was virulent and hate-filled and directed entirely at the people beneath them. But there were some things it was hopeless to discuss with him. (*Buddha* 149)

Ironically, even Terry himself has no reaction when Shadwell, an obvious "bastard" associated with racist organizations in his definition, requests Karim to do the Indian accent. Afterwards he consoles Karim with a communist utopia where unfavorable directors will "return to the factory they came from" (*Buddha* 148). What he does not know is that, as a non-white Briton deemed by some white racists as "people beneath them," Karim has a taste of virulent and hate-filled working class fury when "Hairy Back," father of a white girl he was involved with, threatens to smash one of his black hands with a hammer (*Buddha* 40). His leftist jargon and job position as a theatre actor brings him a step away from his working class position, impairing his class authenticity for some in the radical upper-middle class. Like Karim, whose ethnic background is translated into his cultural capital, Terry hopes to attain upward social mobility in the theatrical world. As he once mentions, "I reckon [Pyke] wants my working-class experience to give his puerile political ideas some authenticity" (*Buddha* 163). However, the entrance barrier of a classed character is much more transgressible than that of a character defined by race. While an actor can easily play a role with different class background via gestures, accents, and costumes, one has difficulty staging a different ethnicity in order to convincingly get an audience to

suspend their disbelief merely by using these techniques. While physicality governs stage effect, and non-white immigrants become the most evident trait, visually or socially, of postcolonial Britain, Karim is the only actor cast by Pyke from Shadwell's troupe, where Terry is the most eager one to join Pyke. Another actor in Shadwell's production accurately comments on a shifting taste in late 1970s Britain: "If I weren't white and middle class I'd have been in Pyke's show now. Obviously mere talent gets you nowhere these days. Only the disadvantaged are going to succeed in seventies' England" (*Buddha* 165). Ironically, Pyke later earns more than Karim by impersonating a police sergeant, an agent of the ideological state apparatus representative of his political enemy. "[A]sked to open firework displays, judge play competitions and appear on celebrity game shows" (*Buddha* 197), Terry becomes a celebrity whose simulacra in a police-station drama accumulates symbolic capital, bringing more economic capital to his leftist party.

In contrast to Terry's weakened marketability of class background, Heater's job position as an authentic member of the working class makes his daily performance meaningful to those liberals haunted by their sense of guilt for their middle class origins. A "local road-sweeper" accepted and cultivated by left-wing actors, Heater monopolizes a market needing a "symbol of the masses" for his upper-middle class clients engaging in high culture, since he "was the only working-class person most of [those cultural elites] had met" (*Buddha* 175). Fantasies about the working class can also be represented to audiences via alternative theatre: "Pyke's shows were . . . commended for their fantastic intermissions . . . where the fashionable audience came dressed in such style they resembled Chinese peasants, industrial workers (boiler suits) or South American insurgents (berets)" (*Buddha* 160). Knowing they are just performing the working class as actors or audiences, the leftist middle class requires Heater's authenticity for their performances as citational acts, giving his words a

certain degree of truth that helps rectify middle class viewpoints cultural elites most want to shake off:

> [Heater] even popped in to dress rehearsals to give his opinion as 'a man in the street'. If you didn't adore Heater – and hated every repulsive inch of him – and listen to him as the authentic voice of the proletariat, it was easy, if you were middle class (which meant you were born a criminal, having fallen at birth) to be seen by the comrades and their sympathizers as a snob, an elitist, a hypocrite, a proto-Goebbels. (*Buddha* 175)

Heater's class authenticity echoes what props up Tracey's discursive power. When she criticizes Karim for his staging of Anwar, "[Karim] could see the others were prepared to agree with Tracey. It was difficult to disagree with someone whose mother you'd found kneeling in front of a middle-class house with a bucket and mop" (*Buddha* 181).

A similar basis of performance can be found in Karim's and Heater's examples. Familiarity with high and alternative culture is Heater and Karim's common capital to enter or socialize with the world of theatre. Reading Balzac and commenting on "the latest production of *Lear* or the *Ring*" in Eleanor's house,[38] Heater is a privileged class minority who can retain relations with cultural producers because of his capability of translating the world of his class into understandable language for the upper-middle class. Kureishi further shows how his advantage is earned via exchange between cultural capital of different classes, whose distance between one another makes grass on the other side greener. "Encouraged . . . to speak of knife fights, Glasgow poverty and general loucheness and violence," Heater will "bring up

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[38] *Lear* refers to Shakespeare's tragedy *King Lear*, while the *Ring* is Richard Wagner's opera, *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (*The Ring of the Nibelung*).

Beethoven's late quartets and something which bothered him in [Joris-Karl] Huysmans" (*Buddha* 176).[39]

The aforementioned performances related to the world of theatre find variations in three other major performers from the suburb—Haroon, Eva, and Eva's son Charlie. With Eva's encouragement and advice, Haroon, a first generation immigrant and a former member of the upper class on the subcontinent, plays the role of Buddhist guru despite his Muslim heredity. Kureishi's vivid description through the hero's eye shows how Haroon utilizes costume, accent, props, stage design and his audience's background to turn himself into a self-Orientalized guru. "[P]robably the only man in southern England at that moment . . . wearing a red and gold waistcoat and Indian pyjamas," Haroon is a "graceful" mentor resembling ballet dancer Nureyev (*Buddha* 31), while "hissing his s's and exaggerating his Indian accent" reminds his audience an unmistakable Indianness (*Buddha* 21). The room setting for his preaching is also crucial. "The candle industry was stimulated, Venetian blinds were lowered, Indian sandalwood stinkers were ignited and put in flowerpots, and a small carpet was put down for the Buddha of suburbia to fly on" (*Buddha* 32). To present Haroon as a leading actor, Eva "bowed to him and handed him a daffodil," a prop consecrating his holiness (*Buddha* 32). Practices as such easily differentiate an identity from those related to his working and domestic spheres. Only Karim, who sees how his father "cleaning his teeth with Monkey Brand black toothpowder manufactured by Nogi & Co. of Bombay," can wonder how Haroon transforms himself from "Indian in the Civil Service . . . in Whitehall" into a "wise adviser" (*Buddha* 31).

Karim's knowledge of his father is quite different from that of white audiences

[39] Charles-Marie-Georges Huysmans (1848–1907), who published his works as Joris-Karl Huysmans, was a French novelist famous for the novel *A rebours* (Against Nature or Wrong Way). His wide-ranging vocabulary, encyclopedic documentation, sensuous description, and satirical wit support the enormous cultural capital Heater has acquired.

or pupils. Eva promotes Haroon's Buddhist business because he liberates her from spiritual barreness. Like his idols, the Beatles, finding transcendental meditation useful in their Indian guru, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Charlie believes Haroon to be "the best" and "wise" (*Buddha* 14). Charlie and Eva are among the spiritual tourists who cannot just be fed by material consumerism in the West. Their spiritual search, according to Mick Brown, author of *The Spiritual Tourist*, is:

> A symptom of collective uncertainty in an age when the traditional institutions of church, family and community appear to be breaking down. A symptom too of growing disenchantment with the values of materialism, and a weariness of science, which has stripped all mystery out of existence" (qtd. in Lewis 12).

Now that "[w]ealthy New Consumers are hiring a variety of spiritual advisers including personal yogis, meditation teachers, spiritual directors and smudgists," and since Haroon's props, among "a vast range of New Age products, candles, incense, crystals, essential oils, rock formations, magnets . . . are spreading rapidly through towns and cities on both sides of the Atlantic" (Lewis 12-13), Haroon has an enormous market to sell. As Karim observes, "he would never lack employment while the city was full of lonely, unhappy, unconfident people who required guidance, support and pity (*Buddha* 279).

However, to reduce Haroon's impersonation of guru to charlatan ignores the hybridity of current Buddhist practices, as well as Haroon's efforts to spiritually develop himself and his followers. Buddhism as an atheist religion has harmoniously co-existed with local gods in many cultures, and because of its emphasis on inborn wisdom of human beings, it easily articulates with other trends of thinking and religions. Introduced into China through Central Asia around the time of Jesus

Christ's birth, Buddhism has long been a glocalized phenomenon. Haroon's "books on Buddhism, Sufism, Confucianism and Zen which he had bought at the Oriental bookshop" (*Buddha* 5) are, ironically, English translations rather than Chinese or Sanskrit, an ancient Indian language he is related to in Orientalist categorization. Leading thinkers of Taoism and Confucianism, Lu Dongbin, Lao Tzu, Chunag Tzu and Confucius joined in the formation of Chinese Buddhism, which is seldom regarded as an inauthentic belief. Based on this, Haroon's understanding of Buddhism has been validated in a process of cultural articulation, hybridization and synthesis over a thousand years in East Asia, offering its newest followers, consumers in the West, "an 'authentic' spiritual experience" (Lewis 12). While Haroon's Muslim heritage is comically co-presented by Karim the narrator with his Buddhist practices, even Karim cannot but claim "He [Haroon] is a Buddhist" to refute Auntie Jean's accusation of his "impersonating a Buddhist" (*Buddha* 44).

Haroon's habitus structured by his former upper class life in India, and later as an Indian civil servant in Britain, is crucial for his transformation of identity and his success in marketing his new self. His high cultural taste, "aristocratic uselessness" (*Buddha* 24), a stable work position allowing him plenty of time for spiritual quests, and a highly Westernized lifestyle direct him into non-manual production of culture. Except for routine work, Haroon's everyday life shows the progress of spiritual consumption and trainings that gradually liberate him from racial discrimination, attacks, and a stagnant suburban life. As Karim notices, "[b]eneath all the Chinese bluster was Dad's loneliness and desire for internal advancement" (Buddha 28). For Haroon, the structured structure—his lack of economic capital, improbability of job promotion as a minority, failed communication with his lower middle class wife, and possession of intellectual and cultural capital—stimulates his desire for symbolic capital and social rise, a structuring structure and in turn prompts him to accumulate

more cultural capital. In this circle, Haroon's experiences and self-trainings in daily life are rehearsals for his "on-stage" performance as a sage. His brother-in-law, Karim's uncle Ted, "was Dad's [Haroon's] triumph; he really was someone Dad had freed" (*Buddha* 22). Ted's distress from routinized, exhausting work and an unharmonious marriage is similar to Haroon's, yet the latter channels it via Buddhist and Taoist thinking, presenting a therapeutic performance highlighting the kernel of Ted's problem. Even Jamila recourses to Haroon's guidance for her forced marriage, despite her familiarity with feminist theories. Karim finds Haroon's suggestion for her is to also solve his emotional struggle between Eva and his wife Margaret (*Buddha* 76). While John Clement Ball sees Haroon's performed ethnicity is at "the level not of identity but of artifice and image," and regards Haroon and Karim as "father and son both become faux-Indians" (23), Haroon's spiritual suggestions/services are authentically distilled from a dialectic between his religious readings and painful experiences. Because of this, he becomes a real guru whose daily life is an intense rehearsal for credible performances.

Haroon's Buddhist practice, as business and personal belief, illuminates not only the logic of late capitalism, with regard to cultural depthlessness reflected in his exotic appearance, but also a philosophy of religion and performance. Both enable human beings to regain their spiritual subjectivity when commodification is rampant and routinization remains commonplace. His liberation of Ted, as briefly mentioned earlier, exemplifies the Buddhist reproduction of self that reorients one back to the track of capitalism. Unable to tolerate his "damn work," and knowing his business is collapsing, Ted takes Haroon's suggestion to "Follow your feelings. Follow the course of least resistance. Do what pleases you – whatever it is. Let the house fall down. Drift" (*Buddha* 49). Once he drifts away from his unattractive job for a while, his "returning appetite for labour" easily directs him to Eva's business of interior

design, employment that can release his full potentiality as "a poet among builders," "an artist returning from barren exile, Rimbaud from Africa" (*Buddha* 111). Ted's transformation shows how spiritual development releases his productive power, which simultaneously expands his subjectivity and fuels cultural production in late capitalism. Interestingly but not unexpectedly, Haroon's philosophy of drift, with all its Taoist and Buddhist color, reflects a postmodern ethos against the controlling desire of modernity. As Slavoj Žižek claims in "Revenge of Global Finance:"

> The way to cope with this dizzying change [in the contemporary world], [Eastern] wisdom suggests, is to renounce any attempts to retain control over what goes on, rejecting such efforts as expressions of the modern logic of domination. Instead, one should "let oneself go," *drift* along, while retaining an inner distance and indifference toward the mad dance of the accelerated process. Such distance is based on the insight that all of the upheaval is ultimately just a non-substantial proliferation of semblances that do not really concern the innermost kernel of our being. (my emphasis)

In Buddhist meditation one detaches from his or her sufferings, seeing them as stemming from their renounceable desires rather than immutable realities. This time-honoured self technology in Buddhism and Taoism also appears in the realm of performance, where meditation is sometimes believed to be a part:

> within the domain of performance . . . meditation cultivates the act of contemplation by creating a subject/object position in which an individual becomes both performer and spectator. Through observation of the "theatre of the mind," the subject becomes aware of the constructed nature of experience and its relationship to the action of performance. (Sellers-Young 116-17)

Just as an actor does not mistake stage roles for his/her real self, in late capitalism

human beings try to retain their subjectivity by objectifying and observing how they and the world mutate. In an era where "diversity of production" and "of subjects produced therein" is the norm (Joseph 26), Buddhist practices help subjects adapt to an ever-changing world and different life positions. Haroon, Karim, Eva, Charlie, and Ted all drift from their original familial and social bonds, engaging in cultural production whose "accelerating turnover time" (Harvey 156) reinforces a sense of flux. More or less picking up on Haroon's philosophy, or just slipping themselves into tasks and roles they are engaged in, these performers support Žižek's bold claim:

> The "Western Buddhist" meditative stance is arguably the most efficient way for us to fully participate in the capitalist economy while retaining the appearance of sanity. If Max Weber were alive today, he would definitely write a second, supplementary volume to his *Protestant Ethic*, titled *The Taoist Ethic and the Spirit of Global Capitalism*.

As Haroon teaches his pupils, "to reach your full potential as human beings . . . [y]ou must not resist [the meditative practices]. If you resist, it will be like driving a car with the handbrake on" (*Buddha* 13). Successful cultural performers do not resist playing new roles. In so doing, Haroon teaches his students they can reach a higher potential than they were at in the beginning of the novel, and contribute to diversification of British culture with their products.

Eva, the locomotive character drawing Karim, Haroon and Charlie to the center of London, utilizes her habitus and cultural capital as a female. Karim's discovery of Eva's cosmetics, body care products, ornaments and gadgets in her large bathroom (*Buddha* 92) highlights a narcissistic culture that expands the terrain of a subject from an individual's body to his or her external space. In this sense, Eva's business of interior design, a product she sells to the metropolitan upper (middle) class, or yuppies, is an

extension of the daily life aesthetic she has long practiced on her body. Renovating houses for self-enjoyment and future sales, Eva reminds us of the word "décor," which may refer to interior decoration in general and scenic decoration in theatre. For Eva's buyers, a house is like a stage in support of its owner as a leading character. It is where daily performances happen, where incarnations of personal identity differentiate one home interior from another, securing daily iteration of one's private life. Also, the product of interior design is a commodity that performs to potential buyers, trying to arouse their desires and win their identification with it. Knowing that she begins her job without professional training, Eva is "constructing an artistic persona for her self," raising and strengthening her professional profile by frequently attending social events, where she highlights her artistic and intellectual taste. "I'm an artist, a designer, my team and I do houses" becomes her performative utterances through which Eva hopes to gain an authentic identity for her specialty (*Buddha* 150). On the other hand, furniture, ornaments, and designs are like settings and props on the stage, in need of actors and plots to bring them to life. Eva's discursive performance enriches meanings applied to her designs, persuading her clients into believing what they bought enhances or satisfies their taste.

Karim's expression of his cultural capital via dialogue, clothing, and gestures to attract Eva and Charlie is the first step on his assent up the social ladder. Similarly, Eva conquers her clientele/consumers "party by party, contact by contract" when "these London people . . . never stopped eating or talking or looking at people performing" (*Buddha* 151). Repetitively performing herself as radical chic and an artist are Eva's "do's," as Karim calls them (*Buddha* 150). "[F]or Butler you are what you do, which is to say how you appear, through your actions in the world" (Joseph 29). No wonder "[w]hen the journalist asked her, 'And what is your philosophy of life?' Eva behaved as if this enquiry were precisely the sort of thing she expected to be asked in the course of

discussing interior decoration" (*Buddha* 262). In addition, since interior design is highly customer-oriented, Eva cannot keep up her professional performance without "be[ing] able to work in a number of styles" (*Buddha* 262). Eva's self performance records a process of identity transformation. As a newcomer to London, Karim "saw she wanted to scour that suburban stigma right off her body. She didn't realize it was in the blood and not on the skin; she didn't see there could be nothing more suburban than suburbanites repudiating themselves" (*Buddha* 134). Near the ending of Buddha "[t]here was nothing suburban about her; she'd risen above herself to become a glorious middle-aged woman, clever and graceful" (*Buddha* 261). Kureishi shows that Eva's repetitive performances in a place bound by environment have become performativity—discursive practices unconsciously forged by her and other metropolitans—that bridges the identity gap between her former suburban self and a Londoner.

Charlie seems to better his mom's adoption of different personas both on and off stage. To win affection from girls, Charlie plays it completely cool to allure his targets. It is through Charlie that Karim learns, "if you're too eager others tend to get less eager. And if you're less eager it tends to make others more eager" (*Buddha* 5). Impersonating a pop star up on the trendiest style instead of personal preference, Charlie transforms himself from Hippie to Punk and begins to sell his Britishness when he starts a career in America. Charlie's glam rock theatricalizes pop, where music speaks less loudly than stage design, costume, makeup, choreography, body positions and facial expressions. Before simulacra take over the world with the triumph of 3D technology, internet transmission, downloadable movies, and digital photography, Charlie's visual performance is a leading phenomenon that characterizes the 1970s as an early period of visual postmodernity.

With Charlie's specialty in playing salable personas as pop star and lover, Kureishi

nevertheless accentuates the remaining boundary between private and public, as well as a "real" self that cannot easily be altered by willing performances. Charlie's lack of "an original sound" (*Buddha* 118), his "manufactured rage," "big con trick" on stage, and "temporary, borrowed persona" as a rock star (*Buddha* 246), along with a self-fetishized pose to attract girls, seem to evince a performative identity without essence. Furthermore, Charlie relies on deliberate menacing in his lyrics and public statements to build a radical image. "With luck [his] record would be vilified and banned, guaranteeing credibility and financial success" (*Buddha* 153). Charlie's performances, unlike that of his mother, do not change his internal identity much, if there is such a thing. Karim's life in New York with the then-successful Charlie raises issues of his authentic self, contrasted by a "funny and iconoclastic" role he cannot accept wholeheartedly (*Buddha* 251). Those "two things . . . that finally made [Karim] want to get back to England and out of Charlie's life [in New York]" disclose Charlie's struggle between his simulated radicalism and a private self unable to be performed as freely as he likes (*Buddha* 251). Charlie's intolerance and violence against a persistent journalist illustrates the necessity of maintaining one's usual identity. With his masochist experiment ending in genuine repulsion, Charlie's experiences reveal that not every performance brings the subject a transformation of identity. As Charlie correctly points out: "It's only by pushing ourselves to the limits that we learn about ourselves" (*Buddha* 252). To assert himself as a radical chic, Charlie must continually exclude his uncool or outdated parts. This forces him to go to extremes by alienating his acquaintances and former identities until he reaches a border of identity where his own humanity (sick of the dominatrix he's hired) is not unlike that of Karim who is unwilling to participate in masochism.

Conclusion

While *Buddha* optimistically empowers performance as a means of reprocessing one's cultural capital for social climbing, "[n]ot all the characters in *The Buddha* discover their identity through performance: some are stuck or get lost in translation, such as Anwar; and there is also the contrasting position of Jamila, who advocates anti-racist action" (Thomas 72). That Anwar starts "behaving like a Muslim" (*Buddha* 64) is not articulated in the productive system for the benefit of himself. Leaving his small business aside to execute a hunger strike for a patriarchal belief, he reduces his productivity and ironically becomes productive material for Karim, with an already Westernized mind, to sell to his white audiences. Anwar's performance loses power in pouring on social, economic or cultural capital because it does not work in the economic field of his grocery store. Thus said, his embrace of an imagined Muslim belief (just think about how Dubai the city dances with capitalism) estranges him from the market/audience around him. When it comes to non-white underclasses in London's inner city, lack of economic capital and cultural capital makes it almost impossible for them to achieve social mobility via daily or, if there is a chance, stage performance.

On the other hand, Kureishi illustrates the idea of performance, chic as it may be in postmodern society, is with realities not-so-rosy in late capitalism. Racism, one of the most discussed dimensions of *Buddha*, continually besets social climbers like Haroon and Karim, and even leads Gene, a talent and unyielding Caribbean actor, to his death. Given that racism or racialization cannot to be rectified overnight, the minority must find space where they can empower themselves in various ways. In all of his postcolonial stories, Kureishi keeps venturing into heterogeneous attitudes of white Britons against non-whites, demonstrating that racialization is sometimes easier to take advantage of than racism. While both are scars on the minority, they can be

reprocessed as cultural capital into chic productions. In an era when cultures are marketed as commodities and cultural identities are unavoidably colored, redefined, and articulated as such, social agents who engage in cultural production, no matter which ethnicity they belong to, translate, develop, or create their marketability to meet requirements of the survival game in late capitalism. This is especially so for racialized minorities. Without a stage of representation they hardly have a chance to speak for themselves and give the representative structure a fine tuning. Shadwell's response to Karim's reluctance to speak with an Indian accent cogently concludes his later success: "You'll survive" (*Buddha* 146).

Another mundane dimension of performance can be spotlighted from its intimate relation with late capitalism. "[C]apitalism is performative: it is always engaged in experiment, as the project is perpetually unfinished. Capitalism is therefore a highly adaptive and constantly mutating formation; it is a set of poised systems" (qtd. in Thrift 3). Used to refer to unusual or staged activity, performance is also related to execution or accomplishment of acts. For the second significance, performance, like capitalism,

> always look for the routine, even boring, as well as the sexy. It is all too easy to get carried away and depict capitalism as a kind of big dipper, all thrills and spills. But capitalism can be performative only because of the many means of producing stable repetition which are now available to it and which constitute its routine base. (Thrift 3)

Karim and Haroon's rehearsal of their performance works, not detailed by Kureishi in this novel, are too salient to be put aside. These repetitive practices, with which Butler explains her idea of performativity, shape the identity of social agents and hinge them on a capitalist mechanism. At home, Karim has to practice accents, as well as Anwar

or Changez's gestures, while Eva, as Haroon's stage manager and business mentor, insists on "Haroon improving the service: she got him to consult esoteric library books early in the morning before work and asked him at breakfast . . . 'And what did you learn this morning'" (*Buddha* 115). Routinely practicing their new roles brings the performers a sense of belonging, "not just be-ing" (the routine/boring), "but longing" (thrills and spills) (Bell 1). With the constituting and constituted facets of performance, *Buddha* is one of Kureishi's works "on how race can affect class and vice versa" (Thomas 74). With similar class backgrounds (being), Haroon and Karim accumulate their cultural capital (usually racialized) to survive in a field requiring relatively little economic capital, while their upward social and class mobility redefines stereotyping of their race (longing).

This unsexy dimension of performance points to a triangular relation articulated by performance, authenticity, and professional identity. Marketable commodities in the field of culture, be they human beings, physical materials, images or discourses, are equipped with subjectivity to some degree or another. When human subjects keep maintaining their attractiveness, like the ever renewed commodities, by performing their new identities, they also hope that their idiosyncrasy not only helps make sense of the world, but also gains them cultural and economic capital. Whether these efforts are successful or not depends on professionalism that re-clarifies ideas such as authenticity and performance. Just as the professions of pop star and interior designer require more than a pretty face or flair for decorating, the ability to sell skin color or accent is not enough when playing an authentic role such as spiritual advisor or actor. In this sense, and in this novel, authenticity can be verified through professionalism, which is a complex process unable to be subsumed in Buchanan's assertion, that *Buddha* reflects the "inauthenticity of contemporary British life" (42). Karim himself relates authenticity with professional activities. Shadwell, despite having little talent

for directing, has a "real theatre" (*Buddha* 138) in Karim's first stage of social mobility. "[I]mportant people," in London theatres, in Karim's eyes, are "not the sort we knew in the suburbs, but the *real* thing: people who *really* did write and direct plays and not just talk about it" (*Buddha*, my emphasis 113). Karim is happy about his participation in the "professional production" of *The Jungle Book* (*Buddha* 144), just as his Aunty Jean enjoys the play because "it was really professional! And fancy meeting all those [real] television actors!" (*Buddha* 156). Examples as such tell readers that authenticity does not die out in what Baudrillard terms "a hyper-real society," flooded with simulacra and without existence of the real. Stories of the major cultural performers in *Buddha* also reveal that success of a performance relies on whether or not it is professionally authentic for the audience, i.e., whether a performer turns himself or herself into a differentiated and distinguishable self/Other. Such success will then mark the performance with the label of "originality" in that it meets the audience's anticipation of idealization and authenticity. A successful performance of *different* characters, be they oppressed class, gender, or race, is a premise to be validated by new consumers, who "are continually engaged in a discourse of difference, an exploration of 'minute variations, of idiosyncrasies of style, products, brand, signs and meanings … the discovery of difference, the establishing of difference and the appropriation of difference'" (Lewis 15).

Revisiting *Buddha* near the end of the first decade of the 21st century, we may be impressed by the social changes, as well as how Kureishi has his leading characters do the right thing in the right time and right place.[40] Social mobility does not have the same meaning for these four performers. For Eva and Charlie, it means escaping the dullness of suburbia to make names for themselves in different cultural fields, while the

[40] For example, Karim is quite aware that his "coming appearance in *The Jungle Book*" is "the right activity at the right time" (*Buddha* 155).

upward mobility in class and space is a greater success for Haroon and Karim. With little economic capital the latter two can only make the best use of their cultural capital to win themselves a chance. Britain's Orientalist imagination makes their ethnic differences meaningful and performances workable, before an ever evolving process of globalization brings more "authentic" ethnic intellectuals and artists to join a market saturated with Asian stuffs. Though the idea of performativity is widely applied to a postmodern identity lacking essence, there is a survival game critical for the ethnic performers. Detailing struggle and humanity along with commodification, simulation and Orientalization, *The Buddha of Suburbia* records how ethnicity shall be staged in order to win upward class mobility, and how aesthetic sensitivity gains importance in the acquisition of cultural and economic capital.

Chapter Three

Between Consumerism and Islamic Fundamentalism: *The Black Album*

Hanif Kureishi's second novel, *The Black Album* (1995), concerns disparate beliefs and cultures jostling with each other around a young protagonist in the late 1980s. As with *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Kureishi's hero, Shahid Hassan, is involved in, or invited by, disparate fields—this time including creative writing, sexual hedonism, consumerism, mercantilism, and Islam fundamentalism—in an effort to redefine his identities. Paralleling Shahid's hope to be a journalist (and a novelist), the author adopts "a much more journalistic approach" to depict the rise of Islam fundamentalism in a consumerist society (Buchanan 58). His hero straddles the fault line between consumerism and fundamentalism, finding himself an antidote to both practices in a work ethic he brings to novel writing. Rather than laying equal stress on the religious and hedonist, Kureishi details how consumption emerges omnipresently in the lives of different characters rather than the nuances of Islamic fundamentalism. As the plot progresses, Kureishi's own stance of secular liberalism becomes manifest, prompting some scholars to criticize his identification with the West via a negation of Islam. However, it is just this disputable stance that consumerism, as a dominating practice of late capitalism, is recorded, problematized and challenged. Also, via Shahid's choice of novel writing, rather than any practice of Islamic fundamentalism, Kureishi explores how consumerism might be temporarily mitigated or ultimately

surpassed by strengthening individual belief. In other words, consumerism and commodification not merely articulate identities of people from different culture, ethnicity and class, those differences highlighted respectively in identity politics. They can still be disarticulated from one's life with productive practices, especially with reflexive productions like writing. Juxtaposing consumerism with racism, work ethic, Occidentalism and postmodernism, *The Black Album* is a fertile playground for exploring the possibility of overcoming consumer subjugation inherent in capitalism.

This chapter discusses how main characters in *The Black Album* experience and move beyond practices of consumerism and Islam fundamentalism, finding their own identities among various ethical positions in the late capitalist period. Through his characters, the author brings to light the enormous impact of consumerism, even upon fundamentalist believers who themselves are not immune from its influence. Moreover, Kureishi insists, via the romantic ethic, literary endeavors, individualism and liberalism as articulations of consumerism, that individuals are capable of overcoming the lure of extravagant desire and achieving spiritual development. Kureishian scholars explore consumerism and fundamentalism as two major themes in *The Black Album.* Kenneth C. Kaleta notes that "[a]t college, *The Black Album*'s Anglo-Asian Shahid confronts his father's dreams for him and the religious traditions of his past, pitting consumerism against fundamentalism" (6). In a similar vein, Frederick M. Holmes, in his essay on *The Black Album,* "The Postcolonial Subject Divided between East and West," argues that Shahid and his brother Chili hold more or less a consumerist attitude when compared to that of the Islamic community in this novel, affirming a hero struggling between a Western and an Eastern way of life. While Kaleta and Holmes offer many insights, their criticisms do not clarify to what degree characters are exposed to consumerist and religious practices. Still, there are other problems to be solved in Holmes' thesis. For instance, if the postcolonial subject

exemplified by Shahid is divided by West and East, what are the referents of these two frequently-used signifiers after all? Are they geographical locations, skin-colors, languages or ways of life? Is consumerism the mainstream style of living of the West, while the East is composed of anti-consumerisms, such as Islamic fundamentalism? Other critics of *The Black Album*, such as John Clement Ball and Bart Moore-Gilbert, mostly discussing "relations between this book and issues like freedom of speech, race/ethnicity, or the metropolitan London related to The Rushdie Affair" (Su 102), making little investigation into the antagonistic entanglement between consumerism and Islam fundamentalism. Jung Su has pointed out that "mental purification and bodily pleasure" not only bring about Shahid's identity crisis and in-betweenness (104), but Kureishi's intention of liberating the "limitation/prohibition of race/gender" (106). However, if resistance aiming to transgress racial and sexual boundaries, a politically correct in-betweenness in this novel, is observed together with consumerism as a predominant force, it resembles a desire to commodify new stuffs for the subject's gratification. This being the case, it is important to probe how consumerism and Islamic fundamentalism influence, change, and exteriorize multiple personal identities and social values against the backdrop of the Rushdie Affair in 1989.[41] Being that *The Black Album* explores more consumptive activities than Islamic fundamentalism, and that Kureishi admits his concern to be "about what people might do in [religion's] name" rather than "the spiritual" (Jaggi),[42] this chapter begins with a theoretical frame of consumption, and sheds light on Islam fundamentalism as the concerned characters are discussed.[43]

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[41] Deemed blasphemous by many Muslims, *The Satanic Verses*, Salman Rushdie's novel published in 1988, was mainly criticized for its rendition of the fictitious Prophet and interrogation of God's words. The Rushdie Affair refers to protests and book-burning events revolving around Ayatollah Khomeini's fatwa, a death sentence to those related to the writing and publishing of the novel.

[42] See Maya Jaggi's "A Buddy from Suburbia."

[43] Kureishi's familiarity with, and love for Western culture at times weakens his efforts in depicting fundamentalist and moderate Muslims in depth. However, it is because of this disposition that his

Before moving on, an exploration of consumerism will facilitate understanding of ethical choices in late capitalist society. In the 17th and 18th centuries, according to Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Protestant ethic emphasized asceticism and austerity, inciting early capitalism motivated by production. "That powerful tendency toward uniformity of life, which today so immensely aids the capitalistic interest in the standardization of production, had its ideal foundations in the repudiation of all idolatry of the flesh" (Weber 169). As a result, a "productivist ethic" dominated (Ransome 24), with consumption as its subsidiary activity. This ethic aimed to either satisfy fundamental life needs of producers, or reproduce their labor power. In the early phase of industrial capitalism, the value of life lay in work and job roles provided people with their main social identity, i.e., "a relatively coherent sense of who they are, of how they think of themselves and how they wish others to perceive them" (Bocock 49).

About eighty years later, Colin Campbell's *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism* (1987) renewed Weber's argument in terms of consumption. He traced the emergence of modern consumer society back to the late 18th century, claiming that romanticism, as an artistic and cultural movement responsive to the industrial revolution, played a salient role in consumption. No longer an adjunctive activity of production, consumption gained its autonomy by relating to individual characteristics of consumers. Traditional hedonism pays close attention to sensual pleasures. Since each pleasure is associated with a certain activity, such as eating, consumption in this way is standardized, and pleasure is directly allied with satisfaction. Modern consumerism is thus a result of late 18th century romanticism articulated through the Protestant work ethic of the time. While this Protestant ethic is usually understood in terms of asceticism or Puritanism, which impairs development

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delineation, analysis, and criticism of the consumer society become most inspiring.

of consumerism, a branch of this ethic emphasizes "the charitable feelings of pity and sympathy." This, in turn, fosters an emotionalist way of life, affirming the positive value of expressing one's own emotions. As time went by, people experienced pleasure, no longer taking their expression of emotion as a mere virtue (Lury 72-73). Romanticism imbued emotional pleasure with ethical value, for the pursuit of emotion rested on imagination, an indispensable condition of creativity:

> Romanticism provided that philosophy of 'recreation' necessary for a dynamic consumerism: a philosophy which legitimates the search for pleasure as good in itself. . . . In all these ways, Romanticism has served to provide ethical support for that restless and continuous pattern of consumption which so distinguishes the behaviour of modern man [sic]. (Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic* 201)

From the 19th to the 20th century, cultural status of romantic and work ethic shifted as industrial capitalism transformed into late capitalism of the second half of the 20th century. When the working class joined the main consumptive population, i.e., the upper and middle classes, a society of mass consumption took shape:

> By the 1950s, following a pattern already established in the United States, first in Britain, then in the rest of Western Europe, 'mass consumption', in a recognizably modern sense, began to develop among all but the very poorest groups. . . . That is, they [those groups] had sufficient income to provide for their basic needs and had developed an awareness of new objects, such as television sets and cars, and experiences, such as holidays in Spain, which they could afford to buy. (Bocock 21-22)

Once consumption became popular amongst the greater part of society, the romantic ethic, foregrounding individual feelings and experiences, replaced the Protestant work

ethic. In doing so, it replaced preservation and development of families and communities with focus on the individual and critical perception of the contemporary world:

> By the end of the twentieth century, it can be argued that many groups had come to attach as much significance to their roles outside of the work place – in the home, in sports and in entertainment, for instance – as earlier generations did to their work roles. People now work, in the advanced social formations, not just to stay alive, but in order to be able to afford to buy consumer products. (Bocock 49-50)

Due to maturation of transnational capitalism and the formation of media and simulacra society in the 1970s and 1980s, objects for consumption range from material commodities to include images and information. With more and more people influenced by increasingly omnipresent and all-pervasive advertisements, simulations, and messages, imaginations expanded and desires for perfect commodities and services heighted. As a result, and along with traditional determinants such as class, ethnicity and gender, consumption practices came to play a more salient role than ever in formation of one's identity.

The domination of consumerism in the second half of the 20th century fragmented personal identity with commodities of all shapes and colors. Certain traditional values were no longer as dominant as they used to be, and were superseded by diverse attitudes resembling their commodity counterparts put on display. However, the consumer society did not merely take root on commodities and their signs. Its management relied on various ethical ideas inherent in the logic of capitalism. Colin Campbell points out that the consumer society is guided by the dual logic of

modernity,[44] namely the logic of reason manifesting in calculation and experiment, and the logic of dream originating from passion and aspiration. Both the work ethic and the romantic ethic result from this dual logic. In turn, they respectively maintain the execution of capitalism from production to consumption. The usual imbalance between these two ethics is noteworthy. Directly connecting consumerism and human desire is a "'need' for difference (*the desire for the* social *meaning*)" as incarnated in assorted commodities (Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society* 78). This need, far from fulfilling the fundamental demand of everyday life, is usually expressed through fascination of objects not yet attained. For those who lack knowledge of the Protestant work ethic, desire for consumption is likely to put psychological activity into economical practice, disintegrating one's material ground and mixing interpersonal relations with the process of commodification. No wonder consumerism became one of the major enemies of many religions, as illustrated by militant Muslims in the novel equating it with a vicious Western civilization.

According to Kureishi's delineation of different (anti-)consumer communities, this chapter explores the ordered, disordered, and anti-consumerist identities in relation to the consumer society. First, characters overtly enjoying consumption are analyzed in terms of their adoption of the romantic or work ethic. The protagonist's father represents a paradigmatic balance between leisure and work. Still, the well-off family under his care breeds the hero's elder brother equipped with only the romantic ethic, exemplifying the excessive sprawl of hedonism and resulting consumerism that finally destroys an individual. On the other hand, Shahid and his lover Deedee

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[44] The dual logic of modernity mentioned here could be illustrated by Charles Baudelaire's noted definition: "By modernity, I mean the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable" (12). The work ethic accentuates the loyalty to an enterprise or an organization, asking for industriousness and stamina, and hence belongs to "the eternal and the immutable," certainly the opposite of the romantic ethic established by imagination, desire and pleasure. In contrast with the lasting density, tedium and laboriousness frequently appearing in the working experiences, the pleasure of consumption belongs to "the ephemeral, the fugitive, [and] the contingent."

represent certain cultural consumers moderate in their material consumption. Rendering disputable Deedee's pedagogies, which merely center on cultural products validated by populist postmodernism, and Shahid's struggles between his intellectual interest and consumerist desire, Kureishi emphasizes the lasting importance of reading literary canons in a society torn apart by different ideologies. Kureishi's choice of anti-consumerist characters brings about another concern to think through. With reactions of a baffled Marxist and some Islamic fundamentalists toward Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, Kureishi not only re-presents powerful media and semiotic practices in a consumer society, but also implies a need to reconsider liberalism, the footing on which consumerism, the romantic ethic, and modern society are at work, as a consensus for different communities.

Dual Foundations of the Consumer Society: Economic and Cultural Capital

Though class is no longer the primary determinant of personal identity in postmodern society, *The Black Album*, set in the turbulent late nineteen eighties, nonetheless explores the impact of familial class background on the major characters, and especially the protagonist. In tracing the origin of Shahid's individual identities and consumptive mode, it is appropriate to begin with his father, a travel agency owner whose work ethic is as solid as his material consumerism. Twenty five years ago, Papa and Shahid's mother were merely employees of a little travel agency. Despite Papa's death, Shahid's family came to own two shops in Sevenoaks, Kent at the beginning of the novel (*Album* 16). Papa's entrepreneurial success and his early death shrouded in the shadow of overwork testify to the Weberian Protestant ethic he held, where constant saving and reinvestment for accumulation is the norm.[45] He

[45] That Shahid's father only goes by "Papa" reflects the patriarchal influences remaining after his death.

otherwise had little chance of improving his prospects, much less of becoming a more accomplished entrepreneur than his former boss, given his ethnic inferiority in the British job market.[46] Shahid has a vivid description of the working attitudes held by his parents: "My family's work has always been to transport others around the world. They never go anywhere themselves, apart from Karachi once a year. They can't do anything but work" (*Album* 15).

Papa's workaholic mind-set does not however immunize him from the lure of the romantic ethic. It is his work ethic, and its generous entailing remuneration, that sublimate consumerism into the redemption of life. Shahid's family home, "an immaculate 1960s mansion," reflects Papa's erratic consumerism:

> Papa had constantly redecorated it, the furniture was replaced every five years and new rooms were necessarily added. The kitchen always seemed to be in the front drive, awaiting disposal, though it appeared to Shahid no less "innovative" than the new one. Papa hated anything "old-fashioned,"[47] unless it charmed tourists. He wanted to tear down the old; he liked "progress." "I only want the best," he'd say, meaning the newest, the latest, and, somehow, the most ostentatious. (*Album* 48)

But "new" things and experiences are not necessarily better products, when it comes to quality or originality, than older ones. Such Postmodern insistence on newness certainly has a whiff of the progressivism in modernity. As Campbell notes:

> [s]ince the permanent consumption of 'novelty' lies at the heart of

Representing "a deceased parent's continuing presence in an adult child's reality," "Papa is part of Shahid's thinking" (Kaleta 135). In Shahid's and Chili's reminiscences of him, Papa has become an incarnation of work ethic, of the father's law that both sons can never morally deny. For instance, even if Shahid refuses to take over Papa's business, he unconsciously inherits Papa's diligence in his writing.

[46] Racism has become a major rationale for Islamic fundamentalism, which embraces an imaginary and purified Islamic society fighting against discriminative evils of the West.

[47] Papa's preference for marketable old-fashion recalls the emergence of a heritage industry under Thatcher's administration. For a detailed discussion, refer to Ryan S. Trimm's "Haunting Heritage and Cultural Politics: Signifying Britain since the Rise of Thatcher."

> self-illusory hedonism, patterns of 'taste' – in the sense of our choices of those things which yield pleasure – must themselves be undergoing endless, if gradual, change. . . . This does not mean that the modern consumer typically gives expression to idiosyncratic tastes. Rather it means that the only fixed, or 'basic' standard of taste adhered to is a preference for proximate or 'fresh' pleasures, those on the borderline between the experienced and the yet-to-be-experienced, those where imagination embroiders existing reality in tantalizing ways. (*The Romantic Ethic* 94)

While furniture and upholstery transform given spaces, the consumer's imagination has already transformed that space before actual construction is completed. Rather than an inflexible preference for a specific style, this sort of imagination is a taste claiming newness itself, whether it is from a particular designer or as a general fashion promoted by the upholstery industry. Through consumption of these new commodities and spaces, Papa creates his own space where material success and cultural taste ensure his sense of self and self-image, despite the fact that, for some, his inferiority as an immigrant is unmovable.

Papa's travel agency operates in the way of a typical small business most encouraged by Prime Minister Thatcher at that time. Due to its small scale and a more casual division of labor, the entrepreneur usually has to see to every task and detail in order to maintain the operation and its profitability. To this, a travel agency in the postmodern 1980s represented a nodal point articulating the link between consumption and work. "[T]ransport[ing] others around the world" (*Album* 15), the travel industry affirms transnational journeys as being must-do consumptions in the age of increasing globalization. With the advancement of transportation and convenience of travel, pursuing novelties around the world becomes a means of self-fulfillment for postmodern subjects. Those who materialize their transnational imaginations are often like Shahid's father, disciplined by a strong work ethic in the

office regardless of how much consumptive space they have created. These contradicted spaces manifest that no matter how much is said about the dominant roles played by consumerism and simulated information, production in postmodernity is no less significant than that found in an earlier form of capitalism.

Toil during business hours and material pleasure during leisure respectively hold their interior ethic, which, however, cannot be defined as a value for pious Islamic fundamentalists. Shahid is questioned about his family's ethic as he relates Papa's travel business to Riaz, leader of a militant Muslim group in this novel: "And did they lose themselves when they came here" (*Album* 15)? However, "[a]t home Papa liked to say, when asked about his faith, 'Yes, I have a belief. It's called working until my arse aches" (*Album* 102). Rarely bothering himself with the Muslim way life, Papa evinces another possible faith in a post-colonial/postmodern society. This is not so much a Weberian transition from Protestant ethic to the spirit of capitalism as a quasi-religious faith that buttresses benefit-seeking capitalism with an ethical foundation. Papa's faith also constitutes a salient part of the diasporic identity, though not so alluring for critics in that it seems too Westernized. In *My Ear at His Heart*, Kureishi's memoir of his father, he holds that "[i]f the absence of belonging is considered to be the immigrant's particular bugbear, dad was fascinated by another kind of belonging, which might be called a vocation" (99). Papa's work ethic avoids loss of himself at the core of the former Empire, and makes Riaz's interrogation untenable.

Though Shahid and Chili choose different paths from Papa, the latter's emphasis on stylish consumption greatly orients their identities. A representative example is Papa's insistence on scrupulous dressing. Papa's concentration on the catalogue by the store Burtons the Tailors was "like [that of] scholars peering into manuscripts." "Papa took his boys personally to the shops, ensuring that both he and they had the finest

clothes," repeatedly considering how tie, vest, and suit would match up with one another. Papa was also meticulous about personal grooming, taking "Shahid and Chili into the bathroom to demonstrate the only correct way to shave, the loading of the brush and angle of the razor, soaping, rubbing, scraping, and pinching the flesh," still followed "by an illustration of how to powder the balls, armpits, and between the toes" (*Album* 62). Traditionally attributed to femininity, body care is now marketed to male consumers with leisure time and a certain amount of wealth, providing them the opportunity and means of constructing self-identity on a physical level. Papa's requirements for his sons reflect an inscription of the romantic ethic on the male body. A plethora of personal care articles allow and encourage modern men to achieve a perfect image—something otherwise attributed with female ideals. In doing so, they realize "commercialization of the self," as termed by Stuart Ewen and Elizabeth Ewen (215). As shown in Kureishi's novel, this creates a new generation of British men much different from those of the 1950s. In his book, *Cultures of Consumption: Masculinities and Social Space in Late Twentieth-Century Britain*, cultural critic Frank Mort claims that men in the 1980s pursued unique desires through a variety of hairstyles, costumes, accessories, and gestures. The advertising business and its related industries follow this trend, adding more simulacra of commodities to stir consumption. Having inherited Papa's body technology, the two brothers are apt to articulate their desires and identities with images through a variety of different commodities. This is especially manifest in the apparel of both brothers, symptomatic of the romantic ethic that drives Shahid's cultural production/consumption and Chili's material consumerism.

In *The System of Objects*, Jean Baudrillard notes that "The Precedence of Consumption" as "A New Ethic" is feasible to define the consumer society (158). Compared to its predecessor, this new ethic points to a sharp generational contrast

between Chili and Papa. Despite his consumerist desire and an ever-renewing sense of fashion, Papa belongs more or less to an earlier generation for whom "objects once acquired were owned in the full sense, for they were the material expression of work done" (Baudrillard, *System* 158). In this regard, consumption backs up the Protestant work ethic. "People worked dreaming of what they might later acquire; life was lived in accordance with the *puritan* notion of effort and its reward – and objects finally won represented repayment for the past and security for the future" (Baudrillard, *System* 158-59, my emphasis). The precedence of work over consumption is now reversed. "Today objects are with us before they are earned, they steal a march on the sum total of effort, of labour, that they embody, so that in a sense *their consumption precedes their production*" (Baudrillard, *System* 159). As I have mentioned above, mass media and its production of simulation are partly responsible for this precedence of consumption. Also, the credit system and postwar affluence ensured a generation of consumers adopting this new ethic. With Papa's money in hand, Chili's experience attests to the preponderance of consumption available to him as a result of Papa's glutton for work.

Aside from Papa's production and consumption practices, Chili feels free to piece together his identities with brands, drugs and women. In comparison to Papa's gentleman-like custom-made suits, Chili's dress reflects the transition of leading style from that of the modern elite to that of the postmodern yuppie.

> [Chili] did indeed have on the iridescent gray suit, with, today, the Bass Weejuns. . . . In Chili's hand were his car keys, Ray-Bans, and Marlboros, without which he wouldn't leave his bathroom. Chili drank only black coffee and neat Jack Daniel's; his suits were Boss, his under-wear Calvin Klein, his actor Pacino. His barber shook his hand, his accountant took him to dinner, his drug dealer would come to him at all hours, and accept his checks. (*Album* 47)

Chili's belongings make up a Baudrillardian system of objects, distinguishing a specific taste from that of mass consumers, and thus affirming what he believes is a superior identity. As Celia Lury maintains, "[t]aste not only provides a means of defining why some goods are better than others but also a means of defining the people who use such definitions, and why they are better or worse than others" (93). In line with this value system, Chili draws people to him who want to benefit from his economic capital, making his interpersonal relationships a duplication of the commodity system.

Economic capital props up Chili's power of consumption, with which he not only transcends his minority status, "wearing a mink-colored suit, . . . taking out his fat wallet, waving it at the racists, and shouting, 'Get back to your project flats, paupers'" (*Album* 149), but also distinguishes himself from Shahid's cultural capital. Competition between two value systems, as represented by the brothers, brings forth disparate identities. Chili "found Shahid's bookishness effeminate. He was influenced in this by the practical and aggressive Papa, who originated the idea that Shahid's studiousness was not only unproductive but an affliction for the family" (*Album* 50). According to Papa's logic, productivity and a strong work ethic cannot go without economic capital expressed by consumptive activities. This attitude brings to light an antagonism long existent between two orders in capitalist society. "As the holders of cultural capital deride money capital as mere wealth and its conspicuous expressions as high vulgarity . . . holders of money capital regard the pretensions and esoteric forms of high cultural capital as parasitic and irrelevant. . . ." (Miller 152).

However, Chili holds neither work ethic nor any self-earned money to ridicule Shahid's parasitic way of life. He rarely recalls Papa's work ethic as being the basis of his consumptive power. Instead, Chili's romantic ethic prompts his imagination of a

fabulous career. "The problem was, as [Chili and Shahid's] uncle Asif once stated, money had come too easily to Chili in the 1980s. He didn't respect where it came from" (*Album* 63). Consumerist pleasure mantling pains of productive process is a postmodern version of Marxist alienation. As workers lose control of their lives and selves in the mechanical process of industrial capitalism, a postmodern subject may indulge too much in consumerist pleasures that not only thwart Marx's ideal of human self-realization, but ignore realities of production as a survival process. These generational differences mirror the different emphases late capitalism and its predecessor lay upon, something more telling in diaspora communities. As Kureishi himself observes:

> [i]n the fifties and sixties, a lot of immigrants came to Britain from Pakistan and India. And many of them were really honest, and they worked hard, and they did well, and they wanted their sons to do well and so on. And they had the immigrant ethic. And it's kind of run out in Chili. By the time we get to Chili, the immigrant ethic, the work ethic, doing well, head down, studying—in England—has run out with him. The father did well, passed on the money to him. What did Chili do? He spent the money on drugs and women and clothes. (qtd. in Kaleta 143)

Fed by American cultural commodities, especially Hollywood gangster movies, Chili "even cursed Papa—out of earshot—for coming to old England" (*Album* 63). "His most recent ambition was to make it in America. . . . Chili thought he could be someone in America, but he wasn't going to go there poor. He'd get himself more established in London and then hit New York with a high ['rep,'] or reputation" (*Album* 62-63). In many Hollywood movies, details of how successful heroes participate in productive processes are incorporated into a goal of entertainment at its highest importance. The simplified mode of success consumed by Chili becomes raw

material for his daydreams of fame. He can thus "attach his favoured day-dream to this real object of desire," i.e., America. "In this way, imagined pleasures are added to those already encountered and greater desire is experienced for the unknown than the known" (Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic* 86).

Chili's drug addiction seems to be a reasonable outcome. Drugs are one of the best catalysts for daydreaming. While the consumption of drugs pinnacles his consumerism on account of its resultant addictiveness, it also surpasses the category of consumerism, characterized by disillusionment of things already bought and fantasy about new products not yet owned. Drugs drown its addict in a single product that helps create endless illusion and desire.[48] Such becomes Chili's last harbor of refuge from his disillusioned ambition. In this way, an ethic merely venerating hedonism wrecks Chili's working potentiality and self-regulation, driving his consumptive desire to the point of addiction and finally uprooting his economic foundation.

At first glance, Papa and Chili's consumerism seems to be at odds with Shahid's literary indulgence. Nonetheless, "[i]t is that the capacity to buy and read novels, to buy paintings, to attend the theatre or cinema, sporting events, musical concerts of all kinds, are to be seen as components of consumption. They require . . . expenditure of money and time (leisure time)" (Bocock 66). At the same time, Shahid's affluent family, without a rigid artistic heredity, allows more space for his adventure. As

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[48] Campbell has an illuminating comparison between pre-modern insatiability and modern consumerism. According to him, insatiability is not "confined to modern society. For there is plenty of evidence to suggest that human beings in all cultures are capable of developing *addictions*. One could say that the Spanish Conquistadors had an insatiable greed for gold, or that Don Juan was similarly hard to satisfy when it came to women. Such non-satiable appetites, however, typically have a single product focus, as is the case with alcoholism or drug addiction; by contrast, the modem consumer (although not proof in insatiability which arises out of a basic inexhaustibility of wants themselves, which forever arise, phoenix-like, from the ashes of their predecessors. Hence no sooner is one satisfied than another is waiting in line clamouring to be satisfied; when this one is attended to, a third appears, then subsequently a fourth, and so on, apparendy without end" (Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic* 37, my emphasis).

sociologist Robert Bocock argues:

> The bourgeoisie tend to define culture in traditional and conventional ways, preserving the old, established masterpieces in painting, sculpture, music or literature, whereas those who are from families without expensive art objects, or experiences, behind them are more inclined to accept innovations in form and content in the arts and culture more generally. (Bocock 67)

Although Shahid's bookishness is repeatedly ridiculed by Papa and Chili, his diverse cultural tastes are developed within the bounds of the same family. In comparison to those who have to toil for their livelihood, Shahid is much freer to indulge his favorite cultural products without worry about obtaining his daily bread every now and then. With economic and cultural capital in hand, Shahid has so little concern about his takings, even after Papa's death, that he sets out from his suburban home to a college in London, merely to "take the initiative" (33), to explore "the meaning and purpose of the novel" (28).

Consumerism also does not alleviate rampant racism in 1980s Britain. With a mindset bred by Western canons and other cultural products, Shahid comes up against conflicts and frustrations induced by his disadvantageous ethnicity. Although he is more culturally and economically ascendant than most colored immigrants and "local" whites, his skin color becomes an easy device by which some racists place him under a banner of uncivilized immigrants from the Third World. To right the wrong, Shahid hopes to join the *far-right* and whites-only British National Party. His rationale seems justifiable as he exposes the absurdity of discrimination by a string of questions: "Why can't I be a racist like everyone else? Why do I have to miss out on that privilege? Why is it only me who has to be good? Why can't I swagger around pissing on others for being inferior? I began to turn into one of them [the racists]. I

was becoming a monster" (*Album* 19). Shahid does not feel like joining the trade of extreme nationalists out of an in-depth understanding of their activities. Forging his identity with a wide range of cultural products (whether they represent high culture or popular culture, from the centre or margin), Shahid loathes being defined as a homogenized inferior Other. His response is to rid himself of that identity by becoming a member of the British National Party, as if changing his appearance with new apparel. After all, white people are a community most likely to be free from the trappings of racialization, thus being able to select and enjoy a variety of different identities (in Shahid's imagination). Shahid's innocence is telling, as ethnicity is a complex process, a mixture of past and present, body and mind, imperialist sentiments and omnipresent consumption. As the plot progresses, he must reach a deep understanding of his status quo, by immersing himself in postcolonial studies and literature.

Having long tolerated his second-rate citizenship, Shahid is prone to be attracted by a group of Islamic fundamentalists led by Riaz, his "fellow country man" (*Album* 11).[49] They are students of the same college, and try to forge a culture from the same ethic background. In a Britain where consumerism and racism flare, a fundamentalist group seems to provide a common standard for identification, preventing indulgence in personal desires as Chili does, and rendering Shahid a way of life as a confrontation of racism. Shahid has little objection to Chad's criticism of hedonism, which consumerism has contributed to so much, as the latter claims "One pleasure—unless there are strong limits—can only lead to another. And the greater the physical pleasure, the less respect for the other person and for oneself. Until we become beasts." On the other hand, Muslims "have journeyed beyond sensation, to a spiritual

[49] This appellation is applied by Riaz to Shahid, rather than vice versa. Kureishi's design as such intends to show Riaz's scheme to enroll Shahid, a not so Pakistani Briton, in his company.

and controlled conception of life. We regard others on the basis of respect, not thinking what we can use them for. We work for others, which is what we doing right here now" (*Album* 139). In Chad's argument, a consumer society is completely devoid of ethic and altruism. Those who listen to pop music all day long, for example, are controlled "by the music and fashion industries" (*Album* 89),[50] as opposed to pious Muslims with "minds and sense" (*Album* 90).

Despite these pronouncements, commodities, music, and intellectual discourses are omnipresent in consumerist Britain, continually acting upon postmodern subjects like Shahid. While preparing to guard a Bangladeshi family against racist attacks with his Muslim comrades, Shahid "slip on the black puffy coat his mother had given him," which "[h]e had, anyhow, been waiting to try it out"(*Album* 92). Expected to reject the lures of consumer society, even Chad, leader of these armed youths, "stopped dead," his eyes watering upon hearing "the weeping brass of 'Try a Little Tenderness' coming from an open window" (*Album* 99). Shielding the immigrant family, Shahid hums "Sexual Healing" unconsciously (*Album* 136), and cannot restrain his desires from being ignited by the appearance of Brownlow, a Marxist teacher in his college:

> It must have been Brownlow's alcohol fumes which made Shahid yearn for the darkness of a pub. A pint of Speckled Hen, Southern Comfort, Heineken, Tennent's, Guinness, Becks, Pils, Bud-what lovely names, like those of the poets! . . . Yet images of Brownlow's wife [Shahid's white teacher as well as his lover] kept tempting him. At this moment, he could have been gripping her well-exercised calf, pressing her knee, cosseting his hand into her thigh, and sliding inward. (*Album* 107)

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[50] Relating hedonist consumerism with the West and contrasting it with Muslims, Chad creates an us-vs.-them binary that is also exposed in the realm of conception of ethnicity. For him "all white people" possess "a bit of Hitler" and shall be responsible for prevailing racism (*Album* 20).

It is important to clarify whether Shahid, now in a fundamentalist squad, is constantly *bothered* by consumerist images, or whether his identity is influenced so much by Western art and literature that his association with Islam resembles not so much a religious faith as an experience of spiritual consumption. Since Shahid participates in activities associated with both consumerism and Islamic fundamentalism, he thus becomes the nexus of major cultural conflicts in this novel. It is tempting to believe that Shahid is a paradigmatic schizophrenic characterized by postmodern theory, immersing himself in consumerism as much as religious doctrine. While Holmes claims that "Islam attracts Shahid" (299) by giving him "a sense that his identity is coherent and unified" (300), therefore resultant in Shahid's being "The Postcolonial Subject Divided between East and West," there must be a close reading of his Islam experiences. Being the most studious character in this novel, and keen to various ranks of culture, it is curious that Shahid should get so little inspiration from the Holy Koran. This is so despite the fact that fundamentalist Muslim students keep translating its spirit into modern languages for him.[51] His one and only visit to a mosque does not conjure any religious doctrine that can be distinctively attributed to Islam. The way "he asked God to grant him realization, understanding of himself and others, and tolerance," and felt "empty of passion and somewhat delivered and cleansed" are prayers and responses not very different from that of other religious experiences—especially those of Christianity, the dominant religion in many Western countries (*Album* 141). Shahid's Western mental framework is undeniable, for his Islamic prayer is composed almost entirely of cultural ingredients from the West:

[51] Shahid's only sketchy accounts of the Koran are even quotations from his friends, about "stories, in religious form, about the origin of everything, about how God wanted them to live, about what would happen when they died, and why, while alive, they were persecuted" (*Album* 143).

> While praying, Shahid had little notion of what to think, of what the cerebral concomitant to the actions should be. So, on his knees, he celebrated to himself *the substantiality of the world*, *the fact of existence*, the inexplicable phenomenon of life, art, humor, and love itself—in murmured language, itself another sacred miracle. He accompanied this awe and wonder with suitable music, the "Ode to Joy" from Beethoven's Ninth, for instance, which he hummed inaudibly. (*Album* 102, my emphasis)

Ontology, i.e., "the substantiality of the world" and "the fact of existence," a mainstay of Western philosophy, is Shahid's reference when explaining, substantiating, and creating this religious moment. On an aesthetic level, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9, a masterpiece and icon of Romantic music, reminds the reader of the Kantian sublime characterizing Western subjects.

Although he refutes Brownlow's Western Reason which merely values belief in terms of "a matter of truth or falsity, of what could be shown and what not," and highlights the importance of "joining" (*Album* 143), Shahid's participation in Islam only shows how much he resembles an avid tourist in the fundamentalist squad. Like today's more sophisticated tourists, who are more interested in local ways of life than scenic spectacles, Shahid deserves Hart's accusation for his consumerist logic: "But our religion isn't something you can *test out*, like trying on a suit to see if it fit! You gotta buy the whole outfit!" (*Album* 246, my emphasis). The mosque episode, with its religious aura providing a spiritual refuge for postmodern subjects, is also a space "splitting" Shahid's identity in two for a critic like Holmes. Ironically, yet unsurprisingly, it reflects a common reality wherein a tourist's "joining" in with local, i.e., "authentic," practices merely means sharing a particular space. Still, pious local Muslims in this novel are articulated within the margins of a capitalist society. For example, the narrator paints the mosque scene with "businessmen in expensive suits,

others in London Underground and Post Office uniforms," "[c]hic lads with ponytails, working in computers" and "young men in suits" (*Album* 142). In doing this, he unconsciously underscores the point that one's job, upon which stand all sorts of professional and work ethics, never retreats from identity formation—even in a mosque, where the narrator claims "race and class barriers [are] suspended" (*Album* 142). Yet, in this "uncompetitive, peaceful, [and] meditative" atmosphere (*Album* 142), "non-consumerist" Muslims also recharge their work power in the same way the early bourgeoisie exercised their Protestant ethics in the early phases of capitalism. While practices in the mosque reproduce the labor power of pious Muslims, thus supporting them in various professions and class differences, Shahid conditions his seemingly endless desire to reproduce his power for consumption as well as his literary production.

Shahid's inability to transform himself, from being a proponent of Western culture to being a convert to Islam, has its foundation in the productive dimension of late capitalism. It not only brought forth a system of objects as Baudrillard terms them, but inspired a great variety of discourses and narratives, both of which sustain print capitalism. As grand narratives compete with small ones, with the postmodern condition weighing different stories equally, Shahid is unable to make Islamic stories a dominant guide in the vein of his romantic ethic: "The problem was, when he was with his friends their story compelled him. But when he walked out, like someone leaving a cinema, he found the world to be more subtle and inexplicable" (*Album* 143). Religious stories thus reveal themselves to be products of "imagination," which the romantic poet "William Blake called 'the divine body in every man,'" constantly filtered through the hero's romantic ethic (*Album* 143). Religion is salient for some consumerists in this vein. Like cinematic space separating its audience from the external world, religious activities temporarily cut off the toil of work, providing more

meditative and purified space for a subject under siege from various simulacra. Though "his mind was working, justifying, and excoriating" in the mosque (*Album* 142), Shahid found time to catch his breath in the "bustling diversity of the city" (*Album* 143).

As different cultural and religious practices in the eighties could resemble small narratives for a subject, a group of Islamic fundamentalists could then be treated as a subculture with its unique rituals, discourses, and practices. To some extent, this may explain Shahid's involvement in Islam. But as Bart Moore-Gilbert notes, "[i]n any case, it is never made clear why a figure who is so obviously comfortable in secular Britain should turn to 'fundamentalism' in the first place" (145). Lacking friends of the same generation to identify with upon his arrival in London, a freshman like Shahid is emotionally fragile in such a "no man's land." When "everyone was insisting on their identity, coming out as a man, woman, gay, black, Jew-brandishing whichever features they could claim, as if without a tag they wouldn't be human," Shahid is willing to seize Riaz's welcoming hand in the turmoil of racism experienced in his late and indecisive teens. However, from the very beginning, Shahid has rendered himself a very different cultural construct than Riaz, as he does "not quite" miss Indian food as the latter does, and is not so qualified as his "fellow countryman" (*Album* 10). Born the son of a travel agency owner and never believing in any religious precepts, Shahid never finds Pakistani tourism as improper as his new friend does. Feeling "[a] little strange" in a salwar prepared by Chad (*Album* 141), yet much aroused by desire and sensation when dressed as a woman by his teacher-lover, Shahid is disqualified as a Muslim by the author, because "[i]f you're a Muslim, you can't play with your identity in that way" (qtd. in Kaleta 140).[52]

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[52] In Kaleta's interview with the author, Shahid's unease at the "national dress" is more telling (*Album* 141): "Dressing up has a new fluidity. . . .Chad dresses Shahid up—he makes Shahid wear a salwar. It's

Nevertheless, Shahid's western temperaments do not negate his concern for oppressed South-Asian diasporans. "Shahid, too, wanted to belong to *his* people. But first he had to know *them*, *their* past, and what *they* hoped for" (*Album* 102, my emphasis). Kureishi's use of pronouns says a lot about Shahid's partial belongingness or semi-attachment to the above predicates. Shahid is both an insider and outsider of this ethnic community, referred to as *his* or *them*, in the way that a commodity belongs to its owner, yet oftentimes remains an object outside of one's subjectivity. While a consumer creates or gains desirable self-images through purchasing and assembling material commodities, images, and attitudes, in postmodern identity politics one participates in different activities in order to feed his or her heterogeneous needs. Though religious activities do not completely equal consumer behavior, Shahid does follow logic of the latter, passing over elements related to faith in order to ensure that fundamentalism poses no danger to his cultural production and consumption. In this respect, Shahid parallels a modern consumer who disregards marketing strategies and functions defined by the producer, making mutable personal needs his criteria in deciding in which way and how long a commodity is meaningful to his life. Flexibility of choice in both commodity purchase and subculture practice, exemplified by Shahid's participation in the Islamic group, points to the fact that "we are moving towards a society *without fixed status group* in which the adoption of styles of life (manifest in choice of clothes, leisure activities, consumer goods, bodily disposition) which are fixed to specific groups have been surpassed" (Featherstone 83, my emphasis).

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a really good scene. Chad says, 'Hey, I want to dress you up. I'll bring you a present when you dress up.' Really nice. And he gives Shahid this wonderful white, pure silk salwar. Chad dresses Shahid up, and he puts this cap on his head. And Shahid is standing there looking at him really embarrassed. And this scene contrasts, in a way, with the previous scene where Deedee dresses Shahid up. Shahid and Deedee dress up. Deedee becomes a guy who wears makeup; Shahid becomes a woman" (140, my emphasis). The make-up scene between Shahid and Deedee will be further analyzed later.

Shahid's failed identification with the militant fundamentalist group seems to be redeemed through an affair with his college teacher Deedee Osgood, who continuously brings up experiences related to her (sub-)cultural consumption, and processes these raw materials for her professional production. In this way, Deedee goes beyond mere consumerism and further sets up a radical value system heralding marginality and hybridity. A former sex worker, feminist and student rebel in the '60s, Deedee in the '80s has become a sexual radical and vigorous advocate for reversal of traditional gender politics, and an indulger in cultural phenomena, such as drugs and music. In her very first meeting with Shahid, Deedee reveals her capacity for stepping outside of academia in order to stand at the side of minority communities, be they female or colored ethnics. With Prince, Madonna and Oscar Wilde' photos on the wall in her office, and with "All limitations are prisons" as her motto, Deedee also looks upon ethnic cultural figures, like "Wright and Ellison, Alice Walker and Toni Morrison," to support her resistant stance. As if siding with the ethnic or gendered is not radical enough, Deedee venerates Prince as her ultimate idol in that he avoids any singularized subject position (*Album* 33): "He's half black and half white, half man, half woman, half size, feminine but macho, too" (*Album* 34). With common interest in Prince's in-betweenness and a cross-racial love, Deedee and Shahid appear to be an ideal couple defying the homogeneic tendency of Islamic fundamentalism, and cultural barrenness of Chili's philistine consumerism. Moreover, by foregrounding pop consumers like Deedee, and Shahid as the central lover, Kureishi is regarded to claim pop, among other things, "as a site in which plurality of identity—whether at the level of ethnicity, class, gender or sexuality—is celebrated" (Moore-Gilbert 117).

Rather than embracing postmodern political correctness, Kureishi has come up with several important episodes wherein consumerist attitudes weigh much more than Deedee's intention to transgress given mainstream ideologies. When Deedee puts

women's makeup on Shahid in order to assert a transgender posture, she expresses the central logic of objectification and commodification in consumer society. Transformation into a different role may be the purist form of consumptive experience, wherein a subject not only takes on new identities by possessing certain commodities, but, via these commodities, becomes a desired object disguised as a subject. Fearing "as if he were losing himself" and "troubled" by this process of alienation when converted into another sex, Shahid soon enjoys "his new female face. He could be demure, flirtatious, teasing, a star; a burden went, a certain responsibility had been removed" (*Album* 127). That only a non-human object can be rid of all responsibility explains the nature of Shahid's identification with a sexual commodity. "[W]alking up and down on his toes like a *model*" (*Album* 128, my emphasis), Shahid "enters into the spirit of the *thing*" for Deedee's consumptive gaze (Buchanan 62, my emphasis). In doing so, Deedee becomes a creative consumer, aestheticizing Shahid's body in a way that differentiates her taste from sexual seduction stereotyped by the mainstream. Also, as a feminist, Deedee emasculates Shahid by depriving him of his potent male offensiveness, thereby *customizing* him to be a materialization of her radical credo and desire.

Though transvestism marked a boundary transgression celebrated by many gender critics when identity politics was still trendy, Shahid's makeup violates neither the dominant gender ideology nor the system of commodities. Crossing the given sexual border is a legitimate performance in the postmodern private space. Except on some carnivalesque occasions, such as a homosexual parade or a TV show, transvestism is not approved of in everyday public life. Not violating this taboo, Shahid and Deedee, the most radical cultural figures in this novel, continue to go out into the street wearing costumes in accordance with gender stereotypes. Just because of this, their pleasant sensation in private transvestism is heightened, for their

performance crosses forbidden boundaries. Under his makeup, Shahid does not understand how one is socialized as a woman—not to mention understanding those-not-so-rosy realities for women, such as menses, procreation and maternity, which never cross his mind in this transient female disguise. The feminine object Shahid identifies with is a fetish set for seduction. Absolutely disconnected from other human needs and existences, this experience of consumption brings one out of reality and into a romantic self that is at once a subject and a commodity.

Such postmodern impersonation also reaffirms an aesthetic value system for commodified subjects as objects. While beauty is mainly ascribed to women, such beauty is simulated by cosmetics, personal ornaments, apparel and media devices. Therefore, the lipstick, mascara, blusher, and eye shadow on Shahid's face, originally components of femininity, are used to transform his body into a sexual fetish. The irony of this romantic ethic emerges when compared to Shahid dressed by Chad in a white salwar. While Shahid has no scruple about walking around in a salwar, no matter how strange he feels when first trying it, in women's makeup he can only "[wonder] what it might be like to *go out* as a woman," "be looked at differently," and never dare violate mores by actually doing so (*Album* 127, my emphasis).[53] Paralleling the assurance of the gender politics is a domination of sign value attributed to the Western fashion industry. Shahid's excitement in women makeup is in sharp contrast to his relative numbness in a salwar, since the latter costume never holds place in his aesthetic hierarchy.

While Buchanan persuasively argues about unequal power relations in the transvestite scene, wherein Shahid "has lost his autonomy in precisely the same way that feminism argues that women have lost theirs when their bodies are objectified by

[53] When Shahid hesitates whether to have makeup on his face at Deedee's request, Deedee's answer "There's only now" exposes the necessity to do the transvestism indoors, hence reassuring an insurmountable border set by the mainstream gender construction (*Album* 127).

men" (63), the omnipotent power of commodification is never overlooked. This leads us from the politics of transvestism, in which Shahid seems to be passively dressed by his teacher-lover in power, to their self-/mutual- commodification in the act of having sex. No longer looking at Shahid as if he "were a piece of cake" (*Album* 127), Deedee this time commodifies herself with the aid of aphrodisiatic clothing and pornographic postures. Rendered for Shahid's eyes, "in magazine soft-focus," Deedee "turn[s] herself into pornography" by simulating/performing a sexual commodity romanticized through photography. The sex game ends with their simultaneous masturbation and orgasms, "face to face" (*Album* 129). Following Shahid's makeup episode, Kureishi's design of Deedee's self-commodification and masturbation illustrates how a postmodern subject gains his or her subjectivity through imitating sexual simulacra. Deedee and Shahid's masturbations turn what they see (the sight of each other) into simulated sex commodities, while their own postures, resembling a pornographic actress or actor, bring themselves imaginary pleasure that the sexual performers are supposed to have on the screen or magazine. Moreover, masturbation represents fulfillment of the ultimate individualistic desire a romantic subject yearns for. That commodification leads to objectification of a subject only tells half of the story. Considering Deedee and Shahid's indulgence in self-objectification and the latter's fascination with cross-dressing, Shahid gains his new subjectivity, however temporarily and restricted in sexual politics, in a romantic ethic that elevates him to the realm of fetish-like immortality. Thus, the most critical issue of Shahid's (and Deedee's) commodification lies in his *subjective* desire to identify with beautified women as an image *object*, though "[t]he desire of the subject is no longer at the center of the world, it is the destiny of the object" (Baudrillard, *Ecstasy* 80).[54]

[54] In this sense, it is illuminating to juxtapose Baudrillard's metaphorical insight with Shahid and Deedee's mutual seduction, as he "concluded that seduction is best conceived not as a strategy of the

Fascinated by the eternal glamour of commodities, postmodern subjects not only fill their worlds with more artificial materials and images, but develop a new self technology to redeem their subjectivity through becoming seductive commodities.

Sex is not the only realm in which Kureishi doubts Deedee's posture of transgression. A teacher of cultural studies and postcolonial literature, Deedee's personal interests in her daily life, as well as her academic approach, is rendered collusive with the emergence of mass consumption of cultural commodities on the one hand, and on the other, with a branch of cultural studies without respect to aesthetic values. Deedee's lower-middle class background and her lack of aesthetic fashioning distinguish herself from her young lover. Her profession as a "cultural" teacher not only witnesses the definition of culture as greatly transformed or multiplied with legitimation of popular culture, but also the "expansion in higher education in Euro-American societies during the second half of the twentieth century" (Lury 91). With this expansion, new social and cultural classes become consumers of education. To this, a new generation of faculty, as new consumers and producers sensitive to their Zeitgeist, increasingly includes popular and consumerist culture in their syllabi. As an extreme example, Deedee's lectures mirror her private hedonist consumption.

Despite a vast number of scholars having fertilized the field of cultural studies with rigid theoretical formations, Kureishi comes up with critical issues via the characterization of Deedee. First, literary works for her seem more like annotations of identity politics than aesthetic achievements. Not until the Rushdie Affair occurred were writers other than women and nonwhites included in her syllabus. Canonical literature never fits into her life as did drugs, rave scenes, pop music or popular readings. Secretly "reading 'shopping and fucking' novels" and "dozens of self-help

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subject, but as the very being of objects, of their seductive fascination" (Kellner 176).

books," Deedee "was interested in thinking what needs such books supplied rather than attempting to disturb people with literature, which only academics imagined central to anything, and real people only read on holiday" (*Album* 144-145). Deedee's contact with canonical literature witnesses a decreased literary sensitivity in the eyes of some cultural intellectuals. *The Sentimental Education* and *Little Dorrit* cannot be finished without "forcing herself through" (*Album* 144). No longer a repressed culture, popular culture is so pervasive that the very existence of it shapes the way people make sense of the world. While the aesthetic value of traditional canons never totally fades in the postmodern era, serious literature is oftentimes deprived of its goal of entertainment and education. Consequently, it resembles a brand commodity in Deedee's case—that to read them is painful, yet indispensable when attesting to one's cultural status.

Second, paralleling a reluctance to stick to certain canonic works or to approach them with traditional methods is a fascination with any daily phenomena, now the orthodoxical petit discourse in postmodernism. While "[Deedee] and other postmodern types encouraged their students to study anything that took their interest, from Madonna's hair to a history of the leather jacket," Shahid "was discomfited by the freedom of instruction Deedee offered," wondering "[w]as it really learning or only *diversion* dressed up in the *latest* words"(*Album* 34, my emphasis)? Taking consumptive experiences seriously, Deedee's pedagogy replicates the mode of production in a consumer society that shortens the turnover rate of commodities in order to come up with the *latest* stuffs—turning them into short-term *diversions* for consumers that induce continuing purchase.[55] By characterizing Deedee as an

[55] Kureishi's characterization of Deedee vents much of his anxiety about the decline of literature. Cultural study as a powerful discipline in humanities, as well as a dominating methodology of analyzing literary works reflect a loss of autonomy of literature and *literary* theories. As Galin Tihanov puts it, "the early 1990s represents the last stage in the protracted demise of literary theory as an autonomous branch of the humanities. The abandonment of literary theory in favor of projects in

extreme example of a postmodernist rarely seen in actual academia, Kureishi portrays her pedagogy as only focusing on the morally repressed, where the culturally degraded and the politically corrected can obviate an opportunity to explore complex humanities delineated by canonized works. As literature is accessed through gender, ethnicity, or sexuality, like "a literary wank list for [her] students" (*Album* 128), and the novelty of cultural phenomena becomes the highest criteria, Deedee's cultural production is revealed to be her justification for personal hedonism as a consumerist desire.

As if her lectures in class do not attest to her radical politics sufficiently, Deedee recruits minority students under her tutelage to study in her home. This pseudo-postcolonial relationship between a liberal teacher and her ethnic students repeats and updates the colonial version. While colonizers conquer and make use of the colonized to support and maintain their imperial subjectivity, Deedee's post- and anti-colonialist doctrines and practices are buttressed by her ethnic superiority.[56] Moore-Gilbert discerns "an unmistakable whiff of the female colonial missionary about Deedee," as "amongst the three college students who are lodgers in her home

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semiotics as a form of *cultural theory* (Lotman), and in favor of forays into philosophical anthropology (Iser), were symptoms of ill health and of a decline in self-sufficiency. The main cause of these transformations was the changing status of literature and its *consumption* in a postindustrial society, increasingly globalized and dependent on an incessant flow of information and image-based communication. Over the past two decades, the economy of leisure has also changed dramatically, especially in the more affluent West: depersonalized and mediated but commercially successful forms of entertainment make the experience of private reading ever more demanding by comparison. Reading now has to compete, moreover, with sources of information that mobilize simultaneously a wider range of senses and present their material in a manner we think of as companionable ('*consumer-friendly*'). 'The literary work of art' (Roman Ingarden's title is both dated and nostalgic) is no longer endowed with special status; it competes for attention as one of main commodities in the cultural marketplace" (63, my emphasis). Development of the entertainment industry not only creates commodities consumer-friendly for potential readers of literature, further endorsing the salience of cultural studies, but translates literature in its traditional sense into digestible versions like film, TV series and other shortened texts. Alternatively, it is sanctified as cultural/symbolic capital that Deedee has to place at the highest rank of her cultural hierarchy.

[56] Even in a society where consumptive relations between, or among, people and materials are common, the power relation between the consumed and consumers are usually not even. That non-white students are liberated by a white teacher appears much more frequently in media or literary representations than vice versa is just a tip of the iceberg.

are two young British-Asian women whom Deedee sees herself as having 'liberated' from an oppresssive and obscurantist home environment" (141).[57] Chad's criticism of Deedee is irrefutably pertinent: "Would I dare to hide a member of Osgood's family in my house and fill her with propaganda? If I did, what accusations? Terrorist! Fanatic! Lunatic! We can never win. The imperialist idea hasn't died" (*Album* 240). Holding a politically correct banner aloft to manipulate her students' ethnic identities, Deedee makes a larger step forward than those who only appropriate the textual commodities of postcolonialism and feminism for academic reproduction. This is because she remains subject to a semiotics of intellectual consumerism that prefers sign values of the colored or gendered. Baudrillard's analysis is again feasible when illustrating this teacher-student relationship: "*To become an object of consumption, an object must first become sign.* That is to say: it must become external, in a sense, to a relationship that it now merely signifies. . . . only thus can it be consumed, never in its materiality, but in its *difference*." Moreover, "[t]his conversion of the object to the systematic status of a sign implies the simultaneous transformation of the human relationship into a relationship – of consuming and being consumed" (*System* 200). The suicide of one of Deedee's student-lodgers, due to the student's failure to mediate between her ethnic root culture and Deedee's radical pedagogy, reveals commodified human relationships as being potentially harmful, something Deedee has been reluctant to mention.

While minorities are appropriate study material for an academic activist like Deedee, not every postcolonial subject becomes her favorite. "Cool," an idea including certain tastes and styles, is decisive in determining which "Other" is commodifiable for this radical teacher. As Dick Pountain and David Robins claim in

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[57] For deeper analysis of Deedee's ethnocentric practices, please refer to Moore-Gilbert's *Hanif Kureishi*, p.141-42.

Cool Rules, "[c]ool has been a vital component of all youth subcultures from the '50s to the present day, . . . [and] originally expressed *resistance* to subjugation and humiliation" (12, my emphasis). Having "been expropriated by the mass media and the advertising industry during the '80s and '90s, and used as the way into the hearts and wallets of young consumers," cool is embodied in various cultural products. "It is now in the process of taking over the whole of popular culture, and if its conquest is not quite uncontested, some of its competitors for the modern heart and mind – various *nationalisms* and *religious fundamentalisms* – are far from attractive" (Pountain and Robins 12-13, my emphasis). This explains why the fundamentalist student squad, in light of its marginalized position as a social and ethnic organization, wins so little solicitude from Deedee. As a Muslim student complains, "[o]ur voices suppressed by Osgood types with the colonial mentality. To her we *coolies*, not *cool*" (*Album* 228, my emphasis). Unlike Shahid, faithful followers of Islam are too conservative to share with Deedee's postmodern hedonism. Their resolute and militant stance has little consumptive value when compared to that of her submissive tenants. They are simply not cool, being at odds with "the new mode of individualism, an adaptation to life in post-industrial consumer democracies" (Pountain and Robins 13).

The colonization of consumption in everyday life has led to a crisis of value and the problem of identification. Tilting himself toward Deedee's cultural practices, Shahid finds things and experiences he perceives resembling simulacra, which are at the mercy of desire when determining their relationships with the subject:

> He believed everything; he believed nothing.
>
> His own self increasingly confounded him. One day he could passionately feel one thing, the next day the opposite. Other times provisional states would alternate from hour to hour; sometimes all

> crashed into chaos. He would wake up with this feeling: who would he turn out to be on this day? How many warring selves were there within him? Which was his real, natural self? Was there such a thing? How would he know it when he saw it? Would it have a guarantee attached to it?
>
> Lost in such a room of *broken* mirrors, with jagged reflections backing into *eternity* he felt numb. (*Album* 157, my emphasis)

The Lacanian mirror image is *broken* with pervasive yet irrelative commodities and discourses, while hyper-real perfection of each simulacrum represents *eternity*. In a postmodern society, every simulacrum and discourse gains its legitimacy in a certain context or group, and loses its transient glamour once the cognitive/consumptive subject is situated in another environment. Unable to ensure which object is best to identify with, the subject is in danger of fragmenting with the world as representation. This is the crisis brought on by the strategy of late capitalism to solve the problem of over-accumulation of industry capitalism. Constantly consuming experiences made possible by others, whether by Deedee, Riaz, or other (sub-)culture producers, Shahid has difficulty in choosing a position as his ultimate concern for going through a fragmented postmodernity. As a consequence, he appears as just another commodity in need of someone to certify its value. As Bradley Buchanan has persuasively argued: "[t]he irony of the final question is obvious: Shahid has grown so used to consuming drugs, music and experiences to stimulate his self-awareness that he views his 'self' as just another product (one without a guarantee attached to it)" (59).

Serious literature comes to Shahid's rescue, providing him with a value system and strong identity beyond consumption-like practices. This not only pits himself against his lover, but renders himself untimely in an age when high culture is deemed collusive with the dominating class, thus ensuring its hegemony. However, Shahid's embrace of literature is far from aesthetic *taste* as conceived by Pierre Bourdieu, who

understands this as a way to distance oneself from other social groups. He states: "[S]ometimes I see certain people and I want to grab them and say, read this story by Maupassant or Faulkner, this mustn't be ignored, a man made it, it's better than television" (*Album* 29).[58] Making use of visual and sound devices to manage desires, television was the most dominant media form in the consumer society, prior to personal computers emerging in the 1990s. In view of the connection between television and hedonistic consumerism, Kureishi turns Shahid toward reading and writing novels. Respected authors, like "Turgenev, Proust, Barthes, Kundera" and others, make up a literary form providing more space for intellectual discussion and aesthetic exploration than that authored by "Madonna or George Clinton" (*Album* 145).[59] Shahid's reading experiences therefore differ from that of consumerists simply satisfied with sensory stimulation and instant gratification. Dedications in serious literature, especially those in novels, are deemed by Kureishi to be an antidote for depthless consumerism in a simulated society.

Thus said, Shahid's veneration of serious literature seems to be a "(suspect) humanist 'universalism'" (Moore-Gilbert 121), and induces critics like Bruce King claim that "*The Black Album* is a plea for the superiority of real literature" ("The Black Album" 406). Conservative though it might be, Shahid's belief is backed up by the fact that critics, including those in cultural studies, keep generating papers on serious authors like Kureishi, whose work is frequently included on English department reading lists, and considered along with white British novelists already canonized.[60] This phenomenon explains why traditional canons are still of some

[58] Shahid may share similar criticism of television like that of Bourdieu, yet his belief in literature, as a means to make a better sense of the world for everyone, makes his interest much more than a taste intended to distance himself from lower classes.

[59] A character in Kureishi's short story "That was Then" seems to speak to the author's belief: "where else could you get the complexity and detail of inner motion except in fiction? It's the closest we can get to how we are inside." (*Intimacy and Midnight All Day* 196).

[60] Bart Moore-Gilbert categorizes *The Black Album* as a "condition of England" novel, with Priestley

value nowadays, if not those heralded universally by Harlod Bloom in his *The Western Canon*.[61] It is just as dogmatic in discrediting pop culture on account of its consumers, as debasing traditional or canonical culture as "the whole white doo-dah," an ideology sacramentalized by the ruling class (*Album* 228). While canonical western literature continues to inspire, usually serving as the creative basis for producers of pop culture, whether in educational institutions or personal lives, it fails to "connect a generation in the same way" as pop culture did in 1970s Britain (*Album* 144). However, late '80s Britain not only witnessed a decline in high culture, but saw the weakening of resistant pop culture that burgeoned in the 1960s and gained power in the 1970s. Shahid tries to reconstruct a non-coercive value system straddling both high and pop cultures by rejecting to "be denied the best" in various cultural forms, and asserting that "[a]ny art could become 'his,' if its value was demonstrated," (*Album* 145).

However, even Shahid's interest in a perplexing literary world must struggle with sexual consumerism, which finds simulated images a perfect surrogate not only for real sex, but also of usually complicated and frustrating interpersonal relations. Despite his debut story "Paki Wog Fuck Off Home" (*Album* 83) recounting the trauma he experiences as a Pakistani Briton, Shahid's latter works, "The Prayer-mat of the Flesh" (*Album* 144) and "The Flesh, the Flesh" (*Album* 177), are driven by pornography and mutually commodified sex with Deedee. Pornography, "as part of pop culture" and "of the whole culture of simulation" (Degabriele), is liable to flatten the artistic complexity of Shahid's novel writing. As Maria Degabriele argues, "in *The*

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and Orwell as its predecessor ("Kureishi's Revision of 'Englishness'" 143). Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*, on the other hand, "extends a tradition that stretches back through the 1950s novels of social mobility by John Braine (1922-86), Kingsley Amis (1922-95) and Alan Sillitoe (born 1928), through Dickens, to the eighteenth-century picaresque" (Thomas 62).

[61] For a comparative study between Bloom's elitist literary approach and populist culture studies on literature, please refer to Andrew Milner's *Literature, Culture and Soceity*, p.22-34.

Black Album it is in the blurring of the boundaries between the 'fact' of the sexual encounter between Shahid and Deedee, and the 'fictions' of pop culture that their desire is located." Consumerism relies on consumer desire and the seductiveness of commodities, which perfectly correspond to supply and demand in the pornography industry. Supplying *fictional* simulations for *factual* biological desires of its consumers, the porn industry infiltrates Shahid's life and literary practices, witnessing the crisis of the novel in this era of consumerism. Rampant simulacra have colonized unconsciousness so much that the would-be novelist is in danger of losing Bakhtinian dialogism in his stories. No wonder Shahid is rarely inspired by daily contacts irrelevant to his self-indulgence in sexuality, such as the case with moderate Muslims, the underclass and deviant like Strapper, as well as many middle class Britons. In his portrait of the artist as a young man, Kureishi unconsciously reveals what is partly responsible for waning of the novel in the postmodern era, though his main purpose is to challenge fundamentalists' negation of human desire with Shahid's erotic writing.

Orienting his cultural consumption toward literary production, Shahid avoids Chili's Don Juan-like form of consumerism. In doing so he simultaneously returns to romanticism as the origin of modern consumerism:

> It is now possible to perceive how the Romantic theodicy, as it became translated into a theory of art and the artist, led to the creation of a distinctive ideal of character, one which, although most obviously applied to the artist, was also meant to serve for the consumer or 're-creator' of his products. Since the key characteristic of the divine was taken to be creativity, both in the sense of productivity and of originality, imagination became the most significant and prized of personal qualities, with the capacity to manifest this in works of art and through an ability to enter fully into those created by others, both acting as unambiguous signs of its presence. (Campbell, *The Romantic Ethic* 193)

While some postmodern critics highlight the creativity involved in the consumption of cultural products,[62] so as to challenge the elitist status of cultural producers, a complete equation of consumption with production remains questionable. Readers of novels certainly create discursive meanings between the text and their real-life worlds, but Shahid was more likely to become a professional cultural producer, when he "altered [other writers'] words and had their characters do what he required" (*Album* 82). Through his literary efforts, Shahid differentiates himself from consumers shaped more or less by the taste of capitalist producers, thus achieving divine identity like that of Romantic artists.

Writing stories in an era where storytelling is everywhere, from television advertisements to soap operas, political propaganda and pop songs, Shahid's experience confirms the error of his hardnosed father, who pits literature against "the real world" (*Album* 85). If one's world cannot be "real" without earning a living through work, expansion of cultural consumerism will provoke a demand in jobs related to storytelling. Though despised by Papa, the purpose of Shahid's literary consumption is in seeking raw material for further production. At the same time, "journalist," as a work position, promises to enrich his life experiences for literary reprocessing (*Album* 42). Shahid's romantic attitude earns himself a spiritual reward that Papa rarely has in his production, and blurs the conceptual boundary between work and leisure. While hedonistic desire for new experiences does not exempt the subject from toil in cultural production, it redefines such work as romantic self-fashioning: "[Writing] was work and never entirely pleasant; there would be a

[62] This position is manifested in Paul Willis's *Common Culture* and Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*. The former claims that cultural consumption produces meaning, and advocates grounded aesthetics that affirm creative power of the masses (21-22). The latter interrogates the very idea of "consumer" and replaces it with the secondary production (xiii).

moment's satisfaction compared to a week's discouragement. . . . Whenever anything was achieved, there was always something harder to be attempted. There would be no end to it, fortunately" (*Album* 85). As a result, writing becomes a nodal point across which work and romantic ethic intersects with each other. Unsure if literature will provide him a basic means of livelihood, Shahid's strategic choice of journalism mediates between his romantic impulse and economic reality.

Two Types of Anti-consumerism: A Marxist Caricatured and Islamic Fundamentalism

Creating characters holding anti-capitalist and anti-Western beliefs, Kureishi tracks not only how alternative identities are made possible against consumerism, but an ambiguous intimacy between daily practice and consumer culture. Consumerism is usually criticized by some Marxists and religious groups. The former regards it as an ideological practice of the bourgeoisie, a superstructure that helps to conceal the exploitable base. The latter claims that individual desires can hardly be restrained in the emergent consumerism, resulting in the inevitable collapse of morality and a stable society. However, consumerist practices and commercial advertisements never languish despite all their opponents. This is probably why Brownlow, a Marxist in the very traditional sense, and Riaz, a religious leader calling on his adherents' opposition to Western culture, cannot be independent of omnipresent consumer capitalism. Hardly resembling any Marxist scholar turning to post-Marxism in the late '80s, Brownlow represents a Marxist fundamentalist subsuming various social inequalities under the umbrella of class antagonism.[63] Despite being a product of "the upper-

[63] Marx's idea of alienation, with objectification, estrangement and loss of creativity as its three components, is widely appropriated and developed by consumption theories to elucidate the postmodern consumer society. The great increase of consumer goods and experiences has resulted in a qualitative change in the second half of twentieth century, which is surely unimagined by Marx himself.

-middle-classes," Brownlow "hated . . . his own class" and went to Shahid's "college to help . . . the underprivileged niggers and wogs an' margin people" (*Album* 40). However, this positive image wanes when he fails to recognize inherent diversity within an ethnic community or class stratum—something Kureishi is at pains to delineate in productive, consumptive and religious practices.

A major dimension of Brownlow's anachronism is that class antagonism in postmodern Britain is a story much different from that of Marx's model in the 19th century. While student revolution in the late sixties rekindles anticipation of a "society after the r-revolution" (*Album* 254), he is disappointed at "British people [in the eighties]," who "didn't want e-education, housing, the a-arts, justice, equality" and further accuses them of being "a bunch of fucking greedy, myopic c-cunts" who "b-b-betrayed themselves" (*Album* 255). The British people Brownlow mentions here are an undifferentiated proletariat up against the dominant class, while in historic reality:

> Several significant developments widened the *cracks* between different sections of the working classes, though this did not become evident until the end of full employment, during the economic crisis of the 1970s and 1980s, and until the pressure of neo-liberalism on the welfare policies and "corporatist" systems of industrial relations which had given substantial shelter to the weaker sections of the workers. For the top end of the working class—the skilled and supervisory—adjusted more easily to the era of modern high-tech production, and their position was such that they could actually benefit from a free market, even as their less favoured brothers lost ground. (Hobsbawm 307-08, my emphasis)

Because the Thatcher administration's political and economic policies reduced

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See Bocock p.49.

working class protections like the power of trade union and welfare expenditure, less-skilled workers without stable employment quickly became a new underclass. By contrast, "the top 10 per cent of workers, with gross earnings three times as high as those in the bottom tenth," were liable to regard the new underclass as parasitic in their dependence on a welfare system subsidized by their taxes (Hobsbawm 308). If the top end of the working class could afford more consumerist practices to forge new identities, then Brownlow's essentialization of the working class and British people would be quite problematic. The latter allege that their "justice" and "equality" are sacrificed for the underclass. Yet their need for "e-education, housing, the a-arts" and other commodities can be had much more easily.

Brownlow not only ignores cracks within the class stratum but the internal heterogeneity of the minority. His conception of the Other as a resistant unity is actually the prolongation of Marx's anticipation of a revolutionary proletariat. Disappointed by an already co-opted working class as white Britons, Brownlow now places his hope on ethnic communities. Assuming the colored are "modern—with grandeur and dignity" and "not isolated from the people" (*Album* 226), this Marxist teacher romanticizes them as the executors of unfinished class struggle and modernity. In doing so, Brownlow knows little about, or just refuses to admit, that there are arch-Thatcherite ethnics like Papa, Chili and his wife Zulma, as well as the well-off Shahid who concerns himself more with the survival of western canons than the future of London's underclass—Brownlow's *people*. His critique of liberalism, despite its rough resemblance to some postcolonial analysis of Eurocentric reason, remains questionable in terms of his absolute dichotomization between Western and non-Western ideology. In this line of thought, the whites are affluent while ethnic diasporans are the economicly downtrodden. Liberals who support Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, in this logic, "are working themselves up into a pompous lather,"

"just standing by their miserable class," rather than "fighting for literary freedom," or concerning themselves with "the Asian working class . . . and [their] struggle" (*Album* 226). Ironically, it is the neo-liberalist government that ensures the safety of Rushdie, then a synonym of creative freedom, while Brownlow's leftist discourses are assured under the banner of freedom of speech, one of the main principles of the liberalist ideology. Still, Asian communities in this novel are far from the "working class" in Brownlow's understanding. Arch-Thatcherite Zulma and the bookish Shahid, are two Asian Britons with a certain amount of economic capital. In line with Western sentiment, both are against Muslim fanatics. When Shahid clearly defends rights of artistic expression, Zulma is so unambiguous in her humanistic attitude, claiming: "That inane God stuff jolly well irritates me when we don't even have housing, hospitals, and education" in Pakistan (*Album* 200).[64]

Disillusioned by the failed student revolution in 1968, and living most of his adult life in a Britain with little hope for becoming a socialist utopia, Brownlow gives in to consumerism at times. Shahid's close observation of Brownlow's cultural commodities tellingly reveals how communist countries, Marxist theories and pop music are shelved for strengthening or creating his identities. "[B]ooks on China and the Soviet Union" create an imaginary space to supplant his frustration with capitalism in daily British life; "[T]ravel guides to Eastern Europe" fulfill his political imaginations in tourism. Spending only his "holidays in Albania" means Brownlow need not encounter political realities and social poverty in his communist holy land. Meanwhile, a much more affluent Britain continues to provide a wide spectrum of Marxist books, rather than dogmatic practices of political communism. This

[64] Even now the class crack within the racialized Other is quite evident. In 2000, the then British Foreign Office Minister Peter Hain points out: "There is an opening divide between a black professional class, which is doing extremely well compared with previous generations, [and] a vast pool of ethnic minority citizens who are doing extremely badly in comparison not just with mainstream society but with their better-off brothers and sisters" ("Is UK creating racial underclass?").

strengthens his discontent with capitalism, while pop music soothes his intellectual defeatism. Brownlow's fascination with overseas communist countries proves him to be a political pilgrim as outlined in Paul Hollander's *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba*. "Estranged from what they perceived as the acquisitive individualism, the market anarchy, the erosion of communitarian values on their home grounds," some western intellectuals "were ready to perceive the societies to which they traveled as genuine communities . . . through rose-colored glasses" (Coser 821).

Brownlow's stutter began when "Communist states of Eastern Europe began collapsing" (*Album* 40). It serves as a central metaphor for the then stumbling left. Ironically, consumerism is very much responsible for the fall of communism in 1989:

> The successes of capitalism in delivering consumer goods to ordinary people, to the working classes, in Western Europe, Australia, North America and Japan, finally became common knowledge in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union during the 1980s. . . . The failure of the Marxist-Leninist regimes of Eastern Europe to deliver enough consumer goods to ordinary people, in whose name they claimed to rule, played a key role in bringing about their collapse at the end of the 1980s. . . . (Bocock 41)

As China becomes a rising power in the market economy, and escapes downfall of its communist regime,[65] *The Black Album* attests to the fact that consumerism has become one of the major -isms, like late capitalism, professionalism, and Islamic fundamentalism. Brownlow's anachronism, as Kureishi himself points out in an interview, makes himself "a caricature, because [*The Black Album*] was written in the early nineties, and the Left of that time was really fucked. It was the end of the Berlin

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[65] For in-depth discussion on this point, see Bin Zhao's "Consumerism, Confucianism, Communism: Making Sense of China Today."

Wall, the collapse of Eastern Europe and Russia. That kind of Left had nothing left" (Buchanan 113). To solve his identity crisis, Brownlow insists Islamic fundamentalists are politically correct and persecuted by dominant whites, unhesitatingly suspending universal Reason and the freedom of speech as his core beliefs. At the book burning event, Brownlow regains his '60s revolutionary identity as his support for ethnic book burners is based on a symbolic binarism, wherein the protesters are justified by their inferior color, while Rushdie and his work become politically incorrect because of their white supporters.

Brownlow's beloved working class is not the only community forever changed by an ever-evolving capitalism. Pakistani scholar Eqbal Ahmed argues that colonialism and modernization have "caused the erosion of economic, social, and political relationships which had been the bases of traditional Muslim order for more than a thousand years" (27). Hence, Islamic fundamentalism arises as one of "the contrasting symptoms associated with deep crises of [Muslim] politics and society" (19). As noted by Aamir Mufti, it in turn produces two related critiques of contemporary Islamic societies. The first is a cultural critique "directed at cultural forms and practices which come to be marked within the discourse as 'modern,' 'western,' 'foreign'; in short, as un-Islamic" (Mufti 104). The "*political* level of fundamentalism's critique of society is directed at neocolonial structures of domination and exploitation" (Mufti 105). Such critique—as resistance to domestic colonialism in Britain—has secured an alliance with the political Left. The cultural critique, representing everything western—"from the securing of legal rights for women, to demands for the protection of freedom of expression"—makes Islamic fundamentalism incommensurable with the West (Mufti 105). Absolute negation of the West, at least in words, induces Islamic fundamentalists to ignore Rushdie's criticism against racism, thus creating tensions between their religious beliefs and

daily practices, which are inevitably touched and influenced by modern civilization. Nevertheless, it is also because of its antagonist stance against a clearly defined West and self-acclaimed morality attributed to Islam, that Islamic fundamentalism appeals to people who either resents colonial practices of some western countries, or hopes to gain a black-and-white conception of the postmodern world.

These cultural and political critiques against the West characterize Riaz's multiplicity. Compared to Deedee's indulgence in hedonism and the production of cultural discourses, Riaz is marked by his activism. He exerts himself against discrimination of Asian immigrants by holding "his weekly advice surgery" (*Album* 45). He also leads a group of ethnic youths in defense of a Bangladeshi family under siege by racist attackers and rescues Shahid from choking on his own vomit (*Album* 80). Nevertheless, his self-interpreted Islamic doctrine blinds him to the nature of the western society he has lived in for most his life. He admits: "[Britain] will never be my home. . . . I will never entirely understand it" (*Album* 185). Riaz is a typical first generation immigrant who identifies with an imaginary homeland in Rushdie's terms. Though living in Britain since the age of fourteen, Riaz insists he is originally from Lahore, Pakistan (*Album* 14). His immigrant and religious backgrounds orient him to an absolute demarcation between the non-West and West. Despite this, he has no in-depth relationship with any ethnic characters in this novel. Riaz keeps calling an abstract Islamic community his people, regardless of whether they reside in Britain or in certain developing/underdeveloped countries. The idea of Riaz's people works in the same way as Benedict Anderson's imagined community. As Shahid recognizes, "Riaz loved 'his people,' but, unless offering assistance, he appeared uncomfortable with them. . . . The meaning of his life was his creed and the idea that he knew the truth about how people should live" (*Album* 184).

Riaz's conceptualization of community associates himself with Brownlow's

fascination of an oppressed class. Differentiating an opposite Other against the self is a way to draw a boundary around the subject community.[66] Riaz criticizes Western arrogance (*Album* 186), believing that "the masses are simpler and wiser than us. There's much to learn from them" (*Album* 185). Ideas as such are grand narratives attempting to elucidate cultural, national, social, and religious phenomena. For Riaz, the wise masses are an easy translation of Brownlow's proletariat in the postcolonial context. In this way, Riaz's stance is not far from Brownlow's Marxist fundamentalism. With the downtrodden deemed wise, Western masses in the consumer society are discriminated against, either by the former, as being without morality, or by the latter as "fucking greedy, myopic c-cunts."

Treating people as such is not much different from a consumer subject handling commodities. This is because a reductive perception of reality, whether in consumerism or other forms of ideology, is made possible by human desire imagining objects as they wish. In reaction to *The Satanic Verses*, Muslim immigrants in Kureishi's novel venerate a divinely inscribed aubergine (eggplant) believed to transmit God's demand to kill Rushdie. Refused for public exhibit by municipal officials, the dried-up aubergine resembles an outmoded commodity no longer mentioned by the novel's ethnic characters. If "[t]he overproduction of signs and loss of referents" is the defining aspect of consumer society (Featherstone 114),[67] it works in tandem with an arbitrary bond between signifier and signified in post-structuralism and postmodernism. The way an aubergine, as a holy object, can be transiently defined, forgotten, and even replaced by another signifier, is strongly rooted in a simulacra society, while *The Satanic Verses* as the referent is too mediatized to have

[66]In a similar vein, consumers can shape their own communities by making distinctions between purchases of different sorts or levels of commodities. Yet hedonistic tendencies ease ideological conflicts between consumers, manifest in religious fundamentalism, the political Left and Right.
[67] It is noteworthy that "the 'divine aubergine' is not an invention, but is based on a true-life event in Leicester; a friend sent Kureishi newspaper clippings about the said vegetable" (Moore-Gilbert 238).

its substantiality.

Even Riaz and Chad, in all their refusal of consumerist practices, do not easily shed influences from commodities and Western cultures. At the beginning and end of the novel, Kureishi lets Riaz wear Chili's red, name brand shirt, for Shahid unheedingly loses Riaz's laundry and has no alternative but to replace it with Chili's. On the very day of the bookburning, Riaz, as an anti-West leader, "was wearing the Paul Smith red shirt and dyed green Levi's along with Chili's dotted socks" (*Album* 229), unaware of the great conflict between Islamic fundamentalism and what he is wearing. As the story concludes, Chad strikes and kicks Shahid for his alteration of Riaz's poems on the one hand, and his liason with Deedee on the other. At the same time Chad returns to being his former self, a rebellious subculturalist addicted to drugs and violence, Riaz is struck by this scene with Chili's red shirt and is completely at a loss. His helplessness, just as his self-confessed unfamiliarity with Britain, makes him Chili's hostage. Despite its resemblance to Hollywood gangster movies, this scene exposes the impotence of a religious dogmatist in the reality that is daily life. Having no sense of strangeness in putting on a branded shirt reflects Riaz's subconscious rationalization of consumptive codes. At the same time, his powerlessness in the confrontation between Chad and Chili is a vivid witness to his ignorance of real violence, especially in comparison to his firm support of the fatwa. When Riaz is forced by Chili to take off the red shirt, his "wan and skinny" body reflects his subjectivity which is prone to breaking down without the support of Islamic fundamentalism.

Compared to Shahid's final alliance with Deedee, the above negative delineation of Riaz and Chad easily "lends itself in certain respects to being interpreted as an example of the 'Orientalist' thinking which [*The Black Album*] is ostensibly so keen to challenge" (Moore-Gilbert 147). Postcolonial scholar Ruvani Ranasinha is one of

those critics claiming that Kureishi "ignores the range of different forms of Islam that are not extreme or aggressive" (89), and hence "*invents* a polarity between Islamic fundamentalism and detached liberal individualism or secularism (88). To this, O'Shea-Meddour notes, "[w]ith the exception of the protagonist . . . and his immediate relatives—who are liberal, British/Asian 'free-thinkers' exploring a range of subject positions—most of the other characters (particularly the young Muslim ones) attempt to inhabit singular subject positions and, as such, are left to the mercy of the stereotype" (85). She goes on to point out how Kureishi is unsuccessful in representing the complexity of different subject positions in the later part of *Album*:

> At its most challenging moments, *The Black Album* reminds us that secular liberalism [like Deedee's] could just as convincingly be described as having a fundamentalist core. It exposes a form of liberal fundamentalism so often invisible because it is "naturalized" by the existing hegemony. . . . But as the novel progresses, the possibility of exploring varied or complex Muslim subjectivities is closed off. (91)

The aforesaid critiques are highly persuasive in some respects. As an insider of Western culture, Kureishi's deft hand in portraying secular liberalist characters contrasts with his reluctance to, or incapability of, detailing the nuances of a complex Islamic culture. This is one of the major defects that make *Album* a less successful novel than *The Buddha of Suburbia*.[68] Except for a short episode about Shahid's spiritual journey in the mosque, Kureishi does not characterize those Muslims then around him as major characters. However, if readers are willing to accept that a novel may fail to reach a perfect dialogism on account of the novelist's limited background and some shortcomings in writing skill, and have their attention

[68] Moore-Gilbert points out several flaws in *Album*, such as "fundamentally static" characters, "tired 'eroticism'" of the sex scenes (145), unresolved subplots and ineffective comedy (146).

remain longer on those non-fundamentalist Muslims in this novel, they may then be able to discern other facets of Muslim life other than fundamentalist practices. Muslims in the mosque scene are of different nationalities, ethnicities and occupations, which defy stereotyping Muslim Britons as South Asian immigrants. The mosque scene also defies the notion that these cultural Others derail the work ethic or Western life. However, except for Riaz, Muslim fundamentalists are delineated as students not completely attached to working realities outside of school.[69] A conspicuous contrast occurs when a "stooped, bearded man in baggy salwar kamiz," evidently a Muslim, looks for legal assistance from Riaz (*Album* 45). "[A]lready having two jobs, one in the office during the day, and the restaurant until two in the night," this poor old man has to deal with threats and violence from racists (*Album* 46). Being a non-radical Muslim, he might seldom attribute his predicament wholly to a demonic West. He also has little time to be preoccupied with *The Satanic Verses*.[70] Untainted by working spaces and complex interpersonal relationships, young fundamentalists in the novel afford ample time to homogenize the West under Riaz's guidance. They continue to strengthen their radical beliefs with adolescent passion and interactions within the peer group. Even Shahid, with all his quasi-religious belief in the superiority of creative freedom, is infected with the subcultural ardor when the book burning begins. "He wanted to cooperate now, giving himself over to bitter nihilism, destruction, and hatred. He would love the madness coursing through him, as if he were at a teenage rave in Kent" (*Album* 231).

Furthermore, if those critics really look at Kureishi's nuanced accounts of

[69] Despite being a law student, Riaz has an unspecified job. He also differs from his late- or post-adolescent followers since he is over the age of fifty, as Shahid estimates.
[70] As Jaggi observes, "Kureishi believes many British Muslims see the fatwa as a 'terrible mistake'. 'It's been very bad propaganda for Islam. It's allowed it to be represented as something it doesn't have to be, with Muslims labelled as fanatics and book-burners.'"

various sorts of consumerist attitude, they are likely to find that his strength lies in a critique against simulacra society and a superficial postmodern culture. It's something that cuts across the surface antagonism between Islam fundamentalists and liberal consumers. While Muslim scholar Akbar S. Ahmed claims the influence of a "universal Western culture and [its] pervasive technology, is perhaps the most forceful of onslaughts on Muslim civilization yet" (97-98), he overlooks "the spread of fundamentalism in the Middle East, from Khomeini's revolution to the Muslim Brotherhood, has been vastly augmented by just these [western] devices," such like "television and the video cassette" (Huff 504). This "life-threatening struggle fought on the symbolic level" continually grasps for different signifiers and delimits their referents for ideological and marketing aims (Huff 504). For this reason, Riaz and the fundamentalist protagonist in Kureishi's *My Son the Fanatic* could claim their understanding of a homogenized third world they never visited personally. In a similar vein, The Rushdie Affair could be understood in terms of a global mediascape as well as a common sense thesis on cultural conflicts. For literary critic Aamir Mufti, *The Satanic Verses* in the Islamic world is under:

> forms of mass "consumption" other than "reading" in the narrower sense of that word. Extracts published in the print media, in English and in translation, commentary in print, on the airwaves, and from the pulpit, fantasticated representation in the popular cinema, rumours and hearsay. . . . (97)

This accounts for why Deedee asks Riaz to read the novel first before burning it (*Album* 235). Rather than simply allying himself with Deedee's liberal consumerism against Riaz's fundamentalism, Kureishi dismantles lack of referents in those symbolic oppositions. Deedee's hardship in reading the canons and preference for

lecturing easily-swallowed materials are reciprocal causations of the consumer society.

Scholars critical of Kureishi's rendering of Islam usually evades discussion of how the Koran can literally be applied in a democratic Western society, despite the fact that most Muslims there participate in production, consumption, elections and other social activities. Conflicts as such are amazingly ignored by almost all critics of *The Black Album*, and are incarnated most by Riaz, a law school student tackling discrimination cases for his ethnic clients. In doing so, Riaz prioritizes British Common Law over the universality and superiority of Islamic law, affirming the former as a value system capable of living up to social justice. This contradiction occurs when an individual participated in social activities. These Muslim fundamentalists cannot overthrow Western hegemony, from which their identities are shaped. Excluded and degraded, they instead absolutize Islam as a guide that will overcome identity crisis. Yet their adoption of Western values is so ingrained and naturalized that even they themselves, and the academics who study them, seldom deem it inappropriate.

Kureishi's criticism of opposing ways of life raises a fundamental question. If a cultural consumer like Shahid is willing to associate with Islam on the grounds of his training, then realizing "All this believing wasn't so much a matter of truth or falsity, of what could be shown and what not, but of joining" (*Album* 143), then why do Islamic fundamentalists in this novel refuse to converse with divergent voices in the West? Ultimately, the cause probably lies in the latter's inclination to homogenize an unpurifiable world and the self. While some scholars reprove Kureishi's characterization of *Muslims*, he actually stresses the binarism held by Islamic *fundamentalists*, which is not so different from that of the racists they oppose so fiercely.

> Like the racist, the *fundamentalist* works only with fantasy. For instance, there are those who like to consider the West to be only materialistic and the East only religious. The fundamentalist's idea of the West, like the racist's idea of his victim, is immune to argument or contact with reality. (Kureishi, "Sex and Secularity" 87, my emphasis)

Together with other aspects of human life, a religious belief endures by interweaving itself with other cultural elements, therefore developing itself as a consequence. As Kureishi puts it:

> Religions may be illusions . . . but these are important and profound illusions. But they will modify as they come into contact with other ideas. This is what an effective multi-culturalism is: not a superficial exchange of festivals and food, but a robust and committed exchange of ideas—a conflict which is worth enduring, rather than a war. ("The word and the Bomb" 100)

This said, what lurks beneath Kureishi's negative description of Islamic fundamentalism is not an ideology of Islamphobia. Without negating the value of Islam or any other religion, Kuriehsi criticizes exclusionary beliefs and practices likely to result in oppression.

A pious Muslim scholar, Akbar S. Ahmed shares similar attitudes with Kureishi, though his *Postmodernism and Islam: Predicament and Promise* never positively comments on the novelist. He terms moderate Muslims as "traditionalists", who "believe in the universal message of God in *inter-faith* dialogue (158, my emphasis), while fundamentalists, i.e., "radicals", "wish to implement an Islamic order through armed struggle or confrontation. They are usually driven by hatred and contempt for what they call 'the West'" (160). Ahmed's further denouncement of radical Islam is also appropriate for Riaz:

> Many of the radicals live in the Unitied Kingdom for economic and political reasons. Holding British passports, wearing British clothes, speaking and writing in English, relying on the Western media for publicity, their loud proclamations of Muslim radicalism appear paradoxical and contradictory. . . . They conjure an 'ideal' society, one they cannot order, far removed from the actual one they left behind. (163)

Being invited on TV talk shows and anticipating his poems published, Riaz is willing to join simulacra capitalism, as the ethnic actor Karim Amir in *Buddha*, and print capitalists like Shahid. His residence in Britain speaks louder than verbal attacks on it, which serve as discursive commodities creating an imaginary refuge for his followers. Integrated into a consumerist society as such, Riaz's radical stance aims to win clients via hate, a human emotion no less fierce than the consumerist desire. It also sits in great contrast with the marketing slogans of his fundamentalist squad: "We regard others on the basis of respect" (*Album* 139) or "love those of other religions" (*Album* 91).

Conclusion

The dualistic structures forged by Islamic fundamentalism and consumerism in this novel, as well as Shahid's own confession of being fragmented like broken mirrors, lure critics to evaluate his identity conflicts in terms of binary opposites. However, to say *The Black Album* creates a "postcolonial subject" "divided by the West and East" is overtly Orientalist, in that the East is represented as adopting value systems quite different from that of consumer capitalism and liberalism in the West. Also, why should the East, noted for Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism,

and Islam, be a synonym for Islamic fundamentalism in this novel? People in the East, including developing countries like India and China, and developed countries like Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea, have accepted and integrated consumerism into everyday life practices. They enjoy pop music as well as other cultural commodities as Shahid does. Forces that make up Shahid's identity formation are better considered more specifically.

Expansion of consumerism in the so-called East parallels that in the West. It is an undercurrent through which different ideological positions are channeled. In view of Shahid's rejection of Islamic fundamentalism and a "fixed self" (*Album* 285), scholars mostly claim that Kureishi has a firm belief in the fluid and provisional nature of personal and group identity, overlooking the author's effort in depicting his hero's limitation. That Shahid cannot allow Islamic fundamentalism or even Islam to be one of his "innumerable ways of being in the world" has demonstrated that consumerism is so ingrained in him that he cannot dedicate himself to religious activities (*Album* 285). Shahid's disagreement with Deedee's populist pedagogy, and Deedee's inability to genuinely enjoy canonical novels, mark their limits as clearly as their unwillingness to cross-dress publicly. Such reflects a common basis shared by postmodern "cultural dislocation" (Schoene 125) and consumer choice in Western society. Late capitalist society asks for multiplication of commodities, tastes and images while, at the same time, attempting to hedge those hedonist pleasures within the boundary of legal and moral ideologies. This being so, consumer subjects distinguish between one another through individual tastes. Shahid's choice of commodities is also restricted by what is available to him. Geography of consumption in the '80s becomes a backdrop for these hedonist lovebirds. Spending their weekend in "a seaside town, walking on the wet beach, lying . . . in deck chairs on the pier, scoffing crab sandwiches, oysters, and rock candy," or "wast[ing] money in

amusement arcades" and "[a]ny Victorian wax museums" (*Album* 286), reminds the reader of the travel agency owned by Shahid's family. Creative as Shahid believes himself to be, his leisure activity with Deedee is inevitably pre-planned by entertainment designers.

Providing fuel for consumption, and remaining a salient locator of one's identity, work is highlighted by Kureishi as a common position different community members dedicate themselves to. As Kureishi told Maya Jaggi in an interview in 1995, about writing *The Black Album*, he "started going to the mosque in Whitechapel, hanging around with [fundamentalist youths]," and found that "they seemed lost, and fundamentalism gave them a sense of place, of belonging. So many were *unemployed*, and had friends involved in drugs; religion kept them out of trouble" (Jaggi, my emphasis). At work, one not only earns a salary for subsistence, but also is introduced to other members of society—nurturing a sense of belonging, but not necessarily at the expense of debasing other groups. This is why Shahid suggests Hat, a moderate Muslim in the fundamentalist squad, focus on his "accountancy studies" (*Album* 283).

Shahid cannot identify with Riaz's beliefs because the latter overlooks ethics related to consumerism. Campbell continuously stresses individual subjectivity in his exploration of the romantic ethic. He appropriates Weber's idea of *Entzauberung* (disenchantment), as outlined in the book, *The Sociology of Religion*. This term is used "to describe a historical process in which emotions are gradually removed from the natural world ('the night was frightening') to be relocated in the inner-world of the individual ('she experienced the night as frightening')" (Storey, *Cultural Consumption* 10). Hence, Campbell claims that:

> [o]bjective reality and subjective response were now mediated through consciousness in such a way that the individual had a wide degree of

> choice concerning exactly how to connect them. Beliefs, actions, aesthetic preferences and emotional responses were automatically dictated by circumstances but 'willed' by individuals. (*The Romantic Ethic* 73-74)

Romanticism is a cultural movement that reveres "a radically different doctrine of the person" (Campbell, "Romanticism and the Consumer Ethic" 286). The romantic ethic exists to ensure full development of individual subjectivity in a consumer society. Mutual respect of different needs is therefore indispensable among consumers, or between the consumer and producer. This value also correlates with the ideal of democracy and freedom developed in the revolutionary eighteenth century. Esteeming the individuality of the Other gradually becomes a common value in the modern and postmodern society.[71] As Bocock observes:

> This process [of consumption expansion] too has a positive aspect, as well as the negative aspect of adding to global environmental problems and to pollution. In so far as one of the main alternatives to the production of a sense of identity through consumption seems to lie in a sense of identity, and purpose, being derived from ethnic, racial or national group membership, frequently linked with acts of violence, mainly by men, to those who are defined as beillg 'different', consumerism might well be judged to be preferable. (Bocock 111)

Powerful as it is, consumerism does not result in a world free from the violence of racism, religious beliefs or nationalism. The ultimate violence in this novel, much more serious than Chad's petrol bomb toward a bookstore, comes from the IRA's bombing (The Irish Republican Army) of the London Underground (*Album*

[71] Modern Western subjectivity is usually deemed a product of Orientalism and colonialism. However, those colonial shadows have faded to some degree, so as to include more participants in consumerism, as late capitalism keeps highlighting different needs and desires of individuals in the global span.

111-114).[72] Origins of these religious or nationalist attacks lie in a desire that intends to replace multifarious cultural practices with a unitary sign system, so as to conceal/erase conflicts within a certain community. Facing such hostility, *The Black Album* provides no perfect solution. Consumer society certainly has its evils—"gluttony, nihilism, hedonism" as Riaz argues (*Album* 41). Chili's extreme womanizing, as well as Deedee and Shahid's love which continues "[u]ntil it stops being fun," undisguisedly reveal interpersonal relationships translated into a consumptive one (*Album* 287). However, the consumer society is not going to end in the near future. That everyone has his or her freedom to choose commodities implies individualism as consumerism's ethical basis. Moreover, consumerism is unavoidably articulated with the legal system, moral disciplines, democratic regime, liberalism, and finally, the mutual facilitation between the romantic and working ethic, which infiltrate multiple cultures in Britain and serve as a communicative platform for people with different beliefs. With Shahid, Deedee and Papa, *The Black Album* not only emphasizes equilibrium between the romantic and working ethic, but marks the working ethic as the cornerstone of commodity production, personal identity, and social construction. Since consumption and production are hardly avoidable in a modern society, avoiding damage inflicted by religious beliefs (Chad) or personal desire (Chili) becomes a common subject for all communities. This is why Kureishi chooses liberalism to be his ethical bottom line, once this kind of liberalism is based upon a mutual respect between and acceptance of different cultures.[73] As the state,

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[72] Prime Minister Thatcher's nationalist tendency furthered the bluster of racism, and therefore a great reaction from ethnic Britons exemplified by The Rushdie Affair. Moreover, it allowed little space for negotiation between Britain and the IRA, agitating more violent attacks in Britain and North Ireland. This antagonism was mitigated when the election of Tony Blair as Prime Minister ended the Conservative's administration in 1997 and carried out a milder policy on the North Ireland problem.

[73] As Moore-Gilbert points out, "[t]he other aspects of Riaz's resistance – against police harassment of minorities, for example – get forgotten in the rush to condemn his hostility to certain kinds of art. To this extent, Kureishi's own liberalism proves no less absolutist that [sic] Deedee's, whatever the force of his critique of her perspectives" (*Hanif Kureishi* 148). The liberalism Kureishi supports is anything

society and individual are fragmented by increasingly diversified cultural practices, a need of common ethical ground becomes more urgent than ever.

In the face of many incommensurable identity conflicts between different communities, Kureishi could only place his hope on the protagonist. That Shahid is attracted to Deedee is evidence of neither desire for a long intimacy nor a complete submission to her postmodernist doctrines. He knows well that Deedee's consumerist attitude in love allows more freedom for his romantic impulses. Developing himself through the old art of writing, Shahid transcends superficial consumption, of sex, fashion, shopping and tourism, by creating a literary world where conflicts between human beings are allowed to be represented, juxtaposed and explored in length and breadth. Thus said, though *The Black Album* does not (or is unwilling to) venture deep into the vast and complex experiences of Muslims in Britain, it provides a detailed investigation of the consumer society. It also renders how academia, art and religion, traditionally deemed different domains from consumptive activities, are now examplifying a consumer society. With little optimism of mutual respect, *The Black Album* renders a world where mutual commodification might be much better than "different kinds of civil war" (*Album* 144), laying its faith in canonical literature to stimulate self-reflection and thought that transcends the ills of consumerism.

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but the one articulated into colonialism in the 19th century, when some liberalist thinkers upheld universal human liberty, a task of Enlightenment, as the rationale for imperialist adventure. He knows clearly about how liberalism can be misused. "Liberalism can [become a dogma]. The story *My Son the Fanatic* is about that. It's like Bush bombing Iraq and saying, 'We're bringing you democracy,' and you see thousands of bombs and people shooting at you. This is liberalism turned on its head. It's insane. This is liberalism as fascism" (Kureishi, "Hanif Kureishi with Hirsh Sawhney"). Once activities of exploitation, invasion, and colonialization in its name are excluded, liberalism can be a starting point of negotiation for different cultures. Even Riaz knows well about the power of liberalism in his hand, for Deedee's attempt to stop him from burning Rushdie's book is frustrated by his question: "is the free speech of an Asian to be muzzled by the authorities" (*Album* 235). For the author, liberalism is especially beneficial for ethnic Britons: "It saddens me that so many young [Asian] people are turning to religion. I suppose it is because I believe that liberalism is to our (Asians') advantage. Asian people need liberalism to flourish. I am puzzled that people would want something that would not help them" (Ramesh). In Eddy Kent's analysis of *My Son the Fanatic*, Kureishi's stance is under the name of "postcolonial liberalism," which unhooks colonialism and Imperialism to reengage the present global hospitality, to "make [liberal society's] members feel at home in their world" (82).

Chapter Four

Contesting Spaces:
Sammy and Rosie Get Laid

While London is usually the only backdrop for Kureishi's stories, Susie Thomas merely places her exploration of *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* under the title "World City," among her full-scale study of Kureishi's creative oeuvre before 2005 (45). As Kureishi's second film (1987) and screenplay (1988), *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* represents London as a nexus intersected by powers from local and global, past and present. Not just orchestrating "whites and Asians, British African-Caribbeans, trendy liberals and the dispossessed" (Thomas 45) for an ethnic symphony in a global city, Kureishi have two political figures—one in Britain and the other from Pakistan—as duets to complicate time-space compression in this work. On the other hand, as long as a world city is also a "Semi-Detached Metropolis" (Ball 226), London has its locality, boundaries and conventions that not every outsider from the world can have a place. Still, uneven distributions of power in public and private space lead to a complexion of spatial articulation and contestation. Doubtlessly the ruler of a national space, like Thatcher in the 1980s Britain, has the most ideological, financial, and political resources in recruiting co-optable social sections and marginalizing those dissidents, while the articulation of relatively powerless in a certain spatial formation excludes and even victimizes people with power in other space.

Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's triad of conceptualized spaces and David Harvey's analysis of modernity, this chapter explores the contestation of modern

spaces found in this screenplay and film, directed by Stephen Frears. David Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1989) reveals to readers the immutable yet ephemeral nature of modernity (10). Together with Lefebvre's dissection of space into spatial practices, representations of space and representational spaces in *The Production of Space* (1991), this chapter anatomizes how characters and groups in this screenplay—be they oppressive governors, the economically and politically powerless, or a defiant middle class—contest spaces in an attempt to demarcate an enduring identity in the face of all that is mutable and uncertain about the post/modern condition. It also renders dubious the dichotomization of officials and citizens as spatial oppressors and oppressed respectively. Using Kureishi's screenplay, this study puts forth the argument that governmental figures can become "the oppressed" in private spaces they are unfamiliar with, whereas the traditionally oppressed or excluded can become oppressors in their contestation of public or private spaces for their own personal benefit. In this way, a utopian solution for space usage has come to negotiate the shifting and fixing dimension of modernity, as Kureishi has envisioned it through his staging of a group of nomadic subculturalists.

Modernity is an ongoing process in which industrialization, capitalism, enlightenment, and colonialism further one another through, among other things, disenchantment, rationalization, and linear progression. It commends "human creativity, scientific discovery, and the pursuit of individual excellence in the name of human progress" (Harvey 13). A maelstrom of change is thus created through proliferation of knowledge, technologies, commodities and representations (and all their ramifications), undermining hopes of stable advancement with a sense of fleetness, transitoriness and fragmentation. A lyric poet in the era of high capitalism, Charles Baudelaire, made an observation still valid for such a paradox: "By modernity, I mean the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is

the eternal and the immutable" (12).

The paradox of modernity is revealed through contestation of spaces within and beyond the domestic realm of Western nations. In the years following Edward Said's *Orientalism*, postcolonial and cultural studies have suggested that the progressive and sophisticated image of Western modernity cannot forge itself without creating colonized Others. At its height, colonialism went hand in hand with modernity, providing capitalism with mechanizations of production and consumption that ensured steady supplies of capital and materials. Spaces were sites of production, consumption or both, being subjected to changeability and transience bred by capital and technologies as well as colonizers and colonized being transported around the world. In order to reap the fruits of modernity, space must be secured for long-term use and the maximization of profits.

Surges of change in the latter half of the twentieth century would suggest to some that the spatial trappings of modernity no longer exist. New technologies in transportation and communication, flexible accumulation as a new mode of production, and an omnipresent aestheticized consumerism impel some critics like Jean-François Lyotard, Jameson and Harvey to characterize the last half of the twentieth century as "postmodern." The temporal nature of modernity has given way to a diverse commingling of materials, discourses, images and representations. Spaces of modernity and capitalism are transformed by what David Harvey characterizes as "the time-space compression" of postmodernity. As the leading sign of postcoloniality, increase of different ethnic populations in the ex-imperialist Europe is also one of those postmodern conditions in associative with space. As an important branch of postmodern theory, postcolonialism/postcoloniality resists the colonial aspect of modernity. Its discourses reveal how the Eurocentric modern project is being challenged and rewritten. The outsiders are now inside, and the ethnic Other, like

Sammy in this screenplay, is no longer inferior in the contestation of spaces.

Urban spaces of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have become nodal points in global networks of information, commerce, cultural exchange and other transitory encounters. "World cities," representative of postmodern urban space, "are now read as displaying the features of Late Capitalism's accumulative ways; such as spectacular sites of consumption, architectural pastiche, gentrified neighbourhoods and manufacturing sites reinvented as tourist destinations" (Jacobs 31). Developed over time, postmodern urban spaces have witnessed what Harvey refers to as a "'palimpsest' of past forms superimposed upon each other, and a 'collage' of current uses, many of which may be ephemeral" (Harvey 66), something urban planners cannot master.[74] Cloaked in the mantles of consumerism, multiculturalism, and aesthetic pastiche, however, spatial asymmetry continues to produce and displace the weak. This is especially manifest in urban racializations—"a taboo vestige of colonial and neo-colonial exploitation," despite celebration of ethnic richness in the exoticised postmodern city (Keith and Cross 8).

Colonial/modern oppression does not make ethnic groups voiceless Others in need of Orientalist interpretation; but neither are they purely resistant Others in the imaginings of some postmodern/postcolonial discourses.[75] Spatial struggles remain, not only between different ethnic groups, genders and classes, but between defiant individuals represented, imagined, or theorized by postmodernist critics. For those emigrating from third world countries into first world metropolises, postmodern cities reflect their desire for modern advancement. On the one hand, they are Other to native

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[74] However, this recognition does not exclude partial plans for commodifying urban spaces, through which the economic and ethnic inferior, as residents or laborers, are often victimized.

[75] While these scholars do not phrase the ethnic, the female, the lower class or the ruled as the Other, they come up with a dualistic structure that pits the dominant against the subordinate, and argue that through some practices the latter resist or reverse the power exercise of the former. Homi Bhabha's ideas like hybridity and mimicry aims to illuminate the resistant potential of the colonized. In another respect, Michel de Certeau's spatial tactics of the pedestrian is one of the noted examples of the postmodernist resistance.

citizens, while, on the other hand, they have long been subjects as well as products of modernity, especially under gradual edification of Western colonizers. Following independence, both former colonizers and the formerly colonized (those now living in the West) are in need of each aspect of modernity. Their appropriation of kaleidoscopic postmodern spaces, reflecting a desire for the transient, is premised upon economic stability and a living space where individuality is unfettered. Competition for space usually unfolds when such a basis collapses.

Such struggles for space, from national boundaries to housing, are illustrated in the setting of Kureishi's screenplay—London in the 1980s. In this contested arena, politicians of nationalism, ethnic minorities, social deviants and exploited middle/under-class suffer from all the disturbances of modernity. As Michel de Certeau puts it, the city "is simultaneously the machinery and the hero of modernity" (95). People gather in the city to immerse themselves in the peak experience of modernity, yet the spatial unity of urbanism—characterized by order and modern convenience—includes disunity between classes, sexes and ethnic groups, in which modern subjects are constituted by diverse forces battling one another. Once the center of the British Empire, London is now a microcosm of the world, with, among others, formerly colonized citizens resettling within its own administrative border. Moreover, it is the origin of industrialization as well as the center of culture, a booming service industry and political power in Britain. London possesses all the features of modernity. As it moves into a highly globalized era, the city now faces forces of synthesis and fragmentalization, progress and decline, as well as the desire for both conformity and diversity. The explosion of urban postmodernism at 1968 occurred almost twenty years before the screenplay, yet it does not solve the anxieties of its characters. If daily life for Londoners in the late 1980s meant suffering from economic recession, then jostling with strangers of diverse ethnicity, class and gender,

and facing increasing disparity between and among socioeconomic groups (which might be termed as the postmodern condition) would leave them with an ever-changing city resembling less and less closely the British culture they learned from official representations.

When considering usage of modern spaces, it is worthwhile to consult Henri Lefebvre's canonic theories. Evidence of modernity can be found in one or more of Lefebvre's three moments of space. Space, as a process "continually being produced" (Liggett 245), is divided into a triad: spatial practice (the perceived space), representations of space (the conceived space) and representational space (the lived space), each of of which exists in the ever-unfolding course of time. Spatial practice is the living space that people experience without conceptualizing it, therefore it is a *perceived space* without further need of decoding. Guaranteed by the reproductive forces of capitalism, spatial practice inscribes habitual activities into "particular locations and spatial sets characteristics" (*The Production of Space* 33).[76] In this way, it embodies "continuity and some degree of cohesion" (*PS* 33), where a "spatial code" is the restrictive power of modernity (*PS* 16), "capable of bringing order to the qualitative chaos (the practico-sensory realm) presented by the perception of things" (*PS* 17). Under neocapitalism, spatial practice has separated work and leisure as it linked them together in an association between daily and urban reality (*PS* 38). It is in this perceived separation that postmodern individuals enjoy spaces for a variety of consumptions without bother, and so accumulate energies for production, a certain level of "competence" and "performance" in turn (*PS* 33). Without spatial practice, any adventure for a modern subject is unlikely to begin.

Even a space structured to ensure its orderliness allows for dissidents, lest their discontent—a byproduct of fragmented values brought about by modernity, becomes

[76] Hereafter *The Production of Space* would be abbreviated as *PS*.

a destructive force shattering any sense of discipline and regulation in the society. Representations of space are "social relations of production" in their spatial expression, and "the 'order' which those relations impose, and . . . [are therefore related] to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to 'frontal' relations" (*PS* 33). Those with political and intellectual powers are most likely to forge such spaces, and making them "conceptualized space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers . . . all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived" (*PS* 38). Representations of space embrace the blueprints of modernity since, on the one hand, they restrict the chaotic nature and rebellious potentiality of the dominated while, on the other hand, their "practical impact" promises changeability that "intervene[s] in and modif[ies] spatial textures" (*PS* 42). Physical demarcation or linkage between spaces is not the sole product of this *conceived* space. Lefebvre further claims "conceptions of space tend . . . towards a system of verbal (and therefore intellectually worked out) signs" (*PS* 39). Discourses of nationalism, and its counterpart, urbanity against nationality claimed by some cosmopolitan in this play,[77] exemplify how representations of space are enacted through different present-day localities. The conceived space, as a moment when and where space is created, is never isolated. In order for it to endure, it has to consider other spaces beforehand. It must leave free zones where the governed can not merely stretch their arms, but instead find opportunities of alteration. Therefore, the fluidity and changeability of modernity exists in the seemingly restrictive representations of space from the very beginning.

On the contrary, representational spaces, "essentially qualitative, fluid and dynamic" (*PS* 42), do not avoid oppressive elements once they are introduced.

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[77] This will later be expounded in Sammy's renouncement of his Englishness and self-identification with the Londoner.

Representational spaces are lived by those inhabiting it. Subjective impressions and experiences of space are alive in their minds, be they imaginary or not. Thus, representational spaces oppose verbal expressions in representations of space, "tend[ing] toward more or less coherent systems of non-verbal symbols and signs" (*PS* 39). "[L]inked to the clandestine or underground side of social life," representational spaces do not merely illustrate "art" as a "code" of themselves (*PS* 33). They also ignite riots by deprived citizens in the context of this screenplay. Rioters and artists are not rational designers in charge of the representations of space, whose dominance their "imagination seeks to change and appropriate" (*PS* 39). Without being described with terms like "ideology and knowledge," which is sometimes the case with representations of space, representational spaces are ideally conceived as non-ideological, resistant and obedient to "no rules of consistency or cohesiveness" (*PS* 41). However, this does not mean we cannot observe any rules or cause-effect relations in particular representational spaces. One aspect of representational space in the postmodern city is pronounced in the imagination of tourists, who are least likely to resist capitalistic forces shaping their expectations. What follows the realization of representational spaces is another question at stake. Desire to change the status quo reflected in representational spaces does not shut out a yearning to fulfill those wishes (another characteristic of modernity), which thereupon conflicts with, and even oppresses, dissidents with differing imaginations and expectations in the same context of space.

Lefebvre also delineates space in terms of its correspondence to different modes of production. The result is a revision of Marxist periodization of feudalism, capitalism and communism. Here I appropriate absolute space, abstract space, and differential space, characterized by Bo Grönlund as "Lefebvre's second ontological

transformation of space,"[78] to be theoretic equivalents to the ages of pre-modernity, modernity, and postmodernity.[79] Absolute space is mainly associated with a pre-capitalist society, where agriculture is the main economic activity and religion is inseparable from political dominance. "[N]amed and exploited by peasants, or by nomadic or semi-normadic pastoralists," absolute space "is a fragment of agro-pastoral space," crystallized into a rigid, mystic, sacred or cursed character, and paradoxically made into a "part of nature" (*PS* 234). In hindsight, it is tinged with imaginary forces reflecting a society irrational in its social spaces. To ensure social stability "absolute space thus preserved and incorporated bloodlines, family, unmediated relationships" (*PS* 48). Current day social and personal relationships, as illustrated in Sammy and Rosie's mental struggle with excluding Sammy's father from their domestic space, are for us vestiges of absolute space in the capitalistic society we live in. Dominance of religious practices in some regimes, be they Eastern or Western, reflects how absolute space keeps orienting social and political demarcations. "Not that absolute space disappeared in the process; rather it survived as the bedrock of historical space and the basis of representational spaces" (*PS* 48). Absolute space, in cooperation with the imaginary nature of representational space,[80] becomes a power that more or less anchors modern people in their fleeting experiences.

Captialism, ever-dominating and omnipresent, emerged with the production of abstract space. This "contemporary and dominant form of space" stems from "centers

[78] See <http://hjem.get2net.dk/gronlund/Lefebvreindlaeg_21_3_97v2.html#anchor205216>.

[79] Lefebvre himself did not apply postmodern, postmodernity or postmodernism in *The Production of Space*, yet commentators do not give up on finding affinities between differential space and postmodern traits, which I will explore later on.

[80] Lefebvre does not hesitate to claim existence of an intimacy between absolute space and representational space because they share an imaginary nature: "[I]n every society, absolute space assumes meanings addressed not to the intellect but to the body, meanings conveyed by threats, by sanctions, by a continual putting-to-the-test of the emotions. This space is 'lived' rather than conceived, and it is a representational space rather than a representation of space" (*PS* 235-36). In the analysis that follows, we will see how it animates different characters and scenes.

of wealth and power"—a collusion between the state and the capitalist (*PS* 49). In order to present a progressive national and social space, the nation has to come up with measures that destroy or exclude the disfavored within its territory—in the same way that capitalists *abstract* spaces of production and consumption from traditional absolute spaces. "[V]iolent means" buttress both the state and capitalism, eliminating differences within the space that violate their scheme, and differentiating the previously uncategorized, all in service of their spatial production. "Differences, for their part, are forced into the symbolic forms of an art that is itself abstract" (*PS* 49). Modern spaces therefore witness a coexistence of intellectualization, hierarchization, homogenization, and fragmentation, all products of a new order of abstraction. The urban riot in this screenplay is largely a discontent with abstract space eroding the life of subordinate race and class. It illustrates the conflicting nature of modernity, a product "of a homogeneous and pathogenic political 'medium' at once aberrational and norm-bound" (*PS* 377).

From the contradictory nature of abstract space sprouts differential space. From the very beginning of industrial capitalism, colonialism and globalization re-territorialized the world into sites of markets and production, producing fragmental dimensions of space that hardly fit in with rational divisions set by abstract space. Political administration, as well as scientific and technical specialization, and most of all, the commodification of spaces are in sharp contradiction to spatial realities discrepant and fragmental across the globe. In the way that Marx conceives proletariat revolution from a contradiction between the productive force and relations of production, Lefebvre anticipates "the space of a different (social) life and of a different mode of production" (*PS* 60). As Rod Shields puts it, "[Lefebvre's] project returns to relevance when he takes aim at the *future*, proposing the possibility of generating a new spatialization—a more equitable world—out of the contradictions of

contemporary spaces and relations of globalization" (Shield 183).[81] In view of its antithesis to abstract space, which remains dominant to this day, differential space, "either the space of a counter-culture, or a counter-space" (*PS* 349), has been in practice over the last half of the 20th century. The rise of subcultures and the leisure industry are exemplars of a turn toward postmodernity. Rebelling against modernity in the same way that differential space is against its predecessor, postmodern space overlaps differential space because of its spotlight on libidinal, irrational, individual and utopian longings for non-oppression. "[I]nasmuch as abstract space tends towards homogeneity, towards the elimination of existing differences or peculiarities, a new space cannot be born (produced) unless it accentuates differences" (*PS* 52). The duality of modernity does not cease in these revolts, great or small, successful or not, for in many cases revolutionary new spaces repeat geographic exclusions as much as the old ones, and desire for change is incorporated into a flexible market based on stability of a capitalistic economy. The limited scale of a subcultural group, and the resistant stance restricted in verbal practices of Sammy as a defiant bourgeois, are Kureishi's two textual illuminators shedding light on Lefebvre's ideal.

As Lefebvre himself underscores, three moments of space continuously intersect, coexist and rotate, and are therefore of equal importance. Nevertheless, his phrasing and argumentation impress upon us his point that representational spaces and differential space belong to the populace, emphasizing non-oppression and self-expression, while representations of spaces and abstract spaces are, at the same

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[81] Lefebvre does not equate his differential space with the postmodern complex, because, until the end of his life, oppressive aspects of abstract space still prevailed and dissected human beings into functional and hence alienated pieces at the service of capitalism. Prophesying the emergence of small and local narratives that allow people opportunities for making statements and requesting the deconstruction of a homogenizing modernity, postmodernism shares a similar ideal with differential space. Therefore, these two ideas are theoretically juxtaposed (or tentatively equated) in this article for their mutually illuminating dimensions. However, whether this space is realizable or practicable is not the major concern of this paper. For criticisms on differential space, please refer to Rob Shield's discussions in *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle*, page 183-85.

time, both oppressive and homogenizing. Contradictions appear, for example, when referencing the ideas of representational spaces. How can representational spaces be delineated in a theoretic work while they simultaneously obey "no rules of consistency or cohesiveness" (*PS* 41), particularly when they are one of the major shaping forces of abstract space (*PS* 45)? Similar problems occur in the delineation of representations of space. What acts before and together with knowledge and rationality when they give "practical impact" in representations of space? Is it not something closely related to unconsciousness, irrationality, imagination and passion—traits characteristically owned by the representational space? Consideration of theoretic distinctions between representations of space and representational spaces illuminate for us various *facets* of a particular space. Here we can distinguish representational spaces from representations of space in terms of differences in their intensity of power or rationality, rather than whether they are oppressive or homogeneous. As long as space is an articulation of different elements, whether by what are polarized as emotion and reason, imagination and design, it records traces of power that enables a process of inclusion and exclusion, domination and subordination.[82]

In the ephemerality of a postmodern world, characters in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* retain the modern longing for "the eternal and the immutable" Just as postmodern space eulogizes heterogeneity, mutability and the temporal, so too do postmodern subjects persevere in their search for a sense of eternity in transmutation—a sense of immutability in the process of becoming. In this aspiration, they claim, produce, appropriate and/or contest space for their own use, be it public or

[82] On Lefebvre's triad, David Harvey might have similar interpretations to mine, for he subdivides categories of *appropriation* and *domination* under both representational spaces and representations of space (220-21). In Lefebvre's major definitions, appropriation and domination belong to these two moments of space respectively.

private, so long as the space ensures their existence throughout a particular time or supports a process of becoming they favor. This differentiation of space does not completely fulfill Lefebvre's visionary ideal as "differential space," where unity and uniqueness can be restored without oppression. Spaces within this screenplay have been imaginary mainstays without which characters would be adrift on currents of modernity, while riotous streets, a suburban house, a leftist residence in the inner city and a waste ground occupied by anarchists simultaneously demarcate the boundary of their existence. In addition to the physical space, spatiality of modernity in this screenplay is related to both the external locations and derivate emotional responses of the characters. Accordingly, agonized mental spaces will also be included in my discussion. For the convenience of anatomizing different modes of space contestation, I divide characters (real or imagined) in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* into "the ruler" and "the ruled" in terms of their political position. Since Rafi, a former despot of Pakistan appears to be a father seeking shelter from his son Sammy in London, I will discuss him within the fold of both categories.

Space of the Ruler

The rise of British Imperialism cartographized the globe just as its fall created aftershocks upending the imperial center and periphery in their old meanings. When Sammy's father Rafi reaches London in Thatcher's era, Kureishi creates a surrealistic encounter not only between a former anti-colonial fighter and a nostalgic imperialist, but a British-educated feudal torturer and a patriotic politician whose free market policy distresses the lives of the unprivileged classes. Although Kureishi seems to have created in Rafi the character who overshadows the general socio-political plight of some third world ex-colonies after their decolonization, the writer's Pakistani

origin guides his readers to relate Rafi to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the president and prime minister of Pakistan from 1971 to 1977. Owing to his intellectual base of Western culture and a landowner class origin, Bhutto's dual consciousness is significant in his manipulation of space, especially when his influence goes from the tribal district to national and international geopolitics. His anticipation of an entirely new nationalistic space has a chance for realization after Partition and the creation of Pakistan. In the British Raj, revolutionary colonials could create any blueprint they wished, a Lefebvrean representational space that *lives* in the mind. Yet when put into practice, the representational space cannot help but manifest itself with a convergence of different accomplished realities, including people's spatial practices during the Raj as well as the representations of space that seek to rationalize and plan space formations. Once representational space is realized by the anti-colonialists, it does not completely differ from systematic doctrines (the representations of space) configured by the former ruler; neither can it escape the spatial practice of local customs in the ex-colony.

The position Rafi takes, after his motherland has rid itself of Britain rule, reflects how a newly decolonized country distinguishes its representations of space, domestic or international, so as to avert losing its national identity in the flux of globalization. Independence from the colonizer brings hope and expectation to those suffering from imperial oppressions, inducing them to ignore the fact that production of a new space must be based upon a new mode of production, a process that can hardly be reached without thoroughly modifying the Lefebvrean triad. Feudalism, a local spatial practice preceding imperialism, remained under the colonial regime for stabilizing governance. While pronouncing an intact sovereignty in the new territory, the postcolonial local governor, represented here by Rafi, often creates a representational space—avoiding colonial inequality and oppression, yet remaining

unable to alter former spatial practices, or negate some rationality left by colonial representations of space. The spatial triad of modernity, which blurs time/space differentiation in colonial and postcolonial reality, is best exemplified in feudalism and its modern variation, military dictatorship. To rid themselves of the colonial paradigm, newly decolonialized countries usually seek a powerful basis from which they can execute their representations of space, therefore encouraging the rise of dictators who might victimize their nation more than its former colonizer. The new governors' root of power is inseparable from that of the feudal system. A localized spatial practice before arrival of the colonizer, feudalism can easily be adopted after the externally imposed representations of space are lifted (though never completely).

In Emma Duncan's *Breaking the Curfew: A Political Journey through Pakistan*, political figures there are named as "hereditary politicians" for their empowerment remains entangled with land possessions, a remnant of feudalism in its colonial and postcolonial politics:

> Pakistan's hereditary politicians do one of two things: they either make themselves available to the government in power, or more rarely, they build themselves a constituency around an issue or an ideology. The first route to power is the traditional one, taken by landlords and tribal leaders under the Moghuls and the British. The second is a novelty, born out of the ideas and ideals that were shipped into Pakistan when it was created. (189)

While a Pakistani politician accesses power through the second route, traits of hereditary politics do not easily vanish. A patriarch, despot and torturer, Rafi is, in this screenplay, so apt when applying Western terminology to illustration of his ideological stance, that a moviegoer would most likely not see him as a third world tyrant. His education at the University of Southern California and Oxford University

enabled Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to extract populism and nationalism from Western political science as dual weapons in the creation his ideal space. At the same time, his spatially-formed identity as a landlord or feudal patriarch reflected the essence of his origins. Local politics surviving British dominance reclaimed its seat after the Raj, becoming part of the representations of Pakistan that orient representational spaces and spatial practices of its people. In this sense, Bhutto/Rafi's production of a new Pakistan might be characterized as a merger between feudalism and nationalism, where tribal influence is magnified to a national scale. This explains why, initially emerging as a democracy fighter and defender of the poor,[83] Bhutto made a brutal reversal in the mid 1970s, bringing the mullahs and landlords back to their original seats of power and hastening his own demise through discontent of the previously privileged, and feelings of betrayal held by the new intellectuals.

Except for deep-rooted feudal politics, the domestic demarcation and occupation of space, Bhutto's various political manipulations were conducted under the shadow of globalized capitalism, which waits for the opportune moment to profit by *reterritorializing* the newly established nation into its global territory. Three principles were set to resist the danger of current trends and past burdens. They are democracy as the polity, socialism as the economy and Islam as the religion, forging Pakistan through the alchemy of a modern religious state capable of resisting uneven social stratification and ethical indifference brought on by capitalism. This is why Rafi proudly announces his achievements: "Our government awoke the down-trodden and expelled Western imperialists. I nationalized the banks! I forged links with the Paelestinians! (*Sammy* 228). Democracy is ushered in by the colonialists, yet its implied logic of grass-rootedness reminds the ruled that they are indeed owner of the

[83] As Sammy puts it, his father "did miracles for the country" and "was a freedom fighter" (*Sammy* 231).

colony space, and without this system their new space cannot gain equal status with their ex-ruler's modern nation, a representational space lingering in their minds.

In his embrace of the universal value of modernity, Bhutto pushed through a new constitution in 1973 that recognized Islam as the national religion, miraculously grafting modern institutions onto a pre-modern value system. This merger of abstract and absolute space is often seen in developed countries. Because "[t]he West has become very decadent, sex-mad and diseased," Rafi "shut all the night-clubs and casinos. The women have gone back in their place. There is restriction, there is order. There is identity through religion and a strict way of life" (*Sammy* 245). Because of his academic background, Rafi has no reason to be ignorant of his tyrannical measures, of which his mistress Alice accuses him (*Sammy* 245). His yearning for certainty leads to representations of space buttressed by imaginary power within the representational space. Suspending rationality and erasing disharmony, Rafi's national space is *conceived* from "the aestheticization of politics"—a "shift in emphasis from historical change towards national cultures and destinies, sparkling geographical conflicts between different spaces in the world economy" (Harvey 209). Asking for a "national culture and destiny" untainted by the imperialists, Bhutto maintained nonaligned neutrality by withdrawing Pakistan from the British Commonwealth of Nations as well as the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) sponsored by the United States. Since imperial remnants cannot be totally removed from the national boundary, a purposeful denial of all relations with the colonizers converts the local ruler's abject space, a representational space, into the more forceful representations of space. Merely severing relations with the past is not enough to forge meaningful spatial contents for a new nation. Cultural and religious collisions that bring Pakistan onto the world stage provide an unfailing supply of hate that agglomerates elusive contents of cultural identifiers. This is how Islam is appropriated—to create a myth of place

capable of countering any new imperialist project—but this time territorialized in the Middle East. Palestine, with all the traumatic past that can be imputed to the West, is a place that Rafi/Bhutto brings into his imaginary space of liberation movement against the imperial oppressors.

Holding the banner of religion aloft, Rafi's theocracy also aestheticizes its destiny by fighting against other regions that had once been part of the British Empire. Bhutto's commencement of a "thousand year war" against India fanned the flames of conflict between Hindus and Muslims, with genocide in 1971 Bangladesh (then known as "East Pakistan") exposing a nationalist desire to consolidate territory held by its Muslim majority. Rafi is accused of genocide by an Asian accountant in his welcome party: "I was in Dacca when their army came in. How d'you think my father was killed" (*Sammy* 237). A separatist insisting on sovereignty from Britain, this freedom fighter countered secessionist movements in all of Pakistan's provinces for the sake of a unified national identity. Geographical exclusion of colonialists entailed inclusion of diverse groups of revolters, turning the spatially oppressed into an oppressor because, as Rafi puts it, the "down-trodden" (*Sammy* 228) have to be homogenized against the threatening Western power.

To prevent the poor from being exploited in a new mode of production set by new imperialists and feudal politicians after the Raj, socialism seemed to be the perfect blueprint for developing a new and original space. Rafi's relation with Mao Tse-tung is a socialist version of his linkage with the Palestinians. By creating a cross-border alignment of weak Others, Rafi finds his own representations of space enlarged to a global scale and capable of forging a new socio-economic logic outside capitalism. Yet parallels between Pakistan and China had a gloomy shadow. Although both leaders took anti-colonialism and socialism to be their guidelines for producing ideal spaces, their ideals were never fulfilled, and their governances came to be what

they once criticized: feudalistic dictatorship. In a supernatural conversation between Rafi and a ghost victimized by his policies, the former justifies his brutal deeds by asserting that "[t]he country needed a sense of direction, of identity. People like you, organizing into unions, discouraged and disrupted all progress" (*Sammy* 259). When socialism is born in mind as a representation of space in which its productivity exceeds capitalism and therefore must be fulfilled at any expense, trade unions are ironically banned, and "rioters [are shot] dead in the street" (*Sammy* 253). A product of socialism, the trade union today is an indispensable element of capitalism. Through their struggles with entrepreneurs the system reaches a dynamic balance. To counteract the capitalistic mode of production and realize his own blueprint of socialism, Rafi uses dictatorship to expel the whimsy of modernity by creating direction, identity, and progress. Rafi's mystification of a concrete and complicated place as a visionary and forward-looking space is not the only example found in this screenplay. In the postcolonial London where Rafi roams about as a tourist, Margaret Thatcher, a leader who believes Britain is as great as it was, developed another dream by invoking the nation's past.[84]

Space of the Ruled

Sammy and Rosie Get Laid begins with a brutal scene in which a black woman is murdered by a police in search of her son. This brings to mind Cherry Groce's misfortune when the metropolitan police shot her in her bed for the same purpose. Mrs. Groce's accident on the morning of 28 September 1985, depicted in this 1987

[84] Mrs. Thatcher, unlike Bhutto, is not involved in this screenplay as a character. However, as her political speech is incorporated into the sound effects near the film's end, Thatcher's socio-political strategies act as the most dominating forces that alter the fate of all the characters in this story.

film, ignited riots first in Brixton[85] then Toxteth, Liverpool and Tottenham, London. The shooting accident, though not completely related to racism on the part of police, was interpreted by ethnic residents of the inner city as the epitome of discriminatory "stop-and-search" police policy. Because Thatcher's government reduced taxation, limited welfare, and weakened the power of local authorities, often the Labor, inner cities were ignored and became representative of Lefebvre's "lived space." The private relationship between police and residents, vital to maintaining relative harmony within the inner city, deteriorated with the central government being unwilling to inject financial assistance into the dilapidated area. Based on neo-conservative ideology that defended low taxes as being essential to a free market, government was forced to cut expenditures with limited resources used to back powerful market participants deemed major contributors to the economy. Not until riots exploded did Thatcher's government consider these problems in their campaign issues. Thatcher's celebration of her third General Election victory in 1987, around the time filming of Kureishi's *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*, ended with the words: "We've got a big job to do in some of those inner cities . . . and politically, we've got to get back in there—we want to win those too" (MacGregor viii).

Thatcher and her partners echoed the greatest concern of her constituency—invasion of their living space by inner city turmoil. Urban planners' representations of space had everything to do with representational spaces of the middle class. Disorder should not occur in London. It was a leading metropolis. Such representations of space parallel abstract space, with state-based capitalism seeking to impose upon the concrete space of people's daily life. In "Space: Social Product and Use Value," Lefebvre characterizes abstract space as

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[85] Brixton is an area of South London, part of the London Borough of Lambeth. It is a vibrant inner London suburb and the capital of the Jamaican community of London, hence called the "soul of Black Britain."

> a space of quantification and growing homogeneity, a merchandised space where all the elements are exchangeable and thus interchangeable; a police space in which the state tolerates no resistance and no obstacles. Economic space and political space thus converge towards an elimination of all differences. (293)

As for the inner city, Thatcher's administration (the political) in this respect went hand in hand with free market capitalism (the economic), believing it could absorb useful labors and knock out the dissenters. Police force authorized by the government was one of the most important weapons used by investors to realize their representations of space. As a Tory MP in the screenplay explains to a property developer, "[y]ou've got to invest in this area—for your sake and ours" (*Sammy* 216). Thatcher's government garnered achievements satisfactory to voters, while business prospered because the government had its back. The eviction scene at the end of this screenplay illustrates the collaboration between government and private developer—in both its bourgeois ideology and "rational" design. As the jubilant property developer puts it, he is "making London a cleaner and safer place" (*Sammy* 261).

In an effort to forge representations of space both within and beyond the borders of the British isle, Thatcher's abstract space differed from Rafi's tyranny. While Pakistan was a new and independent country in Rafi's governance, however plagued by "poverty, imperialism, feudalism" (*Sammy* 229) and susceptible to military despotism, Thatcher's government had to obey a democratic system matured over the course of Britain's long history. In reality or this screenplay, police do not shoot the protesters as Rafi did—and if not attacked by the black woman, "with boiling fat," the white "hysterical cop" may not have fired at her in self-defense (*Sammy* 197). At the

same time, the urban planner cannot just evict citizens holding ownership or usage rights for the sake of public planning. These rights are clear, yet they all belong to representations of space designed by powerful legislators and implemented as spatial practices taken for granted by most Britons, including major characters in this screenplay. Rafi's violence, more or less related to his religious absolutism, shapes his representations of space into absolute space. Such an instance is often used by Lefebvre to illustrate the pre-modern condition. The collaboration between Thatcher's government and free market capitalists is forged by, and maintained in, abstract space, for it is a spatialization of the democratic legal system that "implies . . . a non-aggression pact, a contract," and in turn "generate[s] 'consensuses' or conventions" as the "trouble-free" bedrock for invigoration of representational spaces (*PS* 56). If the abstract space of Thatcher's ideology promotes racism and the uneven distribution of wealth, it is also the abstract space of democracy and the rule of law that more or less prevent the Conservative Party from abusing their power. It allows Kureishi to make his film, it allows his defiant characters to assert their right to free speech against the government and, above all, it allows the rioters to throw bricks at the police without fear of being shot to death. In other words, abstract space is an unconscious space permitting the possibility of both dissidence and alteration—two concepts that sustain the currents of modernity.

As a writer publicly refuting Thatcher's policies, Kureishi renders nuances of the riot subtly, calling into question asserted righteousness of the revolution.[86] The riot brings to light the plight of inner-city blacks under Thatcher's "domestic colonialism" (*Sammy* 221). And as a violent appropriation of space, the riot attempts to transform established representations of space, where things and spaces no longer serve their original purpose or legal owners. Unlike Rafi's revolutionary experience

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[86] About Kureishi's own stance on the riot, see "Some Time with Stephen," page 137-38.

on the subcontinent of India, this “revolt”[87] on London streets is not well-organized. Its purpose is unclear and there’s no blueprint for how the post-revolutionary space will be used. This is to say that mass uprising on the street resembles a riot more than it does a revolution—which, unlike the riot, has a ready plan for realization of its own representational space after existing oppressive representations of space are overthrown. This is why such carnivalesque violence, as Danny puts it, only brings “attraction but not the achievement” (*Sammy* 221).

Moreover, as Kureishi tries to intimate the oppressive side of Thatcher’s policies and the neo-conservative scheme via Rafi’s tyrannical past, his location of Rafi—the anti-colonialist and violent torturer now in a riotous inner city—renders ambivalent the the rioters’ use of violence. John McLeod insightfully points out that in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*, “violent protest and violent oppression are different in degree but not in kind” (142). Representations of space and representational space are not totally different in nature, so long as they are mental spaces unrealized and distinguishable from one another by the possibility of fulfillment. When black and white youth come together, gather bricks for weapons, burn cars and attack firemen (*Sammy* 208-9), and when people of varying age and ethnicity take advantage of the opportunity to loot stores (*Sammy* 209-10, 222), the legitimacy of their representational space becomes more dubious. Such open violence as a collective action is not so much righteous indignation directed toward the murder of a black woman. It is open violence that reverses the relationship of power between rioters and police, weakening the standpoint of official counterattack by that incidental shot. Without bearing the concrete goal and its relative measures in mind, violence utilized to effectuate

[87] Danny, a representative of the subcultural ethnic group in this play and a believer of Gandhian non-violence, insists that the uprising be called a *revolt* instead of a *riot*.

representational space is more likely to trigger unjust oppression.[88]

Rafi's private identity as an Anglophile tourist hints at how imaginary representational spaces overlap official representations of spaces in terms of purity and eternal perfection. A former ruler, and now a common tourist, Rafi seeks shelter from his son who lives in London. Rafi's gaze has rich implications in relations between imaginary space and a concrete place, not only for an alien tourist but also for the local governors. It is imperial and cultural heritage that attracts to Britain ethnic immigrants, international students like the young Rafi, and tourists from all over the world. It is this same inheritance that burdens Conservative politicians with preservation of their beloved country in an imaginary realm. London as a representational space full of beautiful images then fits into the ruler's scheme, while non-white immigrants taint the integrity of this mental picture. These attitudes are embedded in the context of reacting to modernity in terms of enjoying freshness and fleetness on the basis of a sense of security, welcoming tourists as customers who approve of such values and opposing immigrants of different cultures for fear that their long-term residence will threaten national identity.

Still, the globalized cityscape of London extinguishes hopes of integrity as the homogenizing lyric yearning of a modern person. En route from the airport to Sammy's house, Rafi imparts to the cab driver his hedonistic view of Britain: "For me England is hot buttered toast on a fork in front of an open fire. And cunty fingers" (*Sammy* 200). While highlighting the pleasurable side of Britain, Rafi also implicitly affirms its civility and orderliness, or he will not express his sense of loss to Rosie, his daughter-in-law: "And before I die I must know my beloved London again: for me it is the centre of civilization—tolerant, intelligent and completely out of control now, I

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[88] Ironically, without these disturbances the government would pay little heed to angst of the inner city. If the oppressed want their voices heard and spaces seen, there seems to be little choice except for an appropriation of public space so violent that it shakes public sense of security.

hear” (*Sammy* 206).

After postwar acceleration of globalization, present day London seemed flush with labor forces, materials and capital. One of the most visible signs of this change was urban infrastructure, altered to suit needs in the 1980s. In an early cab scene, Rafi is surprised by what he sees out the window:

> *Above* RAFI*, and around him, he sees criss-crossed motorways, flyovers, huge direction indicators, and a swirl of fast-moving traffic, dream like, noisy, strange. We see it through his eyes as if for the first time. This isn’t the England he remembers.* (*Sammy* 200)

Motorways, as “physical infrastructure” and a “material spatial practice” (Harvey 220), try to eliminate time, transporting people, materials and information all over the world through the production and reproduction of metropolises. These huge, gray and oppressive flyovers coexist with great historical monuments as representatives of the city, but ruthlessly exposing the fact that post-industrial metropolises are far from simple and pleasant destinations for the enjoyment of tourists, such as Rafi. Aside from shortening commuting costs for urban residents, these flyovers bring labor capital to the heart of “Empire,” lowering the cost of assorted industries. Both functions reflect what Harvey characterizes as time-space compression—annihilation of space through time—which is essential for a more flexible accumulation of capital in 1980s London. It also makes the metropolis resemble more of an open space than a fixed place, “a nexus of in and out conduits” (*PS* 93).

Nostalgic for London, and unable to forsake the patriarchal and feudalistic viewpoint he forged in Pakistan, Rafi, in his tour of the inner city, sees a hierarchical reversal that fails his expectations. Sammy and Rosie’s home, a site of leftist and radical liberalism becomes a space of contestation no less fierce than those he

experienced in his former anti-colonial activities and the conflict between the underclass and police outside his lodging. Despite Rafi's past glory, he appears in London "partly because his life is threatened" in his motherland (*Sammy* 209)—likely due to an insurgency against his tyranny which dethroned his representations of space. Repulsed by his motherland, Rafi revitalizes London in his own mind from the depths of his memory, believing it more tolerant than before and ignoring the fact that it could be equally exclusive as his mother country now revolting against him. Though he seeks refuge in his natural son and overtly confesses he is in Sammy's hands (*Sammy* 209), he does not fully comprehend the full structure of power in the community he attaches himself to. Otherwise Rafi would not transfer all of his money for Sammy in hope of a harmonious family, comprised of his son, daughter-in-law, and himself as the patriarch.

Even a home composed of avant-gardes has its politics. Postmodern or not, a domestic space is expected to be secure enough to hold memories and dreams. As a whole, and with all its emotional characteristics, the home is a representational space (Harvey 221), whereas non-negotiable representational spaces held by its members transform the tranquil ideal of home into a space of exclusion. While Rafi's patriarchal understanding of family is carried to Sammy's sexually avant-garde family, it resembles powerless representational spaces. Since male heritage is requisite for persistence of Rafi's politico-economy, he is unwilling to accept any possibility of Rosie, his daughter-in-law, being a lesbian. Although feminism is accepted by him, it does not extinguish his wish for grandchildren (*Sammy* 214). For Sammy and Rosie, individual freedom is most important in their value system; accordingly, children and parents are better not to appear in their private space.

Changeability of representational space can ironically conjure up the image of country-home, a secure space often yearned for by those in the drift of modernity.

Suffering from disillusion in the decay of the inner city zone, Rafi is unable to convince Sammy to return to Pakistan:

> RAFI: London has become a cesspit. You'd better come home, Samir.
> SAMMY: I am home, Pop. This is the bosom.
> RAFI: What a sullen young man you are. I mean, home to your own country where you will be valued, where you will be rich and powerful. What can you possibly like this city now? (*Sammy* 233)

Rafi's home-country myth recalls his past glory in Pakistan, despite the fact that, at present, he would be in danger there. Once the spatial reality of London no longer conforms to his representational nostalgia, his focus quickly shifts toward identification with his past glory, a space diminished in the present yet alive in his representational space. This was what Thatcher did on a national level when she tried to awaken British citizens, through her invocation of a lost Empire, and impose "a strong hand on this country" (*Sammy* 206). The "home" that no longer exists is redeemed again and again by those who once possessed a great moment in that particular place. Rafi's home-coming desire as a private person and Thatcher's home-country narratives as public propaganda are just two sides of the same coin, by which a favorable space mantles the current place in crisis.

In Sammy's hands, Rafi's desire to stay long in London finally discloses himself as "a *stranger* to him" (*Sammy* 208, my emphasis), not as "the wanderer who comes today and goes tomorrow" (Simmel, "The Stranger" 73). Rafi's residence in Sammy's house allows the host group to regard him "within a particular spatial group, or within a group whose boundaries are similar to spatial boundaries." However, as he has come up with ideologies discrepant from Sammy's buddies, Rafi is endowed with qualities that "do not and cannot stem from the [host] group itself" (Simmel, "The Stranger"

73). As Sammy puts it, Rafi is "a cheerful bastard with great spirit" (*Sammy* 231). With his dominating character and past, Rafi anticipates a seat within Sammy's "particular spatial group," despite its inclusion of "the usual social deviants, communists, lesbians, and blacks, with a sprinkling of the mentally subnormal" (*Sammy* 232). After the welcome party, where individual personalities are brought together and conflicts are fermented, Rafi is irritated by the presence of lesbians, Rani and Vivia, in Sammy and Rosie's bed (*Sammy* 249). As two of Sammy's closest friends being aware of Rafi's bloody past, the two women attack him with homemade weapons stashed in the drawer and force him to flee through the window. Being part of a deviant group, the group boundaries these lesbians defend "are similar to spatial boundaries." Within these boundaries, insiders have the right to appropriate their collective space, while the stranger, Rafi, notwithstanding his previous financial support of Sammy, is powerless in the spatial practice of these locals.

As a stranger, Rafi is far from the place where he had wealth and superiority in political power. Moreover, elements of globalization, specifically those in communications, increasingly expose his evil deeds in Pakistan to the world, including the colored, native Londoners who now ensnare him. In spite of all his nostalgia for London, and his wish to be part of Sammy's life, Rafi's representational space can hardly share in the social intercourse between Sammy, Rosie and their dissident friends—many of whom are from the Subcontinent. These people know the inside story. Like Rani, they "would accuse Rosie of lacking political integrity" for her acceptance of Rafi's long-term residence in her home (Kureishi, "Some Time with Stephen" 132). This pressure to Rafi's distress, only adds insult to injury. If the discussion of urban spaces is meaningless unless human relationships are involved, his past denies him the advantages of being a "pure private person" after his retirement (*Sammy* 204). With the aid of Infoscape and Mediascape, organizations

"rather like Amnesty [International]," global oppressions are recorded and made public to the world, including residents of the first world (*Sammy* 213). What's more, because some of his former victims no longer believed their representational space would be realized after the creation of Pakistan, they too turned toward London, heart of the former British Empire. Consequently, familiarity with spatial practices in Sammy's home and the inner city make these past victims more powerful than Rafi in the space(s) where he currently resides.

Rafi's glorious representational spaces thwart true reunion with Alice in suburban London. Those lived spaces are memories, fantasies, and ambitions heavily influenced by gender distinction in its traditional sense. Granting that he has retired from politics and sold his factory out, Rafi never lets his representational space fade away, for there he is the freedom fighter (*Sammy* 231), the planner of his motherland, a hero welcomed by female admirers and a Dad that Sammy and Rosie will respect (*Sammy* 249). From the moment Alice reunites with Rafi, he flirts with Sammy's mistress, Anna, desires to be part of Sammy's family rather than hers, and obsesses on recording in memoirs his past splendor (*Sammy* 249). All these representational spaces document a masculine space where the self is aggrandized. On the other hand, Alice's foremost representational space is very domestic in that it is one usually attributed to women. It includes two lovers mutually monopolizing one another—"a true marriage" borne in her tranquil suburban household and cherished through memorabilia collected from the moment she met Rafi. All of this is in sharp contrast to Rafi's *domestic* policies that "introduced flogging for minor offences, nuclear capability and partridge-shooting into [Pakistan]" (*Sammy* 255).

After being reproached by Alice for his neglect of her for thirty years, Rafi finds a sense of security in no space, except for Danny's wasteland. Fatefully, the eviction scene, wherein Danny's group is forced to move out by the property owner, is a

decisive event contributing to Rafi's suicide, in that his glorious anti-colonial identity is now frustrated by the strong arm of domestic colonialism. After Rafi suffers a series of frustrations in attempts to realize his representational spaces, Danny's anarchist territory temporarily becomes a stage for summoning his past glory. As a politician and member of an inferior demographic, he is quite aware of the impossibility of winning the present war. He therefore suggests to the youth of Danny's group that they should retreat yet never feel defeated (*Sammy* 258). Subconsciously, he has spatially identified with the waste ground as his last base, a site where the lost past can be resurrected and the exiled self can be anchored. Awaking from a nightmare where ghosts from his past avenge him with his own instruments of torture, Rafi finds the devil incarnate—white property developers and their cohorts on bulldozers—invading his new site of resistance. As Alice comes to his rescue, he occupies the only representational space he identifies with, as evidenced by his delirious rant: "I'm not leaving! Take me back! We must not allow those fascist bastards to drive us away! We must fight, fight!" (*Sammy* 262).

Unlike Danny, Rafi has few options for finding a residence in London. Here, spaces include not only a house (i.e., a material base), but also a network of interpersonal relationships difficult for him to identify with. Rafi cannot simply join with Danny's convoy, for the nomadic life is not the spatial practice of an elitist politician. In light of this, Kureishi elaborates on Rafi's predicament and subsequent suicide: "I don't want [Rafi] committing suicide out of guilt. It's that he's come to the end. No one wants him. There is *nowhere* for him to go, neither at *home* nor in Britain" ("Some Time with Stephen" 137, my emphasis). Once security of an ideal home including Sammy and Rosie proves impossible, the reunion with Alice is doomed, and his delusional revolt against the fascist government fails, Rafi loses all hope in realizing the representational space he desires. By surrendering himself to the

tranquility he imagines death to be, Rafi finds peace in his forced drifting. Kureishi and director Stephen Frears want Rafi's suicide to be "a justified thing, chose, dignified, something of a Roman act" (Kureishi, "Some Time with Stephen" 147). Having been a winning revolutionary, a ruthless dictator, and now a deflated loser in quest of just a harmonious family, Rafi's story illustrates the point that contestation for space is not limited in scope to that exercised on the national or international levels. Whether a private or public figure, leaving life's stage turns out to be the right political move for Rafi in that it helps reorient him once more to a representational space.

By placing Rafi, the "potential wanderer," in 1980s London, Kureishi directs the audience's eye to flyovers, street uprisings, a North London suburb, eccentrics in the Tube, anarchist squatters, and vagrant white elders sleeping on snowy streets. Kureishi cannot expect Prime Minister Thatcher to walk the dejected streets of South London, so he created Rafi, a (albeit former) despot "[who stops] under a railway bridge where other wretched rejects are sheltering—the poor, the senile, the insane, the disabled. Some of them sleep in cardboard boxes, others in sleeping bags" (*Sammy* 255). These images present the shock effect many modernist artists adopt in an attempt to awaken the socially-blunt middle class and politicians they support to tough conditions in their beloved London. Through depiction of a despot excluded by social deviants because of his past tyranny, and therefore forced to spend his retirement roaming bleak streets under the spatial manipulation of another nationalistic leader, Kureishi, as screenwriter, endeavors to reach remotely situated heads-of-state oblivious to the plight of the inner city. Reflected in Rafi's shameless assertion that he was not present while the ghost was maltreated, is the spatial separation between rulers and their suffered people. Both Rafi and Prime Minister Thatcher, as rulers, "gave the order" leading to oppressive representations of

space—justified by such reasons as: "the country needed a sense of direction, of identity," and "unions . . . discouraged and disrupted all progress" (*Sammy* 259).

Among other things, Rafi's middle-class spatial practice complicates him as a character, making him a contradiction unto himself. It reflects both Rafi's identity and high modernity at large, with the former being a product of the latter. Representing the elder generation in this screenplay, Rafi and Alice are each overtly influenced by values held by the middle class of an earlier generation. They reject the ephemerality of modernity by embracing wistful, utopian and private ideology—for Rafi, grand narratives like socialism and Islam, and for Alice, "an old world of certainty and stability," where "[l]oyalty and honesty" in love are valued (*Sammy* 238). Her insistence on staying in a suburban house with dust-laden memorabilia in the cellar is a nostalgic attachment to the past crystallized into certainty. In Alice's loathing of the riotous inner city, is anxiety of modern uncertainties as well as belief in faithful love: "I [Alice] hate their [the rioters'] ignorant anger and lack of respect for this great land. Being British has to mean an identification with other, similar people. If we're to survive, words like 'unity' and 'civilization' must be understood" (*Sammy* 253). Alice's remark not only echoes Thatcher's New Right ideology, but ambivalently responds to the motivation behind Rafi's tyrannical domination—resistance to the defects of Western *civilization* through dictatorial *unity*.

Britain in the 1980s is poised on the precipice of a coming age which some critics term postmodernity. It is characterized by post-structuralist and anti-foundationalist scholars as a new age where small modern narratives of suppressed Others begin challenging or reversing the grand ones. Unlike the reminiscences of Rafi, Alice and Thatcher, which long for a great lost era, the new *postmodern* middle class finds in ephemerality an unfailing supply of consumer goods, feeding their wants in representational spaces. As a mystified Rafi puts it, "[f]or you

[the young middle class] the world and culture is a kind of department store. You go in and take something you like from each floor. But you're attached to nothing. Your lives are incoherent, shallow" (*Sammy* 239). This criticism is only half true. In cooperation with what Fredric Jameson called the "depthlessness" of postmodernity, the postmodern middle class does not completely "attach to nothing." Were it so, Sammy and Rosie would not find Rafi their burden after his tyrannical past is disclosed by their deviant friends. Values brought up by modernity continue in postmodern spatial practices and representations of space. Meanwhile, representational spaces, as spaces of "inhabitants" and "users" filled with small narratives, and deemed by Edward Soja as the liberating space of postmodernity, are not free from the contestation for fixed values. Since private spaces are infiltrated by these narratives, along with micro-power and knowledge, deviants who believe themselves within the alliance of oppressed Others contest spaces not only with other non-dissident individuals, but also fellow members of the same community.

It is no coincidence that Sammy appears as an accountant in this screenplay. In his extraordinary essay "The Metropolis and Mental Life," Georg Simmel points out that urban economy has a great influence upon metropolitan life: "Money is concerned only with what is common to all: it asks for the exchange value, it reduces all quality and individuality to the question: How much" (176). Based upon this,

> [m]odern mind has become more and more calculating. . . . Through the calculative nature of money a new precision, a certainty in the definition of identities and differences, an unambiguousness in agreements and arrangements has been brought about in the relations of life-elements. (177)

Originally published in 1903, Simmel's essay grasped the mental state of an urban individual in high capitalism. After the metropolis has been restructured and

reorganized by the rise of late-capitalism, the calculating rationality ensuring a sense of predictability and immutability is seasoned with flexible production and consumption propelled by a service industry, creating and fulfilling the desires of customers with an endless variety of products and services. In this new form of urban life, calculation is inherent in the separation of work and leisure. Arrival of the consumer society exposed individualistic consumption, and the unyielding, calculating mind of desire. With his Indian background, leftist tendency, multiple love partners, and a wife who "doesn't want to possess any one" (*Sammy* 199), Sammy is mantled by the image of a defiant ethnic professional capable of seeing through the plight of most non-white citizens and getting beyond the living pattern of petit bourgeois.

The resistant potentiality in Sammy's representational spaces is largely undermined by his demand for calculated safeness. Fear of destabilizing his secure life leads Sammy to support a revolt as representational space but not participate in it. It seems that his postcolonial resistance is, at most, confined to attending "an Alternative Cabaret in Earl's Court in the hope of seeing [his] government abused" (*Sammy* 234). In such a representational space, Sammy insulates himself from the spatial practices of many non-white, underclass neighbors. His calculating extends itself to representational spaces, where his affair with Anna is appropriated for eroticism and accounting business. Both ends represent the logic of capitalism, as the *consumption* of love and the *production* of capital are fulfilled at the same time. Sammy's calculating nature is most manifest in his acceptance of Rafi's money (*Sammy* 213). Though unwilling to detain Rafi any longer, and though reluctant to share part of it with Danny (*Sammy* 226), he theoretically identifies with both the proletariat class and those discriminated by their color. Accordingly, Sammy's leftist beliefs only win him the ironic title of "radical accountant" (*Sammy* 203). Like his

father, a politician who believes in socialism yet lives in the way of a feudal patriarch and an upper class, Sammy resembles many middle-class intellectuals who carve out a harmless space capable of defiant imaginations.

With the aid of careful calculation, Sammy consumes London spaces in a safer and more hedonistic style in particular comparison to rioting inner city residents Sammy, at one time something of a radical ethnic youth in a drifting lifestyle, is now juxtaposed, by Rosie, with his current self. When he asks her not to go anywhere because of the "bloody" riot, she retorts: "When black people were attacked before and defended themselves, you [Sammy] didn't used to stay" (*Sammy* 207). Another example of Sammy's personal transformation is revealed through his social intercourse. In response to Rosie's question of whether he will continue his interests in politics in the future, Sammy answers quite ambiguously: "I find more and more that the worst thing about being on the left is the other people you've got on your side" (*Sammy* 222). One's lived space (representational space), can be altered by a number of spatial practices, including those related to peer relationships and, as in Sammy's case, lifestyle. For him, the middle-class way of life determines his spatial practice. Upon achieving a higher social rank, Sammy speculates that many Leftists are probably of a different class and educational background than he is from. Also, with a rise in class, Sammy accesses different types of consumption, in which the fulfillment of private needs should be considered most. In a capitalistic society, when a large-scale war against the ruler is almost impossible, Sammy's imagination ceases to "change and appropriate" (*PS* 39) the dominated space, turning instead to a relatively practical means of self-fulfillment, via discourse generation, culture consumption and material purchase.

If Sammy's spatial practices as an accountant have brought him out of the world of the down-trodden non-white, his residence in the inner city of London reflects a

calculated balance between provoking mutability and demarcated security. In his own explanation, the main reasons for his choice of residence are based upon the inner city's cosmopolitan character and cheap rent (*Sammy* 211), which echo well with Kureishi's own account:

> My love and fascination for inner London endures. Here there is fluidity and possibilities are unlimited. Here it is possible to avoid your enemies; here everything is available. . . . In the inner-city you can barely step in the same street twice, so rapid is human and environmental change. ("Some Time with Stephen" 163)

For the screenwriter, himself a racial hybrid, the multiracial inner city provides him shelter from discrimination. At the same time, conflicts, interactions and other cultural activities offer him inexhaustible sources of inspiration. Living in the inner city, for both Sammy and Kureishi, is a modernistic strategy for coping with ephemerality. In their own way, each does it through total surrender and hedonism.

Nevertheless, this ideal cannot be achieved without a secure living space and an elitist mode of culture consumption found outside the inner city yet still within the outer limits of London. Gentrification, a term from urban sociology referring to "the upgrading of the class composition of an area" and "the trend of middle class minority" (Savage and Warde 83), illustrates Sammy's calculated choice of housing.[89] Sammy and Rosie, an accountant and social worker respectively, belong to the class

[89] Case studies show that cosmopolitanism can be found especially in gentrifying areas: "In a study of two newly gentrifying enclaves in Hackney, one of the poorest boroughs in inner London, in 1988-9, Butler (1991) showed that the residents typically held cosmopolitan values, with positive images of city-living based on a deep dislike of suburban environments, an attachment to the area in which they were living, and strong political aversions to the Conservative Party and reductions in public expenditure. Leisure activities tended to involve sociability, involving quite extensive usage of the cultural facilities of central London. These features distinguished the interviewees, who were predominantly professional and administrative workers, from the average members of their occupational groups; indeed the gentrifiers had higher incomes, longer education and came from higher social classes than the average" (Savage and Warde 85).

of “professional and administrative workers” making up most gentrifiers (Savage and Warde 85). With a higher education and cross-cultural sensitivity, they are able to develop cosmopolitan values that include true appreciation of the kaleidoscopic life of the inner city.

It is no surprise that the gentrified inner city is one of the best locations for appreciating lives of the riotous underclass and places of high cultural taste in London. To achieve this aim, Sammy and Rosie’s spatial identification with social inferiors does not bring the latter into their inner circle of relationships, as the screenplay shows.[90] While their underclass neighbors are irritated to the point of rioting, and have little chance in their daily life to mind “extensive usage of the cultural facilities of central London” (Savage 85), Sammy and Rosie consume the same city in various cultural aspects. Scenic spots like Hammersmith Bridge foil emotional and intellectual interaction between them. Alternative bookstores, like “Any Amount of Books” that sells rare books and novels written by women, fulfill their alternative style of cultural consumption. Theaters like Royal Court and Earl’s Court provide fringe entertainments for dissident intellectuals. Colin Mccabe’s seminar at the ICA (Institute of Contemporary Arts) about Derrida, feed their appetite for knowledge, and is a space inner city residents least hear about and aspire to inhabit (*Sammy* 233-34). Entertaining spaces with such “alternative” color are elitist spaces people without a certain degree of knowledge, taste and economic basis cannot afford. An accountant in the service of many cultural workers (*Sammy* 205), and a yuppie spending his leisure in the aforesaid places, Sammy has little intention of including lower class home interiors in the “mass fascination” of London (*Sammy* 211).

By centralizing the inner city as his spatial identifier and including the wealthy

[90] Rosie does bring some handicapped children to her flat (*Sammy* 201), probably related to her occupation as a social worker. Yet throughout the screenplay, no working class or underclass person joins the circle of her social intercourse, except for Danny, who later becomes her love object.

part of London in his territory of entertainment, Sammy reterritorializes different parts of this metropolis and weaves them into his representational spaces to forge his own cosmopolitanism. “We love our city and we belong to it. Neither of us are English, we are Londoners you see” (*Sammy* 234). It is not hard to find which part of the city Sammy loves and identifies with. The cosmopolitan is usually made possible within a specific city as it expands and lays out kaleidoscopic cultural commodities and events to serve his or her need. In the process of time-space compression, things and messages lose their localized aura, and are reproduced in order to be consumed by citizens. Sammy’s cosmopolitan view is a mixture of these mutable images and academic discourses, abstracting the perceived and lived space of the dark part of the city into easily-digestible culture snacks. Ensuring his hedonist identity by excluding the corrupted part of the inner city, Sammy also divorces himself from complex realities of English as well as London culture.

Sammy’s self-identity as a London cosmopolitan ironically echoes the hegemonic influence of this British city. In the same way Londoners separate themselves from the English (“Neither of us are English”), England replaces Britain, the city dominates the country, and middle-class ideology mantles lower class viewpoints. While many leftist scholars believe Thatcher’s neo-conservative policies led to a divided Britain, characterized as North and South, London (in the South) had its own divisions. Sammy loves cosmopolitan parts of London, purposefully ignoring daily realities related to the plight of many non-whites who riot in the streets and set ablaze buildings and cars. In the new version of London, revised by late capitalism, Sammy’s cosmopolitanism consumes the riots, romanticizing them as revolts—or as Rosie puts it, “an affirmation of the human spirit” (*Sammy* 212).[91] Not until his own

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[91] Sammy and Rosie’s consumption of plights in the inner city, as bell hooks points out, is to “appropriate the pain and passion of the oppressed to build images of themselves as politically correct,

car is burned does Sammy find conflict within his logic. Through his car, Sammy outclasses the riotous who vent their anger on his possession, shattering his solipsist identification with the real inferiors. In this sense, Sammy's curse against his burned car ironically echoes Rafi's tyrannical orderliness and Alice's seemingly conservative stand for civility and unity.

Sammy's car is decisive in his spatial practice in/from the inner city. His car allows him to escape frequent disturbances produced by residents of another class, and visually consume scenes he rapidly passes. The car also brings Sammy much more mobility than his poorer neighbors. As a "private, enclosed, and individual vehicle in a pressing and merely aggregated common flow" (Williams 296), the modern car produces a new space for Sammy as an isolated atom. It endows him with freedom of movement while eliminating the possibility of touching deep-layered urban reality.

Sammy's metropolitan identity could be upgraded if his calculating mind gains more financial fuel. Sammy's new car quickly appears with Rafi's funding—as does consideration of a new house in Fulham, a district where gentrification began in the 1960s. Beneath all cosmopolitan claims, low cost of living is the decisive factor in his choice of residence in the inner city. By excluding down-trodden spatial practices from his representational spaces, and criticizing governmental representations of space from his vantage point in the inner city, Sammy creates his beloved London. Promised with Rafi's money, Sammy appropriates the inner London as a temporary dwelling for later socio-spatial climbing.

Contestation of spaces with strangers also occurs in a middle-class home, no matter how cosmopolitan, liberal and defiant against mainstream values its holder

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as different from oppressive white people who do not lead a more diverse, colorful, intense life, who do not 'get down'" (hooks 158).

claims to be. Sammy wants his home to be an enclave of people he authorizes in. Rafi and Danny are two unwelcome strangers, but because of Rafi's financial support and gratitude toward Danny, these fissures in his secured space are temporarily tolerated. Reflective of Thatcher's and Rafi's geographical exclusion of unwanted people, cultures, and values, Sammy's *home*, a gathering place for the dissidents, witnesses exclusion of strangers, not on the same scale but similar in nature. Foiled by Thatcher's and Rafi's geographical exclusion of unwanted people, cultures, and values, Sammy's *home*, a gathering place for the dissidents, witnesses exclusion of strangers not in the same scale but similar in nature. Strangers are not rejected once they are outside of a host's space. Once a stranger appears at the subject's home—a locale intended to be harmonious, secure, intimate and homogeneous—politics of distance begins. As Simmel illustrates,

> The unity of nearness and remoteness involved in every human relation is organized, in the phenomenon of the stranger, in a way which may be most briefly formulated by saying that in the relationship to him [*sic*], distance means that he [*sic*], who is close by, is far, and strangeness means that he, who also is far, is actually near. ("The Stranger" 73)

When Danny is invited by Rafi to Sammy's house, he is deemed a burglar as soon as an unsuspecting Sammy returns home. It is the nearness of Danny's *strangeness* that threatens to ruin Sammy's domestic harmony. An upholder of the right of minorities and a non-white himself, Sammy just cannot wait to see Danny leave his space. Geography of exclusion also occurs with Rafi. In a representational space that would be realized in Sammy's new house, there is "[s]o much room [he and Rosie] could go for days without seeing each other. Or without seeing [Rafi]," "who could have the basement, or dungeon" (*Sammy* 252). Segregation inside the home enables an

extremely individualist Sammy to transform Rafi's physical existence to that of an abstracted father. It also eliminates conflicts and dullness resulting from frequent contact with his spouse, thereby keeping his marriage intact. Sammy's usage of home brings to mind Rafi and Thatcher's desire for a homogenizing home-country that resists strangers from outside or quarantines them inside. Whether in its original or extended usage, home can be a repressive space where a cosmopolitan intellectual becomes an exclusionist and nationalistic governors become oppressors.

Before discussing the anarchist space carved out by Danny and his fellows—which the author likely created in order to explore the possibility of avoiding general and personal oppressions in space—let us review the space usage of Danny's counterparts. Self-asserting dissidents, like Rafi as an anti-colonialist, Sammy and riotous people of the inner city, attempt to resist the invasion of modernity, either by demarcating their own spaces or venting their anguish temporarily on spaces where they are harassed. Sammy's enclave-like home, Rafi's nationalistic regime and desire for a harmonious family, and rioters' occupation of inner city streets and looting of others' private spaces, are all overshadowed by globalization and a subsequent sense of insecurity. In the logic of late capitalism, spaces were produced for either production or consumption and, on many occasions, for both ends.

Related to this is the division of labor and leisure. Sammy's daily life is a well-calculated consideration of this distinction. As a member of the middle class and emblematic of rising service industry, Sammy fluidizes his labor schedule by means of self-employment. Even with fewer earnings, owing to insecure numbers of customers, Sammy insists on freelancing because it gives him more time for cultural activities. As I have discussed earlier, cultural consumerism ironically binds him more closely with late capitalism, which seeks to expand the need for commodities.

Expansion and upgrading of consumption do not merely fulfill private desires, they also strengthen the individualistic urge for a more consummate space. Rafi's sense of being excluded is an appropriate illustration of this mechanism of individualism. For many other residents of the inner city, work is hard to get during the mid-80s, and anger about the blight around them has to be anesthetized via drugs and daily violence. Rioting, and subsequent looting, as violent appropriation of public space, is the most luxurious consumption they can afford under the temporary tolerance of government. Sammy and the rioters, seemingly diametrically opposed to each other, ensure their space usage at the expense of jeopardizing others' living space.

The dark clouds of modernity fall on Danny and irritate him, yet his strategy of non-violence reduces his conflict with the socio-politically powerful as well as the spatially ruled. As the spokesman of youth in the anarchist community, Danny represents to the audience an alternative way of living in capitalistic society. If the urban life of a laborer (whether blue- or white-collar) at present means spatialized division between work and entertainment, Danny's flâneurie is emancipation from the dichotomized, and therefore abstracted, spaces of capitalism, best exemplified in spatial practice under neocapitalism:

> [The spatial practice under neocapitalism] embodies a close association, within perceived space, between daily reality (daily routine) and urban reality (the routes and networks which link up the places set aside for work, 'private' life and leisure). This association is a paradoxical one, because it includes the most extreme separation between the places its links together. (*PS* 38)

A commute via the Underground is a spatial practice commuters accept as a medium for acquiring a salary. It hides the *separation* between work and leisure by its appointed function of accelerating the accumulation of capital. Making the Tube lines

his office (*Sammy* 217), Danny appropriates this perceived space as lived space where people's activities are observed. In so doing, ephemeral images are more likely to be left in one's mind when an observing subject meets commuters again and again. The weird finger man familiar to Danny but frightens Rafi is just one example of Danny's understanding of strangers in the public space (*Sammy* 217). Streets, even in riotous nightmare, can be a hopeful space where his interpersonal space is expanded. Bearing his insistence on non-violence in mind, Danny spares strength to help the injured Rafi (*Sammy* 216), consequently becoming involved with and in his life. In this screenplay Danny's role is very much like the author's. With similar observationally discriminate minds, Danny is witness to the love between Rafi and Alice, entering Sammy's home, getting the kiss from Rosie, attending Rafi's welcome party and getting laid with the "downwardly mobile" Rosie (*Sammy* 246).[92] Danny is not a flâneur in its original meaning. He goes into others' private space and participates in their lives. Back at the waste ground, Danny's record of daily experiences translates images into language, visual expressions into verbal ones. Just like Kureishi, a critical writer who refuses to give any easy solutions for questions raised in this screenplay, Danny accepts modern ephemerality without needing to unearth its underlying implication. However, Danny is in a more difficult condition than the author himself. As a member of the lower class, he must live a more non-materialistic existence in a metropolis. And as a victim of Thatcher's policies, owing to his ethnic background and subculture, he has to repudiate violence in order to contest a living space. With caravans as mobile and living vehicles, his group appropriates vacant land in the intervals between capitalist exploitations of space.

However, further analysis of Danny's social context, especially the waste ground

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[92] This phrase is an expression of Danny on Rosie's willingness to love a man of much lower class like him.

commune, brings up some critical questions. Considering the author's fascination with subcultures and critique of Thatcherite capitalism, it is obvious to see Danny as a utopian construct.[93] While this characterization is juxtaposed with other social, economic and political representations in this screenplay, it is hard not to suppose a spatial demarcation, which may even be unequally set up, as a prerequisite for Danny to be leader of the anarchist commune, an amateur writer, and a boundary crosser between ethnicities, love relations, as well as private and public spaces. Considering Danny's lower class reality, it is curious to find him sometimes "riding the tubes all day" and making the London Underground his office for "paperwork" (*Sammy* 217) or writing. Is his creative freedom, based upon leisure and lack of economic pressure, made possible by other members in the commune? Through Rosie's eyes Kureishi locates self-sufficiency in the waste ground. Vegetables are planted by subcultural youth, goods are distributed in the commune's own store, and books are self-made to demonstrate the anarchists' artistic and intellectual productivity. As long as the waste ground is a microcosm of society, no matter how idealistic it can be, it is likely that Danny's freedom and flâneurie are supported by the anarchist community, willing to earn money (the basis of a capitalist society) or produce food provisions for him, which further creates a division of labor that characterizes a capitalist society. In that case, Danny is privileged in his release from manual labors. The others have not-so-creative jobs and perhaps only get Danny's paperwork as a spiritual return. This uneven distribution of labor is the foundation, in the real world as well as this screenplay, of spatial discrimination and demarcation.[94]

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[93] Danny is probably "a figure who is totally outside of crisis but reaching out, a figure of radical innocence, a cross-dressing would-be androgyne, a sweet fake drag queen, the other side of the savvy lesbians, the nicest all-round hybrid you could wish for: Danny-Victoria" (Spivak, "Sammy" 253).

[94] In this sense, Kureishi's utopia is still based upon a division of labor, a necessary perpetuation of exchange value, and a hierarchical value system where mental and artistic work is higher than that which costs physical strength, or there would not be so much stress on the stylistic rather than agricultural, which most represents the self-sufficiency and thence the anarchism of the commune.

Danny's participation, if not intervention, in others' privacies invites readers to face an ethical and essential problematic of space: Can we morally justify boundary crossing in interpersonal relationships because transgression is politically correct in some versions of postmodernism? Before capitalism, there were divisions of space, and those boundaries (shifted or not) will remain in human society if and when capitalism passes away. Rafi cannot avoid agitation when Alice and his private actions are under Danny's careful observation, maybe later being put to paper, a methodology that Kureishi applies to reach his own literary achievements. The aesthetic realm, a redeemer of space contestation in this screenplay, is also a realm of politics. Since the character of Rosie is based on Kureishi's ex-girlfriend, the author cannot shrug off the charge of exploitation: "Sarah [Kureishi's former lover] started to call the film: 'Hanif gets Paid, Sarah gets Exploited'" ("Some Time with Stephen," 135). Private spaces and literary works are by and large representational spaces. Closely bound with one's identity, representational spaces clash with one another in defense of personal boundaries. Therefore, a celebration of movements between the private and public shall always be balanced by indispensable protection of one's territory.

Finally, Kureishi's Baktinian characterization of a straggly band of kids, as residents of the waste ground, invites the reader to ponder the difficulty of not participating in capitalist production of space. In this pessimistic screenplay, the presence of musicians is in sharp contrast to its gloomy tone. Strangely dressed, they climb down from a flyover to their residence in the waste ground (*Sammy* 205): "In the tunnel the straggly band of musicians are playing" (*Sammy* 218); When Danny and Rosie make love,

> kids and the straggly band outside the caravan [are] dancing in celebration of joyful love-making all over London. Some of the

> straggly kids play instruments or bang tins. Others are dressed in bizarre variations of straight gear-like morris dancers, pearly queens, traffic wardens, naval ratings, brain surgeons, witches, devils, etc. (*Sammy* 248)

Disregarding planners' representations of space, the kids create their own spatial practices when they descend from a motorway to the ground. Their carnivalesque costumes and music playing in the tubes transform mundane spatial practices into representational spaces prompting fascination. Their musical accompaniment to joyful sex is the ultimate celebration of representational spaces that human desire carves out. Nevertheless, as late capitalism keeps highlighting cultural production and hedonist entertainment, those subculturalists look like orthodox buskers seen in scenic spots. When mass transportation markets its services through commuter experiences expressed in poems, prose and stories, and when municipal government hires musicians and action artists to lure tourists, it is interesting to imagine how Danny as Tube writer, and the youth, will react if they are invited by entrepreneurs and officials to do what they do.[95] Another problem, beneath all the carnivalesque spectacle, is conflict between the individual and the collective, paralleling those between the eternal and ephemeral brought about by modernity. Creative as the kids are, how can their individualistic desires and artistic productions remain in harmony with a collective way of life? Are representations of space and spatial practices, two elements that help maintain group relations of human beings, and hence the major

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[95] Kureishi admits his unfamiliarity with any real-world anarchists and his inspiration of those buskers from encounters with some highly creative underclass: "The problem was whether this material would be convincing. It wasn't based on anything I'd known, though for a long time I've been interested in anarchist ideas—a respectable English political tradition, from Winstanley, rough William Godwin and onwards. If anything, it was based on some of the young people who'd attended theatre workshops I given. They had terrific energy, intelligence and inventiveness. But because of poverty, homelessness, unemployment and bad schooling, they were living in the interstices of the society: staying in squats, dealing drugs, and generally scavenging around. It seemed to me that this society had little to offer them, no idea how to use them or what to do with their potential" ("Some Time with Stephen" 137). Once a society with political and capitalist governmentality gives these creative people opportunities, they will probably turn into paid cultural workers, just as Kuresihi himself is, rather than anarchists.

repression of individualistic desire, excludable from daily interactions between these anarchist artists?

Conclusion

As bell hooks persuasively argues, "in the film that resistance to racism, sexism, and other forms of domination assumes the quality of spectacle and farce because the forces to be overcome are all-powerful, a rather despairing take" (159). Getting laid rarely mends fissures within spaces or between spaces. Rafi commits suicide despite his lovemaking with Alice. Danny has sex with Rosie for the latter's fascination with different races and classes. Sammy is blamed by Anna for his lack of affection after intercourse. Similarly, the kids' carnivalesque music and costumes do not ease contestation of space for the other characters. What rescues *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* from "stylistic nihilism," with which bell hooks entitled her essay on this screenplay, is Kureishi's critique on spatial boundaries and struggles brought about by individuals of different identities, as well as his honest attempt to invent a utopian reference. In a world overflowing with strangers, fragmented events and information, modern people strive to locate their uniqueness so as to avoid disintegration of their identity. Space, a producer and result of human activity, is appropriated, defined and contested to support identity, no matter how fragmented it is. When individual and social yearnings for homogenous space clash with one another, fissures occur.[96] In order to smooth over such inconsistencies between personal beliefs, oppression is usually employed. From Thatcher's nostalgic geopolitics[97] to store-looting in the

[96] Though critics like Mikhail Bahktin attribute dialogism to the carnival, a desire for the carnivalesque is, in a way, homogeneous in that it keeps out daily dullness and practices of social control, while immersing itself in a world of pure hedonism.
[97] Such nostalgia is about the past glory of British Empire, and its examples include agitated racialization and racism on the domestic level, and the Falklands War (1982) on the international level.

riotous inner city, from Rafi's domestic tyranny to his being banished by lesbians in the name of liberalism as the value of their *country*, and from the home-country myth articulated by the New Right and the home-enclave urged by leftist bourgeois, *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* delineates spaces at their macrocosmic and microcosmic ends. Kureishi's critique of self-righteous radicalism, anti-colonialism and neo-conservatism, as well as his provocative yet arguable aestheticization of anarchists, are springboards from which alternative space usages can be imagined.

Conclusion

> *The Satanic Verses* celebrates hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs. It rejoices in mongrelization and fears the absolutism of the Pure. Melange, hotchpotch, a bit of this and a bit of that is *how newness enters the world*. It is the great possibility that mass migration gives the world, and I have tried to embrace it. *The Satanic Verses* is for change-by-fusion, change-by-conjoining. It is a love song to our mongrel selves. (Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands* 394)

The above quotation from Salman Rushdie, a godfather-like figure of the postcolonial and diaspora literature, foregrounds hybridity as a means to create newness in a culture, usually made possible by an immigrant group. This coincidentally yet unsurprisingly meets the productive and consumptive rule of the global capitalism—to import different and hence new cultural elements to create and satisfy potential consumers. Those who find enjoyments in reading Rushdie's works, whether to seek cultural novelties, or literary, aesthetic, and critical developments, are involved in an experience of newness that Rushdie's publishers, translators, and critics uphold, reflect, and circulate, in comparison to literature of an earlier generation or with white authors. The duality of Rushdie's newness, as a way to criticize "the absolutism of the Pure" like Thatcher's nationalism or Islamic fundamentalism propagated by the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini on the one hand, and on the other as a marketable style and theme, is echoed by Graham Huggan's definition of the postcolonial exotic, which

> occupies a site of discursive conflict between a local assemblage of more or less related oppositional practices and a global apparatus of assimilative institutional/commercial codes. More specifically, it marks the intersection between contending regimes of value: one regime—postcolonialism—that posits itself as anti-colonial, and that works toward the dissolution of imperial epistemologies and institutional structures; and another—postcoloniality—that is more closely tied to the global market, and that capitalises both on the widespread circulation of ideas about cultural otherness and on the worldwide trafficking of culturally 'othered' artifacts and goods. This constitutive tension within the postcolonial might help explain its abiding ambiguity; it also helps us better understand how value is generated, negotiated and disseminated in the postcolonial field of cultural production. (28)

Rushdie, with his high educational background in Britain, and an already privileged class background in India, has little difficulty in dissecting disturbances related to colonialism and racism in a transnational span. Many non-white Muslims in Britain, either in lack of cultural capital or a taste to enjoy postmodernism and magic realism in *The Satanic Verses*, and supposedly not Rushdie's target readers, response with anger for his blasphemy. For them (like Riaz and Chad in *Album*), *The Satanic Verses* is less about postcolonialism than postcoloniality, by which the author enters the global market at the expense of debasing their religion. Conversely, many Western or liberalist readers across the globe (like Shahid and Deedee, again in *Album*) highlight his anti-colonial postcolonialism, and in turn advance Rushdie's symbolic capital as a persecuted writer in the globe. Rushdie's plight and success illustrates the cultural producer's dislocation from and embeddedness in a Western(ized) field of culture. Articulated himself successfully with a metropolitan middle class readership, Rushdie, as a postcolonial exotic, lost his glamour in the eyes of Muslim communities where he was from.

Following Rushdie's literary track, Kureishi makes his successful way in marketing his multicultural representations. Readers from British or other liberalist world do not always require, or have little interest to know whether these postcolonial writers have faithfully translated the exact lives, thoughts, and emotions of non-white Muslims in Britain. Hybridity sells both in a business world and literary production. Purchasing goods nowadays is not just for basic utility but for new functions, packages, looks, social significances, and symbols. For literary producers, novelty is made possible, as in Harold Bloom's noted theorization, by an anxiety of influence from their predecessors, which is further echoed by the readers' intolerance of passé. In the realm of postcolonial literature, newness is articulated with the author's non-white ethnicity, depiction of minority lives and their traumas, upon which a marginal identity is recognized and authenticated. Seeking for newness and difference, many postcolonial cultural critics are aware that an oppressed other cannot exist without a homogenized dominant community, just as a certain product gains its value by devaluating another of an early generation or other brands. Kureishi satirizes this condition in *Buddha* by having Karim photographed beside a barbed-wire, a prop that speaks to his identity in "the margins as a site of resistance" (Huggan 83). This recalls a binary opposition criticized so much, yet remaining as the orthodoxy of academic and cultural productions still sponsored by national capitalism. As Huggan further claims,

> To think at, and from, the margins is to challenge the authority of the mainstream, a mainstream usually defined in some combination of white, male, heterosexual, middle class. Counterhegemonic thought arguably constitutes the new academic orthodoxy, as different interest groups fight it out for the right to make the margins their own. (83)

Kureishi's cultural identity, like Karim, Shahid, Omar and Sammy, calls to

question the author's marginal status. He once denied his cultural in-betweenness by saying: "Critics have written that I'm caught between two cultures. I'm not. . . . I'm British; I've made it in England" (Kaleta 7). As a result, there are some, though not many, dissenting voices among those who herald positive representations of hybridity in Kureishi's works. Moore-Gilbert notices that "(post)Modernist ideas of collage", "conventions of the 'fringe theatre,'" "western confessional modes" and "the mixing of 'high' and 'popular'" are doubtlessly common practices in a cultural field of the West (200). This further brings to mind discontents with "Kureishi's tendency to portray characters in full flight from their marginal ethnic status" (Buchanan 148). Kaleta points out that Karim in *Buddha* "is in love with power" and his ultimate goal is "assimilation into the white London scene" (Kaleta 179). Ruvani Ranasinha exemplifies Kureishi's "Western-centric" attitude to Asian culture by stereotyping Changez in *Buddha*. Even Kureishi's "marketability as a writer of color" is mentioned (Buchanan 149). Ian Buruma accuses that "Kureishi's combination of talent, charm, exotic ancestry, and subversive posturing is just what people who are chic, liberal and a trifle bored like" (34). Thus said, Kureishi's postcoloanialism, "dissolution of imperial epistemologies and institutional structures" in his stories, and postcoloniality, his *recognizable* otherness and highly readable subjects for those western-friendly world readers, are dual guarantees for his success.

The above critical responses are usually based upon the sanctification of *ethnic* hybridity as their foremost criteria. Like Karim depreciated by Shadwell for his unfamiliarity with Indian, Kureishi is sometimes stressed, if not criticized for his lack of a non-Western cultural engagement. However, if we admit that any cultures and individuals are composed of heterogeneous ingredients, and hence are already hybrid, then our critical eyesight need to place on how Kureishi makes the best use of his Westernized cultural hybridity to delve into complexities within Britain and its

subjects. When Buchanan asks Kureishi: “Does the conception of hybridity disturb that idea of humanism for you,” his positive response explains that humanity is his ultimate concern:

> [Hybridity is] a vague idea, because there’s hybridity everywhere. . . . Look at a child with a mother and a father, and is composed, therefore, as Freud wrote, of at least two genders, and the pulling together of these genders into a sexuality so on. And in fact these parents have come from different places psychologically, so there’s a lot of hybridity going on all the time, if you think of hybridity as meaning the putting together of disparate things. People, when they talk about hybridity, are really talking about someone with an Indian mother and an English father, aren’t they? (Buchanan 119)

Admitting that he is still “thinking in [humanist and canonical writers’] terms,” Kureishi is “still working on the same problems: What are men and women doing” (Buchanan 119). That said, he deals with contemporary human activities in his postcolonial stories by foregrounding multifarious reactions toward a late capitalist Britain, where people labeled with different identities keep categorizing and stereotyping each other, manifesting limitation of human perceptions and desires for otherizing the Other. As Kureishi comically relates in an interview:

> Men say women are stupid or that their sexual organs will devour them. Women argue that all men are essentially rapists or that the source of sexism is the penis. Whites say blacks are stupid or worthless; blacks counter that white men are devils. So no one has to look at why people become the way they are or notice that people resist their training and change. (qtd. in Kaleta 47)

Hybridity and a tendency of stereotyping, paradoxically, is what Kureishi attributes to the universality among human activities. This is certainly different from humanism in its traditional sense, which views human subjectivity as the source of a

meaningful world, with freedom, intentionality, and autonomy as its innate characters. In the above quotation, Kureishi cautions against human blindness in acknowledging one's distinctiveness while ignoring other's hybridity, which means that the "self" and "other," as hybridization of different discursive, material, social and biological practices, may share some similarities forged by the same social forces. In the four stories explored here, attempts to assert one's ascendant identity are made possible either by debasing or articulating with some referent groups, whose hybrid formation is constantly bypassed. Jamila in *Buddha*, a down-to-earth activist who foils the snobbish Karim, cannot evade stereotyping when enouncing her victimized ethnicity. Accusing that her mentor Miss Cutmore "colonized her," she ignores the West is one of the major sources of anti-colonialist theories. "Without Miss Cutmore, Jamila wouldn't have even heard the word 'colony,'" as Karim observes (*Buddha* 53). In *Album*, the militant Muslims' demonization of a simplified West and an imagined religious alliance only expose traces of incommensurable differences—the incongruity between their faith and daily practices in British society. The gang group's refusal to face squarely Asian enterprise, as a rising socio-economic power in *Laundrette*, only aggravates its marginalization in Thatcher's enterprise culture. Sammy's self-assertive alliance with the lower class rioters in *Sammy* is ironically exposed when he curses those who burn his car during the "revolution" on street.

Inevitably hooked on a late capitalist society with advantages and disadvantages inseparable from each other, ethnic subjects have to make the most use of this cultural and economic milieu to fulfill their possibilities as humankind. The imperialist glory surely remained in 1970s and 1980s Britain, yet it cannot but fade away (surely not totally vanish) in 1990s and early 21st century. Rampant with depthless simulacra, narratives, and sound effects, a late capitalist society, via commodification of culture and culturalization of commodity, liberates individual productivity at mental, spiritual,

and material ends. As a result, there may sometimes be a greater tolerance in certain issues or fields than in modern or pre-modern eras. In addition, late capitalism is not totally unhooked from morality, as I have discussed in the chapter related to *Album*. Maximizing production and consumption via different cultures and culturalization, a late capitalist culture cannot be unrelated to morality and ethic that allows production and dissemination of different vocies. Exploitation of labor power in the global span always encounters counter-discourses and protests, while a redefinition of colonial labor by transnational movements attaches the idea of culture, a form of capital characterizing postmodern capitalism, to producers of different ethnicities, and further brings about new subjectivities especially in industries demanding intellectual or cultural capital. Partly because of this, postcolonial studies and anti-racist discourses gain their power in criticizing an uneven structure by mediatized counter-discourses, representations and chic vocabularies, which produce more cultural producers and consumers. This process, sometimes overlaps with omnipresent commodification, may alter white supremacy to a certain degree. Leftist characters in Kureishi's postcolonial stories are just some fit examples.

Visiting Kureishi's early postcolonial stories in the early 21st century, as the Tory had been replaced by the Labour since Blair's success in 1997, readers can only be amazed by how much Kureishi's chic-ness extends to cultural production in our present era. While many critics would depict Blair as the major builder of the New Left, aiming to realize equality of opportunity and relief of poverty, the ex-Prime Minister (he resigned in 2007), with the aid of the present PM Gordon Brown, continued Thatcher's liberalism in economy. Noticing that "neither [Blair] nor Brown changed the major premises of government policy they found on entering office in 1997," Simon Jenkins entitles his article by "Blair is Going, but Thatcher Still Rules." This development is not as much hybridization of the left as the continuing

dominance of late capitalism, where a desire to liberate individual power of production and consumption keeps defining the track of the economy and culture. As Homi Bhabha has pointed out,

> If you have this notion of 'the people' as being constructed (through cultural difference and hybridity . . .), then you avoid that very simplistic polarity between the ruler and the ruled: any monolithic description of authoritative power (such as 'Thatcherism'), based on that kind of binarism, is not going to be a very accurate reflection of what is actually happening in the world. If instead you have a model which emphasizes the ambivalent nature of that relationship, which understands political subjectivity as a multi-dimensional conflictual form of identification, then Thatcherism is the name for a number of articulated constituencies. . . . You also begin to see how this 'general will', this consensual bloc could be disarticulated. (221)

Even when Thatcher was still on her reign, extremist racism has been disarticulated from the discursive field of the mainstream. In the general election of 1964, a Tory nonentity Peter Griffiths defeated the then confident Patrick Gordon Walker as a Labour to win the inner Birmingham seat of Smethwick. His campaign slogan is only with 10 word: "If you want a nigger for a neighbour, vote Labour" (Derek Brown). It is important to notice that "[n]o candidate would dream of saying such a thing now. If they did, they'd be prosecuted" (Derek Brown). In a poster prominent in the 1983 campaign, the Conservative seemed to reverse itself by saying "Labour says he's black, Tories say he's British," and this turn never impeded Thatcher's most decisive election win since that of the Labour in 1945. A black young man in his business suit featured this poster, aimed to call "young blacks to enter the mainstream of the national culture" (Hamnett et al. 41-42), represented non-white Britons as unignorable socio-economic force, and echoed Omar's dressing (starred by Gordon Warnecke) in

My Beautiful Laundrette.[98] In 1990s New Labour proposed "creative industry" as their policy concept, officially confirmed the commodification of culture that Jameson found in late '80s. In 2003, the then mayor of London Ken Livingstone confirmed that this new industry could not be without the participation of the minorities: "The Asian presence within London's creative industries is a huge asset, with the potential to improve the competitiveness of the sector" (v). *Britain's Got Talent*, the most popular talent show in recent years at Britain, named a street dance troupe Diversity its winners in 2009. Composed by members of different ethnicities, this group beat the Scottish amateur singer Susan Boyle, reaffirming a possibility of equality of opportunity and positive representation of non-whites in the mainstream media. This recalls Kureishi and Frears' characterization of Danny and his anarchist artists in *Sammy*. It is very possible that in today's atmosphere they will transform into stars in a multiculturalized Britain.

Having witnessed the historic development summarized above, we find little difficulty to comprehend in which way does Kureishi articulate with certain aspects of

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[98] For Salman Rushdie and Rebecca Dyer, who quotes Rushdie's words in analyzing *Laundrette*, this poster is certainly a part of the divide-and-rule strategy of the colonial ruler: "I've [Rushdie] been told by Tory politicians that the Conservative Party seriously discusses the idea of wooing the Asians and leaving the Afro-Caribbeans to the Labour Party, because Asians are such good capitalists. In the new Empire, as in the old one, it seems our masters are willing to use tried and trusted strategies of divide-and-rule" (Rushdie, "The New Empire within Britain" 138). In Paul Gilroy's critique of the poster, "The slightly too large suit worn by the young man, with its unfashionable cut and connotations of job interview . . . conveys what is being asked of the black readers as the price of admission. . . . Blacks are being invited to forsake all that marks them out as culturally distinct before real Britishness can be guaranteed. National culture is present in the young man's clothing. Isolated and shorn of the mugger's key icons–a tea cosy hat and the dreadlocks of Rasta–he is redeemed by his suit, the signifier of British civilisation. The image of black youth as a problem is thus contained. . . . The wolf is trans-formed by his sheep's clothing" (59). Concerning my above quotation of Bhabha, Rushdie's remark of a divide-and-rule policy and a government as "our masters" is what Bhabha terms as a "simplistic polarity between the ruler and the ruled," a reluctance to admit internal discrepancies of the so-called minorities, as well as the articulating power of late capitalism on people with different colors. It will be more interesting if we consider Rushdie's acceptance of knighthood from the Queen in 2008, and infer whether this would be a fit example for his own "divide-and-rule" theory. Gilory's observation of this poster completely ignores its historic significance in terms of a gradual disarticulation (another point of Bhabha in the above quotation) of extremist racism from the Conservatives. Before non-whites have plenty of space of non-discriminative representations, inclusion of a black man in the Tory's poster is a significant step that articulates his blackness (his distinct skin color cannot simply be eradicated by a suit termed as "sheep's clothing") within a changing Britain.

Thatcherism, despite his heavy criticism against the Conservative. This does not result so much from Thatcherism's theoretical flawlessness as from its hybridity, its rupture between an economic liberalism and moral/cultural conservatism. Kureishi never makes clear whether his elevation of hedonism and creativity is just the cultural translation of Thatcher's economic liberalism. However, as the economic and cultural mingle in late capitalism and produce meanings more salient to the individual than to the group identity, Kureishi's stories concerns how much one's potentiality can be realized especially when their creativity, culture and talent hook on economic activities as their careers. Thatcherism does not prevent ethnic citizens from becoming productive and consumptive subjects, just like that Kureishi cannot imagine a world completely disarticulated from capitalism (his rendition of an anarchist commune in *Sammy*, as I have discussed in Chapter Four, is quite unconvincing). Like the conflicts and miraculous articulation between economic freedom and social discipline within Thatcherism,[99] Kureishi's radicalism in sex liberation, pop music, and drug use are constantly balanced by a call for work ethic, self-preservation and calculative rationality. In *Buddha* Pyke has little worries about his radical experimentalism for his symbolic capital has won him governmental funding, while Charlie's rebellious stance as a rock star is a well-calculated outcome of the market. As I have pointed out in Chapter Three, Shahid and Deedee's sexual plays in *Album* always face the barriers of social convention, and are further used as Shahid's productive materials for his creative writing. Omar and Johnny's gay love in *Laundrette* never comes out of the closet, yet becomes a vigorous incentive to advance their enterprise. Sammy and Rosie's libertinism, foiled by their leftist discontent with Thatcher's policy, looks like emotional outlets to keep themselves on track of their unfascinating jobs. In a similar

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[99] These conflicting stances can be illustrated by the following key words: "freedom, choice, self-reliance and enterprise on the one hand; morality, responsibility and nationhood on the other" (Brown and Sparks xii).

logic, characters like Johnny, Chili, Changez either start as slothful non-workers yet end in their fitting jobs, or repent their former self-destructive indolence.

Like the above cases, Kureishi's own work ethic and stress on creativity are what buttress his marketable writing style and filmmaking. As he wonders "how much Thatcher would approve of [the filming of *Sammy*]": "we're a thrifty, entertaining, money-making small business. . . . [P]art of our purpose is to make popular films which are critical of British society" ("Some Time with Stephen" 131). The success of literary production lies in cultural capital held by the creator, in the form of the so-called individual talent and critical insights highly compatible with "Thatcherite ideas about individual initiative and self-reliance" (Buchanan18), which help formulate a successful productive unit that Thatcher encourages. Articulation occurs, despite the will of the leftist author, as he is born from, shaped by, and therefore has faith in the logic of success in the capitalist geography of Britain. Unwilling to be without a career in literary production, a postcolonial author has to be more than a profligate consumer, leavening himself by an immigrant/working ethic that is just what Thatcher believed to be the panacea for the receding British economy. It is also their unwillingness to be losers in '70s and '80s Britain that Kureishian heroes clasp the logic of late capitalism to accumulate, ameliorate, convert, and market their (postcolonial) cultural capital.

In the four stories I discuss here, Kureishi explores the survival conditions of different ethnic characters in post-revolutionary late capitalism. With characters voicing their differences, either to earn economic, cultural or symbolic capital, or just to maintain one's identity against other's reductionism, exploitation, or oppression, Kureishi reminds his readers about a need to co-represent and find conjunction among different ethnicities. Articulation can be a means for social climbing or subsistence in *Buddha* and *Laundrette*, while characters of different ethnicities come together to

upgrade their ethnicity and class. In *Sammy*, an articulation of leftist, middle class minorities as host Londoners can result in inhospitality against an outsider like Rafi. In *Album*, Shahid's strategic articulation with Deedee is juxtaposed strangely with his disarticulation with some pop products, just for rearticulating himself with literary canons that help him out of a consumerist culture. Coexistent with the alluring differences of non-whites, subcultures, pops and revitalized canons of all forms are Kureishi's concern for the ability to respect and see through differences/sameness among subjects. This is perhaps the best way for him to recreate and regain a complex humanity, and to join the reorientation of an ever-evolving capitalism.

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