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The immigrant experience: multiculturalism, religious identity, Thatcherism and the clash of generations in selected works by Hanif Kureishi.

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Dedicated to

My Dear Late Father Abdul Mannan and my Innocent Village Folks.

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Abstract

This thesis, focusing on a wide range of texts by Hanif Kureishi, discusses postcolonial aspects of multiculturalism, racism, evolving religious identity, and the ways in which Thatcherism led to class rifts as well as entrepreneurial opportunities. It also examines how the social milieu of British society and the ancestral values of its immigrants resulted in clashes of cultures and generations. Within the theoretical framework of Homi K. Bhabha, the characters' behaviour and their psychological reactions to the changing dynamics of British society are scrutinized through reference the key concepts of hybridity, liminality, ambivalence, and third space of enunciation. The thesis examines five primary works of Kureishi which are *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990), *The Black Album* (1995), *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1986), *My Son the Fanatic* (1997), and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* (1992). Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003) and Ed Husain's *The Islamist* (2007) are used as supporting texts in this research. The arguments in this thesis are further substantiated by some of Kureishi's essays, interviews, documentaries, and newspaper articles in addition to the literary works indicated above. The uniqueness of this thesis lies partly in my argument that Kureishi - as a Westernised, atheistic creative author - inadequately and at some points sarcastically projects Islam; my emphasis on the way multiculturalism, despite celebrating diversity can trigger racism and violence, raising questions about the integration and assimilation into British society; and my discussion of the paradox of Thatcher's economic policies which were detrimental to the working-class people. The thesis also explores how Kureishi, being a second-generation author of Asian heritage, presents a broader spectrum of the disparities and differences between the first-generation and second-generation immigrants in his works.

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List of Abbreviations

BoS: The Buddha of Suburbia

BA: The Black Album

MBL: My Beautiful Laundrette

MSF: My Son the Fanatic

SRGL: Sammy and Rosie Get Laid

RS: The Rainbow Sign

BL: Brick Lane

Islamist: The Islamist

MM: The Mimic Men

LoC: The Location of Culture

O: Orientalism

BSWM: Black Skin, White Masks

CI: Culture and Imperialism

Preface

The motivation for this research started from my reading of Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990) wherein one of the major themes in his representation of the plight of Asian Immigrants in Britain during the 80s and 90s fascinated me to further explore his other works. From further studies of Kureishi, I discovered that racism, discrimination, and exploitation against Asian immigrants during that time period were rampant in Britain. At this point, I found a commonality between atrocities in colonial India by the British Empire and the treatment of the Asians living in Britain as immigrants.

Having been born and brought up in India, a former British colony, my concept of 'The British' has its roots in the colonial history of British rule in India. This concept, from the colonial perspective, is mainly associated with the establishment of white supremacy, exploitation, cultural discrimination, genocide, torture, and other physical as well as psychological atrocities against Indians in their native land. Even the Indian English literature during the first half of the 20th century is influenced by the same image of British atrocities over the Indians and depicted the struggle of colonised people (Indians) with the colonisers (British) to reclaim and regain their lost identity, culture, land and freedom from the colonisers. The literature about the British Raj is mainly dominated by the themes of nationalism, the struggle for independence from British rule, patriotism, local and tribal identities, partition, and the conflict between Western modernisation and native traditions. Among them, male authors such as Amitav Ghosh, Khushwant Singh, R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao, and Mulk Raj Anand emphasize the themes of native traditions, cultural roots, rituals, icons, societal hierarchy, and belief systems. On the contrary, female authors such as Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, and Arundhati Roy mainly celebrate the themes of feminism, diaspora, dislocation, disillusionment, and exile. British authors such as E.M. Forster and Rudyard Kipling, in their writings, depict India through the eyes of colonisers wherein India is portrayed stereotypically. Kipling writes

from a Victorian, white-superior perspective and paradoxically depicts India through the character of Mowgli in his *The Jungle Book* (1894). The Western concept about Indians in Forster's *A Passage to India,* is "barbaric, uncivilized [and] inhuman" (Said, 1994:206). Many Western authors also view India as a "chaotic, and degenerate sub-continent" (Parry, 1998:176). The superiority of the West, in these writings, is always established by the desire of the East (India) to imitate the West. The unbridgeable gap between the East and the West is always predominant in the literature of these authors.

The Western dominance and white supremacy over the East can be traced back to the early 19th century which is evident in the statement of a British politician, Thomas Babington Macaulay, in his *Minute on Education* published on 2nd February 1835. Macaulay states in the *Minute*, "A single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia" (Lord Macaulay's 1835 *Minute to Parliament*) establishing the fact that the inferiority of colonised people is not only marked by their culture, lifestyle, language and social class but in their literature too. Macaulay also echoes the motive of a colonial master when he expresses his intention to educate some specific Indians to meet their goals, "to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect" (ibid). Western literature has always played an important role in propagating European culture and Western values to the colonised peoples. Many intellectuals from the colonies imitated the lines of their masters like Macaulay. One such example is from a prize-winning essay written in 1841 titled: The Influence of Sound General Knowledge on Hinduism by an Indian student, Mahendra Lal Basak, at Hindu College, Calcutta which states,

> With the Hindus everything and all things are incorporated in their religion. Their sciences, their arts are all revealed from heaven. If, therefore, their science is overthrown, their religion is also overthrown with it. … The citadel of Hinduism is the religion of

> the country. Attack, capture that citadel, the system of Hinduism lies a conquered territory. And it is the science and religion of Christendom which have now encompassed round about that citadel. … But, alas, alas our countrymen are still asleep- still sleeping the sleep of death. Rise up, ye sons of India, arise, see the glory of the Sun of Righteousness! ...” (Majumdar 1973:201).

In this particular extract, the author echoes Macaulay’s opinion that in India; literature, science and religion were intermixed while each was distinct in the West and willingly adopts the role of Macaulay’s English-educated Indian who acts as surrogate Englishman and seeks to awaken the native masses (Loomba, 2005:78).

After the independence in 1947 from the British Raj, the colonial residues clung to us in our lifestyle, English language, and imitation of British culture and fashion which was considered to be superior to our Indian indigenous languages, cultures and lifestyles. Although India became politically independent from British rule after the Second World War, it continued to maintain the British legacy and in doing so the hierarchy of the coloniser versus colonised remains an established fact in our Indian society.

Later, when I became familiar with the works of Hanif Kureishi, a postmodern British author of Asian descent, who was born and raised up in Britain but still his subject matters echo the same sense of discrimination, exploitation, racism, and violence against the non-whites, in this context, the Asian immigrants living in Britain. This reminded me of Macaulay’s *Minute*, and Forster and Kipling’s stereotypical representation of India during the colonial period. The only difference I could realize is that Kureishi is writing from within the British society. From this observation, it can be established that the gap between the East and the West, white and non-white is more psychological than geographical in a context which underpins Edward Said and Homi K Bhabha’s postcolonial theories. This particular finding motivated me to investigate more towards Kureishi as an author and his works wherein he depicts the plight and experiences of the immigrants living in Britain.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis intends to analyse Hanif Kureishi as a British postcolonial author in the light of his major and minor works. The thesis is divided into chapters among which one underpins the themes of changing phenomenon of race, color, and identity under the aegis of multicultural Britain in the 80s and 90s, and the discrepancies between the immigrants' dreams and the actual reality of life. As Kureishi being an atheist took sudden interest to research Islam, so one of the chapters critically examines to what extent his representation of Islam in his works is authentic. The other chapter takes into account class-ridden Britain under Thatcherism: how the poor became poorer and the rich got richer due to Thatcher's free-market policy, business and entrepreneurship. Finally, the last chapter deals with how the father/son or father/daughter relationship is influenced due to the clash of first and second-generation immigrants who are psychologically and culturally different from each other.

The research undertakes the postcolonial theory of Homi K Bhabha and applies his key concepts of hybridity, liminality, mimicry, ambivalence, and the third space of enunciation for the chapters dealing with multiculturalism and the clash of the first and the second generations of immigrants. In doing so, I have examined Kureishi's characters and their psychological traits as well as cultural complexities with Bhabha's aforementioned key concepts which are discussed below in detail. It also takes into account the paradox of identities of the characters wherein the first generation of Asian immigrants born and raised up in a conservative or religious society come out of the cocoon of conservatism and embrace a liberal life in Britain; alternatively, some of the second-generation immigrants who are born and raised up in liberal Western society tends to identify with a radical and extremist ideology. In the course of my research, I have analysed Kureishi's representation of Islam in his works in the light of the Holy Quran and the Teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him). The research

discovers a substantial disparity between the fundamentals of Islam with the Teachings of the Prophet and the Islam that Kureishi has represented in his works. In the process of building my argument, I have included Ed Husain's memoir *The Islamist* (2007) and some documentaries on radical Islam which finds a close relationship between the radicalised fictional characters of Kureishi and the radicalised real young Muslims in Britain. Finally, against the backdrop of Thatcherism and fading socialism, I have endeavoured to examine the socio-economic crisis of Britain in the 80s and 90s which adversely affected the working-class people as represented in Kureishi's *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985) and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* (1987). These works of Kureishi portray Margaret Thatcher's detrimental and discriminatory policies which mostly benefitted a particular section of society by neglecting the majority of them and highlight the rising entrepreneur culture among the upper-class immigrants and the joblessness of the white working-class society.

1.1. Research Objectives and Analysis.

Kureishi as an author has tackled multiple layers of themes in his works covering the time period of the 80s and 90s Britain. One of the most significant themes reflects the acute racism faced by Asian immigrants, and subsequently the emerging complexities of sexual, racial, gender, and religious identities. He also deals with emerging multiculturalism and the rise of popular culture, art, and music. The other major themes include religious extremism and the rise of Islamic radicalisation, father-son relationships; social, political and economic crises and class struggle in Britain during Thatcherite rule. My research mainly focuses on Kureishi's radical representation of stereotyping racism, satirical portrayal of Islam, racism in the context of multiculturalism, the socio-economic disparity under the rule of Thatcher, clash of first- and second-generation Asian immigrants. The research also aims to deal with the formation of identity to fit into the changing demography of Britain, the rise of Islamic identity among the Muslim minorities and how the young generation of Muslim immigrants used it as a defence against exploitation,

hostility and discrimination of the racist whites. Finally, I examine how the second generation of Asian immigrants who are born and brought up in Britain tend to distance themselves in terms of freedom of choice from their first-generation counterparts.

In the course of my research, I explore and focus on Kureishi's portrayal of Asian immigrants in the postcolonial era of Great Britain and the disparity in the expectations of Asian immigrants before and after arriving in Britain. The generation of Asian immigrants who, like Kureishi's father Rafiushan Kureishi, came to Britain mainly to study, work and write in the first two decades following World War II and settled in Britain. Among them were authors such as Salman Rushdie and Dom Moraes from Bombay, Attia Hosain from Lucknow, Kamala Markandaya from Bangalore, Nirad Chaudhuri from Bengal, and Farrukh Dhondy from Poona (Innes, 2007:179). From Kureishi's texts, it can be established that many first-generation Asian immigrants who came to Britain were either factory workers and labourers or socially, economically and culturally elite-class Asians. But on arrival, many of them were shocked when they found themselves in a crisis in their dreamland and the diasporic subjects experienced the challenges of being away from home in various ways. Among them, some were the failure of assimilation and integration into the new culture, the nostalgia and trauma of migration and the feeling of social alienation both physically and psychologically for being away from their homeland. Under such circumstances, a sense of insecurity prevailed over their lives. They were rendered psychologically, socially and economically unstable in Britain. They struggle to integrate within the white society, but they utterly failed to adjust and assimilate into this new culture or become part of it. Consequently, they became vulnerable to ill-treatment, prejudices, and economic and social discrimination and also faced racial slurs at the hands of white racists. These social prejudices and discriminations faced by the black and Asian community in Britain are explained in Innes' words, "… in Britain the racist attitudes which kept black and Asian people out of all but the most

poorly paid jobs and resented their presence in British cities and suburbs, led to an increasing emphasis on political, psychological and cultural resistance to discrimination on grounds of race and color" (Innes, 2007:4). Some of them were forced to be segregated into a minority community of their own which was culturally marginalized and economically challenged. Eventually, they started yearning for recognition by creating a distinct self-identity in society. In Kureishi's works, the immigrants at this juncture of crisis try to overcome these challenges by creating their own space in the society for effective communication between the coloniser and the colonised which Bhabha terms 'third space of enunciation' in his postcolonial theory.

In the course of the research, I also endeavour to find out a number of factors that trigger racism and discrimination against minorities in Britain during the 80s and 90s. One of the causes of racism and discrimination is the prevalent disillusionment, among intolerant whites, because of the political and economic catastrophe after the Second World War. Britain after losing its empire has been under an extremely political, social and economic ordeal which not only adversely affected the whites but also the Asian immigrants in Britain. The process of decolonisation of the British colonies had already been initiated with the Second World War. At the end of this War, the lack of manpower or labour in Britain invited many immigrants from the colonies. As Innes notes, "After World War II, Britain had recruited thousands of people from the West Indies and the Indian subcontinent to sustain the national health and transport systems and to work in the steel and textile factories" (Innes, 2007:4). The more the number of immigrants increased in Britain during that time period, the more they became visible in public places such as pubs, clubs, shops, and other businesses. Some of the whites feared that these immigrants had captured their economy, business, and other opportunities which escalated their sense of hatred and racial prejudice against the multi-ethnic immigrants. In Kureishi's works,

the second-generation immigrants such as Karim, Jamila, Shahid, Chad, and Farid are more in numbers and much exposed in public places and thus they face more racism and discrimination than their first-generation counterparts such as Haroon, Anwar, Papa, and Parvez. Kureishi's works encompass a period when Britain underwent enormous social, political, and economic changes under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher. Thatcher's rigid economic policies triggered a further rift and segregated the socioeconomic classes among the whites. Her policies left the working-class section deprived and unemployed, which subsequently increased their resentment against the ethnic minorities. It is important to note that even Kureishi also observes that racism and class inequality are both interconnected. As racism is not only confined to ethnic identity or colour but it also triggers a sense of superiority and disdainfulness of one class of the society against the other. Kureishi states this complex correlation in his essay, "The Rainbow Sign"

> …racism is a kind of snobbery, a desire to see oneself as superior culturally and economically, and a desire to actively experience and enjoy that superiority by hostility or violence. And when that superiority of class and culture is unsure or not acknowledged by the Other…as with the British working-class and Pakistanis in England, then it has to be demonstrated physically (RS, 26).

1.2. Novelty in my Research on Kureishi.

Hanif Kureishi, a British author of Asian descent, has been widely researched for his major landmark works such as *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990), *London Kills Me* (1991), *The Black Album* (1995), *My Son the Fanatic* (1997), and *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985). Nevertheless, his other works like *Gabriel's Gift* (2001), *The Body* (2003), *Something to Tell You* (2008), *The Last Word* (2014), *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* (1987), *The Mother* (2003), *Venus* (2006), *The Word and the Bomb* (2005), and essays like "The Rainbow Sign", "Sex and Secularity", "The Road Exactly", "Dreaming and Scheming", "Bradford" are also noteworthy.

My research covers mainly the time period of the 80s and 90s Britain, which is why I choose Kureishi's works published prior to 2000. This is a very crucial time period for Britain because of its social, political, and economic changes as it is shifting from its monolithic white identity to a multi-ethnic nation. The changing demography of Britain with the increasing number of immigrants and their challenges lead to numerous identity formations where, especially, religion plays an important role for the ethnic minorities. At the same time, Britain also gets first female Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. Her socioeconomic policies and the advent of globalization plunge Britain into more difficulties and challenges.

In the last few years, there have been a number of publications and research on Kureishi's major works mentioned above but very little has been done to cover a holistic approach to Kureishi. Mostly the research works and publications deal with a particular or a limited aspect of his writing. For example, a novel such as *The Buddha of Suburbia* is mainly analysed from the perspective of multiculturism, identity, the autobiographical elements, music, popular art and culture of 80s Britain; *The Black Album* and *My Son the Fanatic* are typically analysed from the perspective of Islamic extremism and fanatism, *My Beautiful Laundrette* and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* are mainly approached by exploring with the political and economic agendas of Thatcherite government, and the challenges faced by the lower-working class people due to Thatcher's economic policy. In most cases, only the major characters have been dealt with in detail and the minor characters did not get much emphasis or received little or no attention in these works.

The novel, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, has been widely researched from the point of view of emerging multicultural Britain in the 80s. The concept of multiculturalism has been extensively defined from the perspective of popular culture, art, music, and fashion. But my research views multiculturalism in this novel in a new light. It situates the concept of multiculturalism in a British society which is in turmoil under stereotyping racism, a

class-ridden society, hatred and frustration against the ethnic minority immigrants, and the emergence of radical identity both in terms of religion as well as a culture during the 80s.

The major protagonists like Karim, Haroon, Jamila, and Eva in this novel have been discussed extensively but the other characters like Changez, Charlie, Anwar, Shinko, Gene, Helen's father Hairy Back and cast members of Shadwell's play and Pyke's drama have been given little or no attention at all. But this research has tackled these minor characters with greater importance in establishing my arguments. For instance, Helen's father represents an anti-immigrant attitude and hatred. He is a genuine representation of Enoch Powell. Although Changez has been a comic character in the novel, he is a major signifier of young Asians' dream of coming to Britain. The character of Gene is not physically present and he captures very little attention, but his fate reflects the bitter truth of racism and discrimination in the professional life of art and theatre.

The dominant themes in the novel are mainly focused on the contrast between suburbia and the city, racism, multiculturalism, gender, identity, autobiographical elements, popular art, music, and culture. These themes overshadow other important aspects of the novel like the importance of the philosophy of Buddha, the class struggle where the upper class exploits the lower class irrespective of their ethnicity, anti-immigration, and the clash of generations (first and second-generation immigrants). The themes such as Jamila are symbolic of the emergence of feminism, and the struggle of young artists like Charlie because of lack of recognition is mostly described insignificantly. My contribution to this research covers these themes in detail which actually play a significant role in the course and development of the novel. The details such as how Changez represents the dreams of Asian immigrants on arriving in Britain, how the Asian immigrants though geographically separated but psychologically are still attached to their culture, the philosophy of Buddhism and how Haroon as buddha fits into it. The research also covers

how the first and the second generation of immigrants differ in their mindset, the struggle of lower working-class casts in Pyke's and Shadwell's plays, the representation of black in the novel through Gene, and the economic exploitation of the non-whites. Characters representing the second generation such as Karim and Jamila are more integrated into British society and are more concerned with establishing their identity whereas the first-generation immigrants such as Haroon and Anwar are either struggling to get recognition or frustrated due to their incapacity to fit into the British society. The disparity between the economic and social classes irrespective of their national identity can easily be noticed when black artists like Karim, Terry, Gene, and Eleanor are exploited at hands of the upper-class whites such as Pyke and Shadwell. Though black characters such as Gene are talented, they are always portrayed negatively as drug dealers, murderers, or smugglers in the play by the theatre directors such as Pyke and Shadwell.

The novel *The Black Album* and the screenplay *My Son the Fanatic* have mostly been seen in the light of rising Islamic extremism and fanaticism in Britain during the 90s. Kureishi has mainly been inspired by the reaction caused by the movement against the publication of Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* in Britain and worldwide, and the fatwa imposed upon Rushdie for this novel by the Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989. Most of the articles and papers discuss these works of Kureishi mainly from the perspective of rising Islamic radicalism in Britain. My chapter endeavours to investigate how Kureishi as a creative writer falls short to represent the true concept of Islam and his projection of Islam gives a distorted impression of the religion because he could not follow the authentic sources of Islam such as the Holy Quran and the teachings of the prophet. Rather, he conceptualises the concept of Islam from the sources such as visiting mosques and conversing with young rebellious Muslims and ordinary Muslims in the Pak-Afghan border and by doing so he satirises the religion, Islam. My chapter also discovers how Islam is being misused and politicised at hands of opportunist Muslim

leaders such as Riaz and his followers in *The Black Album* and Maulvi and Parvez's son Farid in the film, *My Son the Fanatic*. These opportunistic leaders are keener to establish their political ground or personal interests than educating people spiritually. To substantiate my argument, I have referred to the memoir of Ed Husain's *The Islamist*, the statement by Yasmin Alibhai Brown, and the story of Alyas Karmani's radicalisation presented by Mobeen Azhar. These references are crucial for this chapter because of their authentic experiences similar to those of Kureishi's characters like Riaz, Chad and Farid. Moreover, I also discuss the racism faced by the Bengali family in *The Black Album*, how the ethnic minorities face academic discrimination in London and the relationship between Shahid and Deedee. The prevalence of an anti-Muslim agenda and Islamophobia in the conversation of Charles Jump and the fading communism represented by Deedee's husband in the novel are also given significant attention in this chapter.

My research has analysed *My Son the Fanatic* from the perspective of the short story and the film which differ in the way each begins. The short story begins abruptly in the climax of Parvez's son Ali's religious evolution and the readers are directly put into the crisis that had already begun in the life of the father and his son. On contrary, the movie begins in a more dramatic way and the audience is given ample time and reasons to comprehend the climax of the story. The clashing attitude of the guests (Parvez family) and the hosts (Fingerhut family) opens the passage of the crisis that the relationship has to face in the future. The two opposite reactions: the unwelcoming attitude of the Fingerhut family and; the overwhelming and exciting expression of Parvez's family are easily realized in the film which is absent in the short story. The short story is predominantly comprised mainly of three characters i.e., Parvez, his son Ali, and the prostitute Bettina. Parvez symbolizes the patriarchal father who decides the future of his child rather than giving him a choice or freedom of life. Parvez is unable to accept the changes in his son's way of life. He plays the role of an adamant and dominant father who repeatedly insists his son fulfil his

dreams rather than giving his son freedom to follow his own choice of life. Parvez makes a wish for Farid to get a good job, marry the right girl and start a family. Once this happened, Parvez would be happy. His dreams of doing well in England would have come true. The characters like Mr Schitz from Germany, the maulvi from Lahore, Minoo, and Fizzie are more explicitly dealt with in the film than in the short story. Their role is given a prominent significance in the film which is lacking in the short story.

Kureishi's screenplays, *My Beautiful Laundrette* and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* are mainly interpreted by many critics under the backdrop of Thatcher's social and economic policies during the 90s. These screenplays are mostly analysed by critics for their cinematic technique, queer intimacy to portray the characters, the impact of Thatcherism on the immigrants as well as the white British inhabitants, the advent of entrepreneur culture, and the increasing gap among the social classes. In my analysis of these screenplays, I have endeavoured to explore how Kureishi as a critic of Thatcher speaks about the grim reality of racism which exacerbated the class distinction in 80s Britain, the advent of Thatcherism led to the fading of socialism, and the beginning of globalisation and the rise of capitalism in Britain. I also examine the scenario of Asian male-dominated family set-up, father-son relationship, and use of Gothic elements in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* where a surrealistic atmosphere is maintained through the appearance of a one-eyed, bandaged and smashed head apparition visible to Rafi which becomes a source of perplexity for him and haunts his subconscious mind with his guilt and remorse time and again. Similarly, *My Beautiful Laundrette* showcases the practice of witchcraft by Bilquis to split her husband Nasser and his mistress Rachel. These supernatural elements in Kureishi's works have not been covered so extensively before.

Apart from these texts, my research also takes into account Kureishi's notable essays and notes such as "The Rainbow Sign", "The Road Exactly", "Sex and Secularity", and "Dreaming and Scheming". Although these works of Kureishi have been less explored,

however, they have been a major support to establish the arguments for my chapters besides his major novels and screenplays. For instance, I included the essay "The Rainbow Sign", in the chapter, "Representation of Islam", to substantiate my main argument because Kureishi profoundly speaks about Islam in this essay. He writes about his experience on his visit to Pakistan where he finds his exposure to Islam, he also encounters the Afghani people in the Pak-Afghan border where he comes across anti-Western sentiments, and he also interacts with a lawyer who talks about good Muslim. I discovered Kureishi's concept about Islam from this essay and analysed how this concept is reflected in the novel *The Black Album*. I have equally taken into account the novel, the essay and the memoir of Ed Hussain to frame the chapter, "Representation of Islam" which has not been explored so intensively by any other researchers before.

Similarly, I have linked Kureishi's construction of the character of Changez, in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, who represents the young Asian mindset about immigration to Britain. Kureishi mentions in the essay "Sex and Secularity" where he, at a party in Pakistan, encounters a visitor whose curiosity about Britain is quite remarkable when he says that in Britain there is free sex and security which is not possible in Pakistan. I have linked the other essay like "The Road Exactly" which portrays the struggle and hope of the lower working-class immigrants such as Parvez in the screenplay *My Son the Fanatic.* I have also derived the ideas from the essay "Dreaming and Scheming", the Introduction in *London Kills Me,* Kureishi's Diary, "Some Time with Stephen", published in *London Kills Me* to substantiate my arguments in the thesis on the major works of Kureishi.

1.2.1 Representation of Immigrant Female Folks in Kureishi's Works.

In Kureishi's works, the Asian immigrant female characters are often held back in the background and are not equally involved as the male characters in building the plots. The immigrant female characters such as Tania and her mum Bilquis in *My Beautiful*

Laundrette, Minoo in *My Son the Fanatic*, Zulma in *The Black Album*, and Jamila and her mother Jeeta in *The Buddha of Suburbia* are subaltern in the way they are represented in Kureishi's works. However, Jamila and Zulma are the only strong defiant female figures among them. But interestingly, most of them are one way or the other, subjugated and victimized by the patriarchal ideologies of the first-generation Asian male immigrants. The first-generation female immigrants such as Minoo and Bilquis, and Jeeta are brought to Britain as carers of their families and dependant on their husbands. Kavita Puri records the experiences of the first-generation women immigrants as dependant on their husbands in an interview, "Many of the women came in the 60s once the men had decided to settle here (Britain)" (Puri, 2014). They are completely cut off from the outside world. They live a very constrained and limited life in their own family which can be categorized that they are double migrated. In the end, all of them seem to be revolting to break the shackles of patriarchy and live an independent life. Second-generation immigrant female characters such as Jamila and Tania, because of their upbringing in the Western values similar to most second-generation male characters, remain defiant and un-submissive from the beginning of their life. This attitude results in clashes between the first and second-generations in different stages of life.

1.3. The Context of Colonialism and Postcolonialism.

As my research centres around postcolonial aspects of the author, Hanif Kureishi, and his works, so it is vital to reflect on colonialism to situate the context of postcolonialism. The word 'colonialism' derives from the Roman word, 'colonia' which means 'farm' or 'settlement.' The Roman word çolonia' referred to those Romans who settled in other countries but retain their citizenship with their home country. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'Colonialism' as,

> a settlement in a new country… a body of people who settle in a new locality, forming a community subject to or connected with

> their parent state; the community so formed, consisting of the original settlers and their descendants and successors, as long as the connection with the parent state is kept up (*Oxford English Dictionary*).

After the era of colonialism, the existence of the colonies is marked by an obscure sense of survival, living on the borderlines of the 'present', for which there seems to be no proper term other than the current and controversial shiftiness of the prefix 'post': like postcolonialism, postmodernism, postfeminism… (Bhabha, 2004:1). The word 'postcolonial' can be written without any hyphen or as 'post-colonial' with a hyphen. Historians consider 'post-colonial' to refer to a period of taking control of administrative power after a country or state or people gain independence from European colonial powers. Thus, the term is used mostly for political purposes rather than in literary, cultural or historical contexts. The field of 'Postcolonial Studies' tends to cover literary, cultural and sometimes anthropological studies from the time a certain region was first colonized. The studies are also concerned with the subsequent interaction of the cultures, languages, and traditions between the colonized and the colonizer. Furthermore, the analysis of those interactions acknowledges the importance of power relations in that cultural exchange, - the degree to which the colonizer imposes and the degree to which the colonized people are ready to accept, resist or subvert that imposition (Innes, 2007:1-2). A significant amount of work has been done by the colonized authors during the colonial or postcolonial era which is mainly concerned with depicting long-time oppression, exploitation, and slavery at the hands of the colonizers. These authors intend to celebrate their indigenous cultures and narrate their stories of colonial encounters and their consequences which depict a universal psychological clash and also set a historical understanding of the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized. The concept of postcolonial studies is not limited to any particular geographical area or location, rather it is unique because of its distinct nature, style and context. Thus, contemporary

postcolonial literary studies become a combination of Commonwealth literary studies, Black studies and Third World studies: African, Asian, and Caribbean authors are widely read in Britain; Third World studies and Black studies are parts of university study programmes in America (Innes, 2007:4-5). Further, Innes tries to elaborate on the concept of postcolonial literature in a broader sense. According to Innes, some critics describe the concept of postcolonial literature in several phases such as literature of resistance; literature of national consolidation; literature of disillusion and/or neocolonialism; post-postcolonial literature; and diaspora literature (Innes, 2007: 17).

In the context of colonialism or colonial rule of Britain over an undivided India before independence from British rule, postcolonialism is a term that conceptualises or states the aftermath of colonialism in a particular context and time period. The influence of postcolonialism is not only restricted to the colonised nations but to the nation of the colonial master as well. The consequences of postcolonialism in the colonised nations are visible when they start adopting and mimicking the lifestyles of their colonial masters. In the context of the Indian subcontinent, the impact of the British Raj is visible when the Indians adopt Englishness. They become Anglophiles in most aspects of their life: ranging from their costumes, food habits, language, culture, music, education and politics. In the land of the colonisers, the impact of postcolonialism is seen in a more distinct way with the colonisers adopting the culture of colonised people such as love for Eastern food habits, yoga, and values. The irony in relation to the act of mimicking each other (coloniser and colonised) lies in the fact that when a colonised person follows the coloniser's culture or lifestyle, the person mimics the Western values which stand out as superior to the Eastern lifestyle and values. Interestingly, when a coloniser embraces the Eastern lifestyle, culture or values, it is considered a result of globalization or it creates a multicultural society. It is never considered a clash of superiority and inferiority complex.

1.4. Situating Hanif Kureishi in the Context of Postcolonialism.

Helen Gilbert defines Post colonial as the term signifying a degree of resistance against Western cultural domination… "Post colonial has become a convenient term to describe any kind of resistance particularly against class, race and gender oppression" (Gilbert, 2008:214). The postcolonial literature is mostly dominated by the themes of nationalism, struggle for independence from the colonial rules, demonstrating patriotism, celebrating local and tribal cultures and identities, and conflict between Western modernisation and native traditions. Most of the writings of the Indian authors who wrote in the aftermath of colonisation are mainly dominated by the themes of native traditions, cultures, rituals, and beliefs. They are also called Commonwealth writers because of their distinct content and theme which incorporate the literature produced by the writers having their roots in the former British colonies. The works produced by these Commonwealth writers, though varied in content and form, have a similar nationalistic tone of patriotism, colonial exploitation of the British etc. Towards the last decades of the twentieth century, some postcolonial writers became more experimental with their narrative modes and themes by mixing different genres. An author like Hanif Kureishi being a person of color chooses a different mode of writing in which he explains the life and challenges of the multi-ethnic Asian immigrants in Britain. Instead of focusing on stereotypical themes such as patriotism, nationalism, and the struggle for independence like the above-mentioned writers of Indian origin, Kureishi draws on different themes and subject matters particularly the experience of the black Asian immigrants living in the land of the colonisers. On the one hand, his subject matter includes racism, ethnic identity, economic challenges, and political deprivation in the 80s and 90s Britain. But on the other hand, Kureishi's works also include perspectives which are also very important in English life that including the feminist movement, gay and lesbian movements, art, music, and popular culture in the same period. A critic like Bradley Buchanan observes Kureishi's

works in a different way which according to him, "… the 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 emergence of gay and lesbian movements, and the institutionalization and commercialization of youth culture and popular music as well as an increased postmodern awareness of the arbitrariness and contingency of identity [be it racial, religious, or culture] (Buchanan, 2007:14).

Moreover, Kureishi also sets himself apart from other postcolonial writers in his efforts to attract both the audiences from the colonisers and colonised which in this case are the white British audiences and the immigrants from the Asian subcontinent. In his works, being an Asian author from a minority community, he successfully generalises his own experience of the cultural 'in-betweenness' faced by millions of migrants and their descendants the world over - and, more specifically, by those who have gravitated from the non-Western world to the great cities of the West (Gilbert, 2001:17). The uniqueness of Kureishi's works lies in the fact that he is writing from within the centre of the coloniser's land and becomes a very part of it. His writings incorporate a wider context of themes and subject matters as he equally takes into account the larger British context along with the Asian perspectives. Literary scholars such as Susie Thomas also expresses a similar opinion about Kureishi when comparing him with other contemporaries. She says, "Unlike Salman Rushdie …. Or … V.S. Naipaul … [Kureishi] is not a displaced postcolonial writing *back* to the centre; he writes *from* the centre" (Thomas, 2005:1). Apart from exploring the struggle of the ethnic minorities in the multicultural British society, Kureishi characteristically attempts to address the tension between the dominant white culture and the subdued minority cultures and to imagine new kinds of synthesis or complementarity or linkage which might lead to greater mutual understanding and harmony than has often been the case in British race relations, particularly since the

1970s… a consistent premise of his writing has been that for inter-cultural relations to be improved, the ignorance of the dominant culture about the new minorities must be addressed and dispelled (Gilbert, 2001:21). But the opposite also cannot be neglected because the Asian immigrants are also ignorant or possess very little knowledge about the culture of their British counterparts. Kureishi as a cultural translator or a narrator plays an important role to fill the gap between the British and the Asians by telling stories about the new British communities to interpret one side to the other. This kind of attempt on Kureishi's part as an author would enable the marginalisation of racism as a problem to be tackled by society as a whole. Kureishi himself speaks about the problem of racism and marginalisation of the minority community in his own words when he says:

> If contemporary writing which emerges from oppressed groups ignores the central concerns and major conflicts of the larger society, it will automatically designate itself as minor, as a sub-genre. And it must not allow itself to be rendered invisible and marginalised in this way. In a similar fashion, the problem of race in England is in danger of being marginalised, when it must be seen as central (Published journalism by Hanif Kureishi, British Library).

Unlike other postcolonial authors of the subcontinent who mainly focus on the atrocities, discrimination and exploitation of their colonial masters in their homeland, Kureishi stands unique in addressing these issues along with other diverse themes back in the land of the colonisers. Kureishi with the use of his subtle humour highlights issues and experiences of both the white British population as well the Asian immigrants during the 80s and 90s in Britain. Kureishi in his works impartially deals with his characters from both white and non-white backgrounds. In doing so, he tries to delve into and address the complex picture of multicultural Britain wherein racism and class distinction played an important role in determining the lives of both whites and non-whites in that particular era. Kureishi observes very minutely the reasons for racism and discrimination faced by Asian immigrants living in Britain. Kureishi analyses that their struggles and frustrations

are partly due to their inability to integrate and assimilate themselves into mainstream British society and partly due to their failure to separate themselves from their legacy or roots of their homeland. So, their hatred and frustrations cannot be seen solely as the outcome of racial discrimination by the whites. The first-generation immigrants were mostly the generation affected by the spatial distance as although they are geographically very far from their homeland but psychologically, they are very close to it whereas the state of most of the second-generation immigrants is more crucial as they are in limbo due to their rootlessness both to their ancestor and homeland.

Moreover, Kureishi also demonstrates how the political crisis, and socio-economic class division among the white working-class population played a very important role in aggravating the hatred and racism against Asian immigrants. The racism of working-class people may stem from their being in more direct competition with immigrant people for housing benefits, jobs, health and education etc. but at the same time, there is very entrenched racism at all levels. Kureishi in his works often writes about socio-economic class, and working-class racism and at the same time lampoons the middle classes.

Kureishi's writing discovers a space of multiculturalism, fashion, popular youth culture, art and music emerging in the 80s and 90s Britain. In doing so like a postcolonial writer he celebrates hybridity and cultural polyvalency, that is, the situation whereby individuals and groups belong simultaneously to one or more than one culture. Buchanan observes that in examining Kureishi's cultural politics carefully, it can be seen that his real allegiances lie with a dynamic youth culture which is capable of cutting across political and class lines in Britain and this phenomenon acts solely as the antidote to class imprisonment (Buchanan, 2007:28). He develops a perspective whereby states of marginality, plurality and perceived 'Otherness' are seen as sources of energy and potential change. Because of the nature of Kureishi's writing which is unique in its cultural and political position in Britain, some critics such as Bruce King do not want to

recognise Kureishi as a postcolonial writer. Bruce King argues in one of his essays, "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" (King, 2005:93). However, because of his dominant themes such as racism, multiculturalism, and challenges of the immigrants from the colonies of Britain, Kureishi might be associated with other postcolonial writers.

1.5 . Defining the Postcolonial Theory under the Realm of Key Proponents: Franz Fanon, Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi K. Bhabha.

The concept of postcolonialism or postcolonial criticism turned out as a distinct category in the 1990s through the influence of books such as *In Other Worlds* (Gayatri Spivak, 1987), *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, 1989), *Nation and Narration* (Homi K. Bhabha, 1990), and *Culture and Imperialism* (Edward Said, 1993). Earlier, the most influential works in the 50s and 60s have been produced in postcolonial studies by a French West Indian psychiatrist and political philosopher, Frantz Fanon. He was a French by birth but West Indian by descent. He published remarkable works early on in the psychological analysis of racism, *Black Skin, White Masks* in 1952 and later his most widely read book, *The Wretched of the Earth* in 1961, which promoted resistance to colonization and native consciousness among the blacks. In *Black Skin, White Masks* Fanon explains the effect of the 'colonial gaze' – of being seen, defined and stereotyped by the European whose culture is deemed to be superior and greater than the African and the Caribbean. European culture is assumed to be the standard through which others should be judged, making all others 'abnormal' and either exotic or inferior or both (Innes, 2007:6). Fanon writes:

> There is a fact: White men consider themselves superior to black men. There is another fact: Black men want to prove to white men

> at all costs, the richness of their thought, the equal value of their intellect. How do we extricate ourselves? (*BSWM*, 1967:10).

In his psychoanalytical study, Fanon tries to highlight the causes of racism and the effects of racism and colonialism on both the colonized and the colonizers and how to overcome those effects. Later in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Fanon continues to study the psychological relationship between the colonized in relation to the colonizers. In order to justify their rule and occupation of the colonized land, the colonizers create and define a 'Manichean Society', which classifies the 'natives' as the opposite of everything the European or the Western represents: civilization, morality, law and order, wholesome masculinity. So, the colonized by default become associated with the other pole in the binary: uncivilized, barbaric, feminine, unable to rule themselves, and superstitious. The 'native' is considered to have no historical monuments, no literature, and hence no history (Innes, 2007:8). Chapter 3 in *The Wretched of the Earth* discusses how the African and Caribbean intellectuals responded to these European stereotypes, first by internalising European views of them and their cultures and showing that they can copy the white man, and behave just like him. In the second stage, these intellectuals observe that they are discriminated against despite their demonstrably equal intelligence and educational attainment. Then they start protesting against this discriminatory treatment, often in terms of the very values which the Europeans have proclaimed and taught- especially equality and justice (Innes, 2007:10). Fanon developed the idea of the elite class or 'comprador' class which he formulated from his study of the psyche of the colonised affected by the colonial domination. This comprador class compromised their own values to adopt those of the white colonial powers and in that way, as Fanon suggests, they masked their black skin by their complicity (Ashcroft et al. 2007:91*)*. However, Fanon also emphasizes the fact that the reconstruction of a postcolonial society is not possible unless there is a social consciousness among the national liberators about the fact that the pre-colonial society

too was not free from social inequalities due to class and gender formations which needed reformation by radical forces (Ashcroft et al. 2007:91). Although Fanon's theory plays a very fundamental role in fighting the stereotypes of postcolonialism I did not consider his theoretical framework to analyse Kureishi's works, the reason which I briefly discussed below.

Another important central literary and cultural critic in postcolonial studies is Edward Said who was born in Palestine. Unlike Fanon, whose works focused mainly on the relationship between colonizer and colonized in Africa and the Caribbean, Said's work centred around the portrayals of Asia, including India and the Middle East in European-authored literary, historical, and cultural texts. In one of his seminal works, *Orientalism* (1978), Said studies how knowledge is governed and owned by Europeans to reinforce power and to exclude or dismiss the knowledge that natives might claim to have (Said, 1978:199). With references to anthropology, history, linguistics and literary criticism as well as European literary works, Said analyses discourses about how the Orientals are to be viewed and to be governed as they are not capable of self-governing (Innes, 2007:9). He further adds that Orientalism is a concept or thought which is not restricted to any particular geographical area rather it is an idea that according to Innes can be seen as "Western style for dominating, restructuring, having authority over the Orient" (Innes, 2007:9). Said expresses,

> without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage- *and even produce*- the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period … European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self (*O*, 1978:3).

Postcolonial criticism by its nature of undermining the universalist claims of liberal humanist critics once made on behalf of literature rejects the white, Eurocentric norms

and practices that take for granted both the superiority of what is European or Western and the inferiority of what is not. Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* identifies a European cultural tradition of 'Orientalism', which is a particular and long-standing way of identifying the East as other and inferior to the West. In other words, Said further illustrates in this book that the East becomes a repository or projection of those aspects of themselves that Westerners do not choose to acknowledge (cruelty, sensuality, decadence, laziness, and so on). Paradoxically, at the same time, the East is seen as a fascinating realm: the exotic, the mystical and the seductive. It also tends to be seen as homogenous, the people there are considered to be anonymous, undifferentiated masses rather than individuals, their actions determined by instinctive emotions such as lust, terror, fury, etc. rather than by conscious choices or decisions. In Orientalist discourse, the emotions and reactions of the colonized people are always defined by their racial identities as they are no longer considered as individuals but labelled as Indians or black Africans or Eastern. The concept of Orientalism also tackles the universal clash between the Self and the Other which is the obvious outcome of European superiority over the inferior East. According to Said,

> Race theory, ideas about primitive origins and primitive classifications, modern decadence, the progress of civilisation, the destiny of the white (or Aryan) races, the need for colonial territories-all these were elements in the peculiar amalgam of science, politics, and culture whose drift, almost without exception, was always to raise Europe or a European race to dominion over non-European portions of mankind (*O*, 1978: 232).

Said in his book, *Culture and Imperialism* (1994), refers to a link between colonialism and imperialism in his words:

> 'Imperialism' means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory; 'colonialism', which is […] a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on [a] distant territory. [… Colonialism is] almost always a consequence of imperialism (*CI*, 1994: 8-9).

Imperialism is a territorial phenomenon wherein the superior territory controls the inferior or the weaker territory. Colonialism is derived from imperialism wherein the Western supremacy controls the inferior Other or the East. Moreover, in *Culture and Imperialism*, Said affirms Fanon's concept of 'nationalism' as 'critical nationalism' and notes that "[Fanon's] notion was that unless national consciousness at its moment of success was somehow changed into social consciousness, the future would not hold liberation but an extension of imperialism" (*CI*, 1993:323).

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, an Indian (Kolkata) by birth, is another very influential academic and prominent literary critic of postcolonial studies. She is also known as a feminist critic. Her much-applauded works include articles such as "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" (Spivak, 1985) and essays such as 'Can the Subaltern Speak*?*' (Nelson et al. 1988:271-313). Spivak's works mainly deal with the historical movement of the rewriting of history- particularly subaltern history. The word 'subaltern' refers to lower caste people or those who are not part of the upper class or the ruling class population. Subaltern history refers to the history of these lower-class people- those who are subordinated by the dominant class. As a result, subaltern histories might deal with the suppressed and oppressed groups- perhaps the working class, perhaps women, perhaps members of a lower caste. It can be assumed that Spivak was influenced by the concept of the subaltern from the feeling of suppression of lower caste by the upper caste people because during that time the study of subaltern groups has always been very predominant in India (Innes, 2007:11). The caste system in India divides Hindus, the majority of the population of India, into four rigid hierarchical groups based on their definition of work and duty. The system has existed in Indian society for more than 3000 years and dictated almost every aspect of Hindu religious and social life, with each group living in their particular segregated colonies trapping people into fixed social orders. Upper caste Brahmins, who are supposed to be the intellectuals or rulers, for instance,

would not touch or accept food and drink from the lower caste Shudras who are considered servants in the society. The caste system in India rested many privileges on the upper caste and sanctioned repression of the lower caste by the privileged groups. (What is India's caste system?, BBC News, 2019).

In the context of postcolonialism, Spivak's context of subaltern can be applied to the 'colonized' as the subaltern or lower class and the colonial masters as the dominant or upper class. In terms of immigrants in Britain, the black Asian immigrants are considered to be subalterns or the oppressed ones and the whites are supposed to be the superior and ruling class. Spivak formulated this concept of subaltern or the lower-class people from the Indian caste system where this suppressed class fight to gain their basic human rights which they are deprived of but not for the establishment of their identity. Unlike the lower-caste people in India where they fight for rights; in Britain, the black Asian immigrants struggle to form their identity, make their voice heard, and prove their existence come to the fore.

1.6 **Homi K Bhabha and Key Application of his Concepts of Postcolonial Theory on Kureishi**.

The fourth critic and cultural theorist in the field of postcolonial studies is Homi K Bhabha, an Indian by birth in Mumbai, whose work is highly influential and frequently quoted in the discussion of postcolonial literary and cultural theory. With reference to the psychoanalytical theory of Freud and Lacan, Bhabha explains the key concepts of his postcolonial theory which are 'mimicry', 'ambivalence', 'hybridity' and the 'state of third space' in representing the dichotomy of the coloniser and the colonised.

1.6.1 Bhabha's Concept of Mimicry and the state of Ambivalence within the process of Mimicry.

In defining mimicry, Bhabha states,

> … mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal. Mimicry is, thus the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which 'appropriates' the Other as it visualizes power. Mimicry is also the sign of the inappropriate, however, a difference or recalcitrance which coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensifies surveillance, and poses an immanent threat to both 'normalized' knowledges and disciplinary powers (*LoC*, 1994:122-23).

Bhabha argues that mimicry of the colonizers by the colonized subjects can be a form of subversion. The West has always regarded and propagated their art, culture, lifestyle, education and language as superior to the East and expected the East to imitate them. As such, Mimicry may be one of the obvious goals for the colonizers to be applied to the colonised nations which can be illustrated by Lord Macaulay's 1835 *Minute to Parliament* when he advocated the education policy for India to teach them English art and learning through English literature. He suggested a method by which a mimicry of European learning should be achieved through a class of interpreters between the ruling class or the colonisers and the millions of colonized sections. This class of interpreters are those who although belonging to the colonised sections of society but served the colonisers. Similarly, the line of descent of the mimic man can be traced through the works of Kipling, Forster, Orwell, and Naipaul (Bhabha, 1994:125). Ralph Singh's apostasy in Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* (1967) is an example of an inappropriate colonial subject in these words:

> We pretended to be real, to be learning, to be preparing ourselves for life, we mimic men of the New World, one unknown corner of it, with all its reminders of the corruption that came so quickly to the new (*MM*, 1967:146).

Bhabha describes this desire to emerge as authentic through mimicry- through a process of writing and repetition- is the final irony of partial representation (Bhabha, 1994:126).

Mimicry, in post-colonial theory, plays an important role as it describes the ambivalent relationship between the colonizers and the colonized subjects. When the colonizers encourage the colonized subjects to mimic them by copying their culture, lifestyle, art, institutions, and values, the result is not simply a reproduction of those traits but rather a 'blurred copy' which can be quite threatening and subversive because mimicry of the colonizers may turn them into a subject of potential mockery (Ashcroft et al. 2007:125). Mimicry, therefore, reveals a flaw in the certainty of colonial dominance and an uncertainty in its control of the behaviour of the colonized (Ashcroft et al. 2007:125). The colonised subjects like Macaulay's interpreters or Naipaul's character Ralph Singh in the novel *The Mimic Men* may be appropriate objects of the colonial chain of commands, but they are also inappropriate colonial subjects because what is being set in motion in their behaviour is something that may ultimately be beyond the control of the colonial authority. This inappropriateness brings out the threat inherent in mimicry disturbing the normality of the dominant colonial discourse as the mimicking colonial subjects come out with the resistance in the form of an identity not quite like the colonisers, which can be said, "almost the same, but not white" (Bhabha, 1994:128) because mimicry can be both ambivalent and menacing. In other words, the inability to imitate the colonisers completely by adopting a Western lifestyle, values, language, and culture by ignoring their own roots purges them into ambivalence and consequently they become vulnerable and subjects of mockery. In this complex and critical situation, they struggle to find a new sense of identity and belonging in the land of colonisers which can be potentially insurgent. For instance, Kureishi's characters such as Haroon in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Chad in *The Black Album* and Parvez in *My Son the Fanatic* fit into Bhabha's subjects of mimicry. Haroon is compelled to mimic Buddhism in order to get recognition and fit into

British society. But till the end, he remains a charlatan and a subject of mockery for the English people. Parvez, although educated in an Islamic school and raised up in a conservative society, diverts away from his cultural roots or religious ideology. He starts adoring and mimicking the Western lifestyles and wants the same for his son Farid or Ali to follow up. But his son revolts back and identifies with what his father Parvez has already abandoned. In this case, Parvez's son mimics the colonised Other which is menacing for both of them. Chad's mimicry of Western, as well as Eastern values, is the consequence of his previous adverse racial experience. His act of mimicry is not of his choice but is the consequence of his unacceptance in society. He is denounced by the whites because of his race and color, and is castigated by the East because of his upbringing in the English set-up. The failure of acceptance in society leads him into a state of ambivalence which intimidates him to join Riaz who provides him with a sense of belongingness. These characters of Kureishi in their desire to mimic the colonial or the coloniser undergo a stage of ambivalence in which according to Bhabha, "the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an 'ambivalence'; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference" (Bhabha, 1994:122).

However, Bhabha states that mimicry does not always mean directly copying the 'Other', in this case, is the 'West'. According to Bhabha, the discourses of language, enunciation and subjectivity which state that communication cannot be achieved completely as there always remains a gap between what is uttered and what is perceived. The concept of colonial mimicry, thus, in Bhabha's point of view is "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (Bhabha, 1994:122). The discourse of mimicry is very much crucial because the reproduction of mimicry of the colonizers by the colonized subjects is "stricken by an indeterminacy: mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal" (Bhabha, 1994:122). He also emphasises the fact that it is never

possible to create a replica of any work because there is always an impact on the context in which the work is produced. Consequently, the representation of colonial subjects in its entirety is not achieved and thus it becomes 'hybrid' and 'ambivalent' when it is reproduced (Bhabha, 1984:125-133).

Bhabha adopted the term 'ambivalence' to describe this complex situation of attraction and repulsion of the British culture and lifestyle. It is defined as ambivalent when a colonized subject can never completely resist the colonizer. Kureishi in his works tries to demonstrate the impact of society on the individual and how the colonized subjects are mixed up in the ambivalence of colonial discourse and inflected by other cultures.

1.6.2. Bhabha's Concept of Hybridity.

Bhabha's 'hybridity' discusses the rise of new transcultural forms caused by the impact of colonization. He focuses on the colonizer-colonized relations, their interdependence and the mutual construction of subjectivities. For him, cultural deviations, codes and systems have been constructed in a space which he calls the 'Third Space of Enunciation' (Bhabha, 1994:37). It is an incongruous and ambivalent space in which cultural identity always comes out. According to Bhabha, this cultural identity formed in the contradictory and ambivalent space is untenable because the recognition of this ambivalent space of cultural identity empowers hybridity by overcoming the exotic aspect of cultural diversity. In Bhabha's words,

> It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory … may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the *diversity* of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's *hybridity* (*LoC*, 1994:38).

According to Innes, Bhabha like Said and Spivak, "celebrates the hybridity of postcolonial cultures, seeing their embrace of European as well as indigenous traditions

as a positive advantage which allows their writers and critics to understand and critique the West as both insiders and outsiders" (Innes, 2007:12).

However, the use of the concept of hybridity in the post-colonial discourse has also been criticised because of its association with cross-cultural exchange and also because of its propensity of neglecting the inequality and imbalance of the power relations it refers to. The importance of hybridity lies in the fact that it is not simply the product of cultural assimilation or cross-cultural exchange. Rather, it is a discreet and distinct identity formed in the 'in-between' space. Critics such as Aijaz Ahmad, Benita Parry, and Chandra Talpade Mohanty have criticised Bhabha's concept of hybridity on the ground that this concept does not take into account the "specific local differences" (Ashcroft et al. 2007:109). Kureishi's character Karim in *The Buddha of Suburbia* is both biologically and culturally hybrid because of his biracial origin. He tries to embrace both the Western as well as the Eastern culture but fails to adopt either of them completely. He is rejected by the whites because of his skin colour and he is unable to fit into his own cultural heritage because of his Western upbringing. This psychological complexity of attraction and repulsion leads him towards ambivalence and makes him a hybrid character in the novel. Since this nature of ambivalence is not a fixed identity, so during this state, his sexual identity fluctuates and remains fluid as he goes on sexual adventures with his boyfriend Charlie and at the same time, he maintains his sexual relationship with his girlfriends, Jamila and Helen. Omar in *My Beautiful Laundrette* is also a hybrid character because of his mixed cultural upbringing in the Western society. His character is projected in such a way that he takes care of his workless father and looks after other household chores like any other Asian dutiful child and simultaneously he joins hands with Johnny, to set up his own business, who along with other friends racially abused him in the past. With Johnny, Omar discovers his homosexual identity. This homosexual relationship

transfers them into the third space where they make love in the bathtub inside the laundrette.

1.6.3. Bhabha's Concept of Liminality and the creation of Third Space.

The concept of liminality in post-colonial theory comes from the word 'limen' which is a psychological term meaning threshold or limit. Bhabha derives the concept of liminality from American art historian Renee Green's characterization of a stairwell which is a "liminal space, a pathway between upper and lower areas, each of which was annotated with plaques referring to blackness and whiteness" (Bhabha, 1994:4) to signify how it becomes a point of symbolic interaction. This liminal space restricts the identities or subjectivities from associating with any arbitrary designations such as 'black' and 'white' or 'rich' and 'poor' or 'West' and 'East'.

Bhabha's liminality is an important aspect of post-colonial theory as it describes an 'in-between' space wherein the exchange of cultures takes place. It also describes the transcultural space wherein there is a continual process of movement and interchange between different states such as personal or communal self-hood. For example, a colonized subject may not simply move from a colonial discourse to a non-colonial identity but will have to go through a liminal space wherein the colonized subject is to encounter a process of engagement, contestation, and appropriation (Ashcroft et al. 2007:117). Further Bhabha states that there is a co-relation between liminality and hybridity as an "interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (Bhabha, 1994:4). Kureishi's character Anwar in *The Buddha of Suburbia* is struggling to identify him with either the East or the West. There are no fixities in his character and he is psychologically so unstable that he on one side desperately misses his home country

but on the other side, he longs to go to Las Vegas for gambling. He also practices the Gandhian principle of non-violence and simultaneously indulges in a hunger strike to force his daughter Jamila to marry of his choice. This fluidity of his character drives him to form his own liminal space for his psychological stability. This liminal space leads him toward his comfort zone which can be specified as the third space of enunciation in Bhabha's theoretical term. Similarly, Shahid in *The Black Album* is in psychological limbo when he swings back and forth between different mental states. Shahid's adverse childhood racial experience at school often inclines him to find his liminal space by putting down his thoughts secretly in his diary. This liminal space has been threatened by his Papa as he wants Shahid to be a businessman and not a writer. Shahid lacks stereotypical fixity in his character which makes him ambivalent. Because of this nature, he vacillates between Deedee and Riaz. Since this ambivalence is not a fixed state, he, when in the company of his romantic love Deedee, desperately misses the spiritual guidance and teachings of Riaz or the serenity of the mosque; but when he is with Riaz and his group for religious teachings, he longs to go back to Deedee for his sexual gratification.

The concepts of liminality, hybridity and third space or in-between space are very much correlated to each other as one follows the other. When a person is not able to identify oneself with a particular arbitrary designation, the person is stuck in an in-between state, this in Bhabha's term called a liminal space. The person makes certain codes to psychologically fit into this space and creates a concrete identity which leads the person to a third space. This complexity and the state of ambivalence in the later stage turn them into hybrid characters.

1.6.4 Why Bhabha stands out among the other Postcolonial Proponents in the Context of Kureishi.

The research mainly intends to apply Homi K. Bhabha's post-colonial critical theory to the works of Hanif Kureishi as Bhabha's key concepts of postcolonialism such as hybridity, ambivalence, liminality, third space of enunciation, and mimicry appropriately defines the complexities of characters of Kureishi. Bhabha's key concepts of theory have potentially originated within the context of colonialism and postcolonialism in the Indian subcontinent. The research applies Bhabha's theoretical approach to Kureishi because of the distinct political and geographical backgrounds of his characters. Bhabha developed his theoretical concepts keeping in mind the dominance of British colonialism of its subjects in the Indian subcontinent. Similarly, Kureishi as an Asian immigrant author projects the characters in his works who are the subjects of former British colonies living in Britain. In my research, other proponents of postcolonial theories such as Fanon, Spivak, and Said are kept in the periphery for the background of their theoretical references. Fanon and Said derive their concepts of postcolonial theory from the perspective of black and white, the superiority of the European culture over the African and Caribbean culture, and 'East' as 'Other' or inferior to the West. This can be universally applied to Kureishi as an author but it would be insufficient to analyse the individual character as a whole. Similarly, Spivak who is also a postcolonial theorist develops her concept from the perspective of the class and caste system prevalent in the Indian Hindu society, which recognised a particular section of society to be domineering and the rest of the majority to be suppressed. This may be applicable to Kureishi's works when they are seen in the context of natives and non-natives where natives are the white British and non-natives are the Asian immigrants or blacks. However, it cannot be applicable to analysing the characters' racial backgrounds. In the Indian context, the fight of the lower-class Hindus is mainly for their basic rights in the society and not for their

identities as they are exploited by the upper section of society of their class and not on the basis of their colour. Unlike the struggle of the Indian lower sections of society, Kureishi's characters in Britain are mainly struggling for their racial and ethnic recognition and establishing identities in a wider white supremacist perspective.

1.7 Hanif Kureishi: A Distinguished Author among his Contemporaries.

Kureishi's writings, in many ways, are unique and distinct from the other British writers or authors of Asian descent in Britain. Although born and raised in Britain and a son of mixed Asian-English parents, his works do not just revolve around a particular theme or context. Rather his works are about more versatile themes which reflect the changes in Britain's popular culture with the shift from the drab restraints of the Victorian era, the Second World War and its economic and political crisis to the emergence of the Beatles and Bowie in culture, fashion and music in the 70s, 80s and 90s. His works also focus on some of the emerging and darker issues of post-war Britain such as racism, challenges of the multi-ethnic immigrants, identity and class politics, and socio-economic crises affecting the natives and non-natives equally in Britain. Although authors like Monica Ali who was also born and brought up in Britain as Kureishi himself, her subject matters, themes, and characters in her works are not as diverse and extensive as Kureishi. For instance, Monica Ali's debut novel, *Brick Lane* (2003) equally takes into account the lives of working-class people in Bangladesh as well as the working-class Bangladeshi immigrants living in Britain. She tries to compare the lives and challenges of the women working in the cloth factory in Bangladesh and those living in Great Britain. Moreover, there is not a single white character in this novel, whereas, in Kureishi's writings, the white and non-white characters are equally significant and dependent on each other. He writes from within British society and it is very difficult to distinguish the importance of the role played by the whites and the black Asians in his works. For instance, in *The*

Buddha of Suburbia, Eva (a white character) plays an important role alongside Haroon (a black Asian British) in the novel. The portrayal of their relationship remains a focal point in the course of the novel when keeps unfolding. The same degree of mixed racial relationship can also be assumed for Omar and Johnny in *My Beautiful Laundrette* or Bettina and Parvez in *My Son the Fanatic* or Shahid and Deedee in *The Black Album*.

Kureishi has established himself as a cultural spokesman for immigrants in Britain, especially for the Asian immigrant community. He began writing, plays and screenplays in the 1980s. He moved towards writing prose in the 1990s, considering that writing novel would be a superior form to explore one's creative possibilities. Kureishi's artistic creativity is shown in his first novel, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, through a number of postmodern narrative techniques- the use of his humour, paradoxes, inter-textuality, multiple voices, irony, and pornographic illustrations, which brings out the beauty of his narration. The novel also represents the characters' unstable sense of truth, identity, and the self which is beautifully constructed by his narration (Foss, 2016). As a novelist, playwright and author of screenplays he has recurrently tackled the questions of racial prejudice, and the formation of subjectivity and explored the irresolvable tensions between the middle-class immigrants who are socially and culturally marginalized; and the white British population who see their socio-economic status, cultural prestige and national identity challenged by immigrant populations from the British ex-colonies. Kureishi in his works also projects the contrast between the lifestyles of the Asian immigrants living in Britain and their lives back in their home country.

In dealing with the coloniser and colonised subjects, Kureishi, unlike many colonial authors, is writing from the land of the colonisers. His subject matters address racism, violence, discrimination, and exploitation faced by immigrants in Britain. Many colonial authors also address similar concerns faced by the colonised in their homeland at the hands of the colonisers. In the context of his works, Kureishi brings forward the fact that

the atrocities and exploitations of the colonisers towards the colonised are not limited to any geographical location, rather it's a universal clash of the whites and the non-whites, East and West, or Self and Others. In doing so, Kureishi emerges as a subaltern author who voices the black Asian minority community from the land of the colonisers. Apart from this, his works also explore the identities of colonisers and colonised in a unique manner when they try to influence each other by exploring homosexuality, beliefs, and cultural identities. For instance, Kureishi represents the homosexuality of Karim and Charlie in *The Buddha of Suburbia* or Omar and Johnny in *My Beautiful Laundrette* where they discover their sexual identity in each other. The belief in Buddhism from the East brings Haroon and Eva closer and inspires each other to rise in the socio-economic class. Similarly, the relationship between Rafi and Alice in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* represents a cross-cultural colonial nostalgia. This cross-cultural nostalgia of their relationship is a residue of colonialism which Kureishi uniquely presents in this work.

1.8 Significance of the Title of the Chapters in the Research.

Kureishi as a creative writer has dealt with multiple facets and themes in his works covering a time period of the 80s and 90s. His works outspokenly tackle the violent picture of racism, depiction of multicultural Britain, social and economic calamities after the loss of empire and the post-war crisis, identity formation, gender and sexuality. The other major themes include the advent of popular music, art, and culture, belongingness and formation of British identity, changing political scenarios, relationships, religious identity, and many more. From these themes, the contention of my research chose the following chapters to explore Kureishi's selected works more specifically and extensively.

1.8.1 The Chapter on Kureishi's Representation of Islam in his works.

Kureishi's novel *The Black Album* and screenplay *My Son the Fanatic* mainly deal with Islamic extremism and fanaticism during the 90s in Britain. These works of Kureishi were

influenced by the aftermath of the publication of Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* in 1988 which saw mass protests and violence around the world. The content of Rushdie's book is considered controversial as it questions Islamic monotheism and disrespectfully presents the prophet Muhammad and his family. It even claims the authenticity of some of the verses of the Holy Quran as descended from the devil instead of God which is why the then supreme leader of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini, had issued the fatwa of blasphemy against Rushdie. This stirred a mass level of protest by the Muslims, especially among the young Asian Muslims in major cities like Bolton, Birmingham, Bradford, and London in Britain. The protesters indulged in many violent and anti-social activities such as burning the novel, *The Satanic Verses*, issuing threats to the publishers of this book, and some of the bookstores were threatened to firebomb and destroy in Britain as well as in other countries (Borger, 2022).

Kureishi who considered himself an atheist suddenly became curious to know about Islam because of the fanatic reactions of Muslims around the world to the publication of *The Satanic Verses*. This led him to research Islam from various sources such as mosques, and discussions with young Muslims. He also tried to acquire knowledge about Islam from anti-Western Afghans in the Pak-Afghan border during his visit to Pakistan. At some point in his writings, he also comments on the verses of the Holy Quran inappropriately and incorrectly. Instead of following the authentic sources of Islam such as the Holy Quran and the teachings of the prophet Muhammad, Kureishi analyses Islam from his personal interactions with ordinary Muslims who possess insufficient or inaccurate knowledge about Islam or are rather misinformed about it as their religious comments are contradictory to the fundamentals of Islam. Moreover, it can be affirmed that their religious comments are mostly influenced by their anti-Western agendas or 'West-hating militant ideologues' (Modood & Ahmad, 2007:190). As a result, Kureishi falls short to represent the true concept of Islam from the theological perspective because of his

reliance on the religious opinions of these ordinary Muslims. It is ironic that Kureishi as an intellectual author and the misinformed common Muslim masses agitating and protesting against *The Satanic Verses* both misrepresent Islam in one way or the other way. This very point of contradiction inspired me to write this chapter on how Islam as a religion has been presented inadequately by Kureishi. For this chapter, I have used Ed Husain's memoir *The Islamist* and the statements of Alyas Karmani and Yasmin Alibhai Brown as supports to build the arguments because these people have much in common with Kureishi's characters from *The Black Album* and *My Son the Fanatic*.

1.8.2 The chapter on the changing dynamics of Multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism has become a very popular and major area of research in humanities in recent years due to the world becoming more global and the rise in immigration especially in Britain. Britain has been a crucial ground for immigration after the Second World War. It is almost impossible to separate Britain from its multicultural aspect because it depends on many outside workforces such as factory workers, building and construction industries, business, NHS staff and many more (Puri, 2014). Multiculturalism has massively changed Britain's political, societal, and economic demography during these years. The changes multiculturalism has brought into Britain have many positive as well as negative consequences on British society. Although multiculturalism has many positive aspects like cultural assimilation including practicing yoga, celebrating festivals such as Diwali, Eid, and Chinese New Year together, trying different foods, and enjoying various arts and music, the flipside of multiculturalism also cannot be ignored. Alongside this, racism, hatred, religious intolerance, and class inequality also emerged in society. This chapter tries to perceive both the pros and cons of multiculturalism reflected in the works of Kureishi and how the gap between both sides of multicultural society can be mitigated through the practice of British values, legislation, and equal opportunities for all which helped to curb racism by celebrating multiculturalism in Britain.

Most of the research on Kureishi's works such as *The Buddha of Suburbia*, *The Black Album*, and *London Kills Me* portray multiculturalism and racism distinctly. The discussion on multiculturalism is mainly based on the emergence of popular culture, fashion, art, music, and food particularly in London because it was the centre of attraction for the immigrants. The critical works on multiculturalism in Britain mainly celebrate the constructive and favourable aspects of multiculturalism or connote the beauty in diversity, unity, togetherness, and celebration. But some of the critical works which deal with racism only present an overview of racist Britain where people are unable to integrate, engage in rioting, carry a sense of hatred against the immigrants, and discrimination, violence, and use of racial slurs against them. It is important to mention that I have intended to analyse racism in Kureishi's works under the backdrop of multiculturalism and have tried to establish a link between multiculturalism and racism in Britain during the 80s and 90s. At this time, racism was very explicit and overwhelming. The chapter on Multiculturalism in my research tries to emphasize how race, color, and identity were affected by the emergence of multiculturalism. It also tackles various facets of multiculturalism throughout the post-war period of Britain and how the concept of multiculturalism has undergone changes with the changing socio-political and economic scenario of Britain.

1.8.3 The chapter on the economic, social, and political conditions under the Thatcherite rule.

Most of the research on Kureishi's screenplays *My Beautiful Laundrette* and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* investigate gender identity, queer theory, and entrepreneurship but my chapter mainly discusses these screenplays from the point of view of Margaret Thatcher's political, social, and economic policies during her rule and fading socialism in Britain in the 80s. The rule of Margaret Thatcher as a prime minister is a landmark in British politics because of her exceptional economic and social policies which created a disparity in

society. Thatcher's critical policies and political ideologies, in most cases, were oriented to a certain section of society like business-class people, rich immigrants, and budding entrepreneurs, but the majority of the working-class or under-class people were deprived of economic opportunities (Buchanan, 2007:113-14). As a result, a massive socio-economic gap had been escalated between the poor and rich, it worsened a strong economic class disparity, it also inflamed the existing racism and violence against the immigrants. One of the examples of forcibly ousting the illegal city dwellers for the sake of industrialization in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* is noteworthy to analyse Thatcher's unfair economic policy aimed to benefit a particular section of society by depriving the other section of society. Apparently, Kureishi's screenplays *My Beautiful Laundrette* and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* have been created as a criticism of Thatcher's policies. My chapter investigates how Thatcher's social and economic policies created opportunities for a handful section of society irrespective of whites or non-whites, and how the rich became richer and the poor became poorer due to her policies. As a consequence, a section of the lower working class or the underclass young generation was forced to live a life of meaninglessness, poverty and unemployment which made them vulnerable to drug dealing, burglary and other anti-social activities. Moreover, this uncertainty and insecurity of life inclined them towards racism, hatred, and jealousy against the economically successful immigrants during this time period.

1.8.4 **The Chapter on the Clash of Cultures and of Generations between First and Second Generation of Asian Immigrants.**

Kureishi as a second-generation child very closely observes his first-generation counterpart. In his works, he presents a very vivid picture of the relationship between the two generations which may be manifested in the form of a father/son or father/daughter relationship. So far there have been mostly discussions on the father/son relationship in some of the papers on Kureishi, but very little attention has been given to the challenges

faced by the first-generation and second-generation immigrants distinctly in Britain. My chapter intends to address not only the plight of first-generation immigrants but also the challenges faced by second-generation immigrants. Both generations encounter difficulties and challenges in different ways. The first-generation immigrants have a longing for their roots, homesickness, nostalgia, feeling of exile, and alienation. Although they left their home country, ironically, their culture or country did not leave them. They are indeed psychologically very much attached to their home country. Instead, the second-generation immigrants are facing many bitter challenges because their struggle is manifold as, unlike the first-generation immigrants, they have no roots or home to connect with nor are they able to integrate into their host society. They live in limbo as they struggle to assimilate into British society because of their upbringing in a distinct cultural and religious set-up contrasting to their British counterpart. This is a very complex and critical situation which forces them to create their own space or bounds them to live in liminality and become vulnerable which leads them to religious fanaticism or extremism, violence and many other anti-social and anti-national activities. This entire experience of living in Britain as an immigrant extensively affects their relationships both familial and with Britain.

1.9 Kureishi's Forecast: Integration and Assimilation under the Realm of British Values and Challenging the existing Socio-Economic Class System.

It is often believed that Britishness is all about shared values of tolerance, respect and fair play, a belief in freedom and democracy. But in the midst of racial violence in Britain, it is very hard to retain the validity of this practice of Britishness. The concept of Britishness is no more confined to the cultural and culinary symbols of 'fish and chips', English tea or playing Rugby and Football but extended to different multinational cuisines such as Indian curry, Pakistani biryani, Chinese stir-fry etc. As early as 1995, London was no more representing a monolithic culture but a place "Inalienably mixed, suffused with the

pulse of difference" (Young, 1995:2). In the course of debates on defining 'Britishness' there arise two distinct concepts among the general masses, "One group embraces an optimistic, Whiggish account of paradise found: a historic democracy, reinvigorated by its dynamic, creative metropolitan centres; the other group subscribes to a darkly melancholic tale of paradise lost: a former superpower, subsumed by supranational forces and losing touch with its rural English soul" (Andrews & Marinetto, 2010). Finally, it can be established that Britain cannot deny multiculturalism as it had a colonial past with many countries with various cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. This can be further substantiated in Buchanan's words, "No doubt defending his decision to escape this castrating class straightjacket" (Buchanan, 2007:np) Kureishi himself has asserted that "there should be a fluid, non-hierarchical society with free movement between classes' and predicts that 'these classes will eventually be dissolved" (Kureishi, 2002:145).

Kureishi's idea as an author about multicultural Britain is revealed in his autobiographical essay, "The Rainbow Sign", in which he quotes about immigration from Roger Scruton's book, *The Meaning of Conservatism* that "immigration cannot be an object of merely passive contemplation on the part of the present citizenship" (RS, 29). Although the anti-immigration wave permeated the 80s Britain questioning the national identity of the immigrant population, the sense of belongingness cannot be separated from Britishness. Ed Husain in his memoir, *The Islamist*, also proudly identifies himself with Britain, "Britain was our home, we were children of this soil, and no amount of intimidation would change that- we belonged here" (Husain, 2007:2).

The changing political scenario of Britain with the New Labour Government coming to the power during the late 90s ushered in new hope and assurance to eliminate social and political inequalities with the recognition of Britain's multicultural status. The Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain sponsored by the Runnymede Trust and chaired by the political philosopher Bhikhu Parekh recommended Britain gain the

advantage of its rich diversity and realize its full potential as a confident and vibrant multicultural society (30). To mend the violent racist past, the Labour government promised a commitment to make a new country where 'every color is a good color', 'everyone is treated according to their needs and rights', and 'racial diversity is celebrated' (33). Further, the then Prime Minister of Britain, Tony Blair, also upheld the significance of multicultural Britain in combating racial violence and discrimination against immigrants. He insisted:

> This nation has been formed by a particularly rich complex of experiences. …How can we separate out the Celtic, the Roman, the Saxon, the Norman, the Huguenot, the Jews, the Asian and the Caribbean and all the other nations [*sic*] that have come and settled here? Why should we want to? It is precisely the rich mix that has made all of us what we are today (Bhikhu Parekh, 34).

Kureishi in his article, "Knock, knock, it's Enoch", also has a similar undertone in the statement: "But we are all migrants from somewhere, and if we remember that, we could all go somewhere- together" (Kureishi: Knock, knock).

Racism has not been completely eradicated from British society and it is still experienced in and out by the Asian and black immigrants. Although, it is no more exhibited physically or openly like that of the 80s and 90s by the National Front "thugs" (Asthana, 2020), it can be assumed that racism is practised in a very subtle and sophisticated manner. After the Labour Party formed the government in 1997, they adopted policies which promoted the need for a national identity which embraces various cultures, arts, fashions, cuisines and music of immigrants from different countries. Even after decades of adopting measures for combating racism, inequality and injustice through legislation and British Values which are taught from the beginning of primary education, it has not been completely uprooted from British society. Rather it can be criticised as non-viable because of its irrational approach of integrating the immigrants as British citizens without

assimilating them into British society due to the unreachable barriers of class, race, culture, and religion.

1.10 Conclusion.

The thesis undertakes a holistic account of Kureishi's works which cover a range of themes and subjects such as the struggles and experiences of the Asian immigrants in racism inflicted in Britain in the 80s and 90s under the realm of multiculturalism. The research widely exposes how structured racism administered by right-wing politicians as well as the white supremacists threatened the unity and diversity created by multiculturalism. It also broadly presents the ironic representation of Islam by liberal and atheist author, Kureishi, by portraying Islam through the radicalised and extremist characters such as Riaz, Farid or Ali, Chad, and Maulvi who distort Islam according to their needs to establish their identity. The chapter on the representation of Islam throws light on the facts and critically analyses these characters. It also critically highlights Kureishi as an intellectual author who fails to define Islam genuinely or represent it in a true sense as his reflections on Islam are based on the opinions gathered from his interaction with the general Muslim masses. In the course of his writing, Islam has been misrepresented which imparts a negative image of Muslims as well as their religion Islam in British society. The chapter on the Political and Socioeconomic scenario under the Thatcherite Rule traces Kureishi's works in the light of the decline of socialism and the rise of entrepreneurial culture in the 80s and 90s Britain. My contribution in this chapter highlights how, ironically, Thatcher's policies to promote business and entrepreneurship backfired on her anti-immigration agendas. Moreover, in analysing Kureishi's screenplays *My Beautiful Laundrette* and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* wherein I drew evidence about how significantly the socio-economic class structure was reshuffled due to Thatcherism. I have also substantially linked how racial prejudice and discrimination against black Asians have always prevailed among whites by establishing a connection

between the recent killing of a black American George Floyd with the opening scene of *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* where an unarmed lady is shot by a white police officer in her bedroom. In addition to that, how Kureishi makes use of supernatural and gothic elements in these screenplays to create an eerie and mysterious atmosphere against the backdrop of Thatcherism. The chapter on the generation gap between First and Second-Generation Asian Immigrants critically portrays the substantial psychological and cultural disparities represented through the father/son as well as the father/daughter relationship in Kureishi's works. In this chapter, I have applied Bhabha's theoretical concepts of identity formation among both the generations of Asian immigrants.

Chapter: 2

Representation of Islam through the Eyes of a Westernised, Atheist, and Creative Author: Hanif Kureishi with special reference to *The Black Album* and *My Son the Fanatic.*

2.1 Introduction.

This chapter investigates how the concept of Islam has been projected in the works of Hanif Kureishi during the 80s and 90s when religious identities emerge as a shield to counter the prevalent racism, discrimination, and hatred against the South Asian Muslim minorities in Britain. The chapter takes into account how, Kureishi as a Westernized, atheist and creative author reflects on Islam and represents the concept of Islam theologically through his works. It explores and probes the underlying factors that motivate some of the second-generation immigrants in Kureishi's works, who despite being raised in a liberal British society, tend to embrace religious identities or are radicalized. It also researches how first-generation immigrants, despite of their upbringing in a conservative society are often pleased to adopt and practice liberal Western lifestyles in Britain. Finally, it argues how Kureishi's lack of grassroots knowledge of Islam has a paradoxical and satirical impact on his authentic representation of it in his works. In this chapter, my arguments are based on the original sources of Islam: The Holy Quran and the Teachings of the Prophet on one side and on the other side, I include some of the experiences of contemporary intellectuals such as Ed Husain's memoir, *The Islamist* (2007), a renowned journalist Yasmin Alibhai Brown's life experience, and a British filmmaker, TV presenter, and journalist, Mobeen Azhar's article "Salman Rushdie radicalised my generation" (February 2019).

2.2. The Publication of *The Satanic Verses* and the Emergence of a New Breed of Political Islam.

Kureishi, who considers himself an atheist, developed his interest in Islam only after the shocking experience of the Rushdie Affair. The fury and anguish raised among the Muslim minorities in Britain with the publication of Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1988) changed the political, social and religious climate of the late 80s and early 90s Britain. The protest against this controversial novel first started in India even before its publication in Britain (Kaleta, 1998:121). This protest among the Muslims was different from other protests and riots as this novel hurt their religious sentiments and deep belief in Islam. The reaction against the publication of *The Satanic Verses* raised a concern about censorship as many Muslims consider it is an offence to attack or make fun of other cultures and faiths in creative art or literature. Shabbir Akhtar, a Muslim philosopher who became a spokesman for the Bradford Council of Mosques after the book burning wrote in reference to the Rushdie affair, "Self-censorship is a meaningful demand in a world of varied and passionately held convictions. What Rushdie publishes about Islam is not just his business" (Malik, 2009).

Kureishi as a creative writer has always depicted the experience of Asian immigrants in Britain from a broader perspective. But unlike other multi-ethnic writers, his depiction of Asians is unconventional. His characters are not merely tea or curry-makers but are confident, sexually experimental, identity-conscious and always ready to explore race, culture and politics. However, his writing changed the direction after the Rushdie affair which he himself reveals in an interview with Kenan Malik in *Prospect*, "Unlike Salman, I had never taken a real interest in Islam. I come from a Muslim family but they were middle-class – intellectuals, journalists, writers- very anti-clerical. I was an atheist, like Salman, like many Asians of our generation were… The fatwa changed all that. I started

researching fundamentalism. I started visiting mosques, talking to Islamists" (Malik, 2009).

Kureishi observes a sudden change among the Muslim youths in Britain with their growing interest in Islam after the fatwa issued by the Iranian Supreme leader, Ayatollah Khomeini against Salman Rushdie. The young Muslims who are born and raised up in secular Britain turn towards a form of religious belief that rejects the pleasure of freedom in Western society. Instead, they embrace Islam, particularly to the extreme form of Islamic Fundamentalism. Kureishi reveals in his observation in the "Introduction: The Road Exactly" (Kureishi, 1997:vii) that most of the young religious extremists were from Muslim families who had come to make a new life in Britain. But at that time, they often belong to those families in which the practice of religion had fallen into disuse. Kureishi further observes that unlike the second-generation immigrants or his generation, the third-generation immigrants, "… were not interested in pop culture, Bhangra music etc. … they were born and raised in England, yet they rejected the West. They hated it. Boys from Birmingham were burning books from Muslim writers who were making fun of Islam. This wasn't some ancient tradition, anyway. Pretending that this fundamentalism was the only Islam was definitely a modern thing. A kind of repossession of Islam" (Amitava 2001:127-128). Similarly in the same context, Kureishi, in another essay, "Sex and Secularity", compares this kind of Islam to "neo-fascism or even Nazism: an equality of oppression for the masses with a necessary enemy – in this case, "the West" – helping to keep everything in place" (Kureishi, 2011:242). He also explains that in the early 1980s he visited Pakistan for the first time, he considered that extreme Islam or fundamentalism acted as a political ideology trying to fill the space that Marxism and capitalism failed to achieve. Interestingly, it is important to note that the emergence of political Islam or this new breed of Islam, and the publication of *The Satanic Verses* and Khomeini's fatwa against Rushdie gained momentum in the West through its discussion in the media.

Moreover, in the essay, Kureishi overtly describes a relationship between a fundamentalist and a racist; as both are based on the same principle of fantasy. The difference between the East and the West is that the former is religious and the latter is materialistic. Kureishi points out,

> The fundamentalist's idea of the West, like the racist's idea of his victim, is immune to argument or contact with reality. Every self-confessed fundamentalist I have met was anti-Semitic. This fantasy of the Other is always sexual, too. The West is recreated as a godless orgiastic stew of immoral copulation. If the black person has been demonized by the white, in turn, the white is now being demonized by the militant Muslim. These fighting couples can't leave one another alone (Kureishi, 2011:246).

Kureishi analyses the then Islamic movements which emerged especially among the second-generation Muslim immigrant youths who were novices in exploring their religious identity. He presents a vivid picture of the rise of Islamic identity in the 80s and 90s Britain in his works, namely *The Black Album* (1995) and *My Son the Fanatic* (1997). In these works, he also represents a new breed of Islamists whose objectives were more political than spiritual. He presents a kind of Islam which was the outcome of the social and political issues influencing these Muslim youths rather than following the original or the authentic sources of Islam (The Holy Quran and the Teachings of the Prophet). During this time period, Muslim immigrants experience the brutal consequences of racism and violence, both physically and psychologically. Amidst this crisis, religion played an important role to unite these young Muslims and helping them to build a concrete and unified identity against the wrath of racism, violence, hatred, and discrimination. This can be substantiated by Buchanan's statement in his book, *hanif kureishi,* where he says, "Indeed, Kureishi seems to posit that religion can sometimes provide a needed defence for British Asians; as we see in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, the only thing that saves Jamila's husband Changez when he is attacked by racists is 'his Muslim warrior's call'" (Buchanan, 2007:23). There were many instances of the emergence of religious consciousness among

Muslims as an identity in various social as well as educational institutions in the 1980s, such as demanding halal food, time off for religious festivals, demanding for prayer facilities, and Islamic dress code at schools, colleges and in prisons (Ansari, 2002:17). As a result of this, during this time period, religious identity begins to take over the ethnic and racial identity. At this moment, no form of identity is more secure and distinctive than uniting under the umbrella of religious identity which allows many individuals a strong sense of belonging in order to gain recognition and attention in the British society. Kureishi's characters Riaz and his group in *The Black Album* are a typical representation of young Muslims seeking recognition under the badge of religious identity in the British society.

Kureishi's works analyze a number of reasons why young Muslims would identify with religious extremism, among those reasons, racism, discrimination, and socioeconomic and political exclusion from mainstream society are the major ones. Despite the legislation in Britain against racial discrimination for the last four decades, ethnic minorities including Muslims are still victims of racial discrimination. Sometimes Muslims face multiple intersectional discriminations: social injustice, racial as well as religious discrimination. Lacking a strong cultural foundation, and feeling the sting of European apprehension toward Muslim immigrants, many Muslims living in Britain have begun to perceive the society in which they live as discriminatory and racist. For example, despite the fact that most British Muslims view religion to be a dominant factor in their identity, the Race Relations Act of 1976 only recognized "Gypsies, Sikhs and Jews as special 'ethnic groups' and provided them with special racial protection", (Wiktorowicz, 2004) excluding Muslims altogether. Little attention was paid to the Muslim community for their social, political and economic development. The continued focus on culture, identity, ethnicity and religiosity per se takes attention away from alienation, exclusion and disempowerment (Abbas, 2007c:723). Disaffection, disenfranchisement and

isolation are functions of both poorer and richer Muslims, and these are the vital factors to lead either to radicalization (Abbas 2007b:19). Other important factors which motivated the young British Muslims towards religious fanaticism were disempowerment or lack of economic opportunities, exclusion from societal affairs, being a political target for the right-wing politicians etc. Buchanan's observation regarding the young British Muslims' radicalization is notable when he says,

> Kureishi does not, however, ignore the racial prejudices that motivate much Muslim extremism in Britain … the intransigence of working-class racism is underscored when Shahid confronts an angry woman, a denizen of the miserable 'mildewed flats' … who hurls racist epithets at him: Paki! Paki! Paki! … You stolen our jobs! Taken our housing! Paki got everything! Give it back and go back home! (*hanif kureishi*, 2007:23).

Consequently, these vulnerable young Muslims are easily manipulated and convinced to join various radical organizations that represent different ideologies and shrewdly interpret Quran to fulfil their interests. Among them, the most prominent ones in contemporary Britain are Hizb-ut-Tahrir, Jamat-e-Islami, Tabligh and Young Muslim Organization UK (YMO). Kureishi's works *The Black Album*, *My Son the Fanatic* and the essay, "The Rainbow Sign" mainly deal with political Islam; representing Islam as an identity maker, especially for the young Muslim immigrants. Most of the characters in these works have a close resemblance to the active members of the extremist religious organizations operating in Britain. Kureishi very tactfully presents these characters and their ideologies in his works without directly linking them with those organizations to avoid any religious controversies. Kureishi reveals in his talks with Kenan Malik on the "Rushdie Affair" about his visit to the house of Farid Kassim, one of the founders of the British branch of Hizb-ut-Tahrir. He expressed his surprise when he observed, "Four women brought in the food. They came into the room backwards, bent over, so we couldn't see their faces. I have never seen that anywhere else" (Malik, 2009). His

character Farid in the film, *My Son the Fanatic*, can be symbolic with this Farid Kassim especially signalled in the scene of the film where the female members of Farid's household are shown serving maulvi and his group with their veils covering their faces from behind their kitchen with limited exposure. This scene has a resemblance to Kureishi's observation of the four women in Farid Kassim's house.

These different politically motivated religious groups such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir, Jamat-e-Islami, Tabligh and Young Muslim Organization UK (YMO) in Britain departed from the fundamentals of Islam and indeed distorted Islam for the fulfilment of their own political propaganda. Moreover, most of these so-called religious organizations came into prominence in Britain after the fatwa issued by Khomeini against Rushdie and his controversial novel, *The Satanic Verses*.

2.3 The Fundamentals of Islam.

Islam, one of the three major world religions other than Judaism and Christianity, is rooted in the Arab world. The followers of Islam are called Muslims. The word 'Muslim' means the "one who submits" (Maqsood, 1994:1). The very first pillar of Islam is the creed of Islam which establishes that "there is no god but the Almighty, Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah" (Maqsood, 1994:1). The basic concept of Islam is to believe in '*Tawhid*' or 'one-ness' (Maqsood, 1994:2) without any partner. The God, Allah, is the Supreme, the Almighty, the Creator and Organizer of the whole universe with all the beings. He is the creator of Hell, Heaven and the Angels.

The second basic pillar of Islam is the belief in the concept of 'prophecy' (Maqsood, 1994:2). The Almighty sends messengers or revealers to the Mankind with His message. Many of the messengers mentioned in the Holy Quran are already revealed in the previous Holy Books such as the Bible and the Torah. The third basic concept in Islam is to believe in 'life after death' (Maqsood, 1994:2). This Earthly life does not start at birth, but at

whatever stage God chose to create the living soul; this does not finish at 'death', but at whatever stage God chooses to disintegrate that soul, if it is His will. The Almighty reveals His Message to the last prophet, Muhammad; the revelation is collected in the form of a book known as the Holy Quran.

Every Muslim must follow the Holy Quran and the Hadith. The Holy Quran is the Book of Allah sent down to the prophet Muhammad bit by bit over the period of 23 years. The Holy Quran explains the Dos and Don'ts for the entire human being. Followers of the Holy Quran are destined to enter heaven and the nonbelievers are to be punished in hell. Islam teaches that God's revelation has occurred in several forms: in nature, history, and Scripture. God's existence can be known through creation; nature contains "signs" of God, its creator and sustainer (The Noble Quran, 3:26-27). The history of the rise and fall of nations, victory and defeat, provides clear signs and lessons of God's sovereignty and intervention in history (The Noble Quran, 30: 2-9). In addition, God in His mercy determined to reveal His will for humankind through a series of messengers: "And verily, We have sent among every nation a Messenger, saying: 'Worship Allah (Alone), and avoid all false deities'" (The Noble Quran, 16:36) (See also The Noble Quran, 13:7, 15:10, 35:24).

The Hadith, on the other hand, is the record of the traditions or sayings of the prophet Muhammad, revered and received as a major source of religious law and moral guidance, second only to the authority of the Noble Quran. It might be defined as the biography of Muhammad perpetuated by the long memory of his community for their exemplification and obedience. From Hadith comes the Sunnah which literally means, a "well-trodden path" – i.e., taken as precedent and authoritative or directive. Sunnah includes what the Prophet said, what he did, and those actions that he permitted or allowed (John, 2005:80). Tradition in Islam is thus both content and constraint, Hadith as the biographical ground of law and Sunnah as the system of obligation derived from it. The Noble Quran

commands to perform ‘Salah’ (prayer) but does not explain the tenants of prayer: how to pray, the conditions and restrictions of prayer, how many times a day, what time to pray etc. One has to refer to the Hadith or the Sunnah for a complete understanding of the prayer. Similarly, one must have the knowledge and understanding of the ‘Sunnah’ and ‘Hadith’ to observe other major commands from the Noble Quran such as ‘Zakah’ or Islamic Religious Tax, ‘Hajj*’* or Pilgrimage to Makkah, and ‘Sawm’ or Fasting in the month of Ramadhan.

The third pillar of Islam is ‘Zakah’ which means, ‘to thrive, be wholesome, purify’. The Almighty asks the believers to give material help (2.5 per cent) from their surplus money, capital or goods to those less fortunate or poorer than themselves (Maqsood, 1994:75). In the Quran, He says, “Alms are for the poor and the needy, and (to pay) those employed to administer the funds; for those whose hearts have been inclined (towards Islam); for free the captives; and for those in debt; and for Allah’s Cause; and for the wayfarer (a traveller who is cut off from everything); a duty imposed by Allah” (The Noble Quran, Surah 9:60).

The fourth pillar of Islam is ‘Sawm’ which means ‘fasting’. The believers who are physically fit are obliged to observe sawm during the holy month of Ramadhan. Ramadhan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. However, those who are not medically fit are exempted from fasting. The Almighty says in the Holy Quran that the believers must fast so that they may learn self-restraint. Fasting is prescribed for them during a fixed number of days, so that they may safeguard themselves against moral and spiritual ills (The Noble Quran, Surah 2:183-4).

The fifth pillar of Islam is to perform ‘Hajj’ which means “to set out with a definite purpose” (Maqsood, 1994:85) or the pilgrimage to the holy city Makkah. It is mandatory for every adult believer who can afford it, and who is able to go, once in a lifetime

(Maqsood, 1994:85). Those who are in hardship or who have dependants to take care of are excused to perform Hajj. The Hajj takes place in the Arabic month of Dhu'l Hijjah. The Almighty commands in the Holy Quran that it is the duty of all believers towards Him to come to the House a pilgrim, if able to make their way there (The Noble Quran, Surah 3:97).

2.4 Kureishi's Perspective on Fundamentalism and Islamic Radicalization:

2.4.1 *The Black Album*: The Rushdie Affair, A Beginning of Radical Islam in Britain.

Kureishi's second novel *The Black Album,* published in 1995, borrowed its title from an American Recording artist, Prince's music album, "The Black Album" which was released in 1994. However, the conception of this novel was formed after the fatwa imposed by Ayatollah Khomeini on Salman Rushdie's novel, *The Satanic Verses* and in a very subtle manner, Kureishi depicts the persistent experience of the Asian Muslim immigrants to Britain in the 1980s with the reaction of the immigrants against such publication. Khomeini condemned Rushdie as blasphemous for this book because of its parodic treatment of Islam and offered a bounty of one million dollars for the assassination of Rushdie. Various elements of the book, right from its title to the various characters, make derogatory references to Prophet Mohammad and his family, which consequently offended the Muslim sensibilities so that a worldwide protest from the Muslim community was called for against Rushdie and the publication of *The Satanic Verses*. 59 people died worldwide as a result of this protest, and Rushdie himself went hiding for nine years (Azhar, 2019). In Britain, the subsequent violence during the protest created an anti-Muslim sentiment among liberal whites who criticized the protest and perceived Khomeini and his statement as the representative of the entire Muslim community. Interestingly, leading Islamic countries and mainstream Arabs were silent with regard to Khomeini's condemnation of Rushdie. Even the Arabs, living peacefully

in Britain, were completely undemonstrative in Khomeini's statement. Only the young and vulnerable people from the subcontinent were shouting the slogan and dancing to the music of Khomeini against Rushdie. Ed Husain, the author of *The Islamist* (2007), worked as an active member of Hizb-ut-Tahrir. Husain very closely observed the scenario behind the Muslim youths joining extremist groups such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir. He explains, "It was mostly second-generation British Muslims and converts who were seduced by the 'Tottenham Ayatollah'. His mastery of the Arabic language, his ready and seemingly relevant quotes from the Koran (Quran) and other sources, silenced us impressionable Muslims of Britain" (Husain, 2007:82). These young Muslims were ignorant and very susceptible to violence in the matter of their faith. However, Rushdie did not expect such violent consequences. Rather, he defended his work on the ground of creativity, which was far more unique than the fantasy books such as the 'Harry Potter' series and on the ground of the Western value of freedom of expression. Kureishi in his own words expressed in *The Guardian,* that this was inspired by the rise of Islamic radicalism in the late 80s and early 90s, as well as Britain's growing awareness of itself as a multicultural society. He also describes Rushdie's fatwa as, "One of the most significant events in post-war literary history" Kureishi found this fatwa as unjustifiable as the "opportunity to dissent, to be critical of leaders and authorities- and to be free of censorship-was necessary for anyone to live a good life" (Kureishi's Own Words: *The Guardian*). For the first time in the history of Britain during the Rushdie affair, British Muslims appeared on the public scene representing themselves as a unified force. He further mentions in the essay, "Sex and Secularity", his acquaintance with a fundamentalist who claims that the Rushdie Affair had a marked effect of uniting the Muslims in Britain, "the first time the community has worked together. It won't be the last. We know our strength now" (Kureishi, 2011:245). The Rushdie affair is a landmark for British Muslims as it encapsulated the identity politics of a minority group just as much as the identity politics

of Great Britain and the West in general. It is also a landmark in initiating the debate on fundamentalism, Islamic radicalization, Muslim identity politics, and freedom of speech in Britain which, even after more than two decades, still remains very sensitive and controversial.

2.4.2 *My Son the Fanatic*: A Transition from Liberal Englishness to Radical Islam.

Kureishi's short story, "My Son the Fanatic" was first published in *The New Yorker* in 1994. It was reprinted in Kureishi's 1997 collection of short stories, *Love in a Blue Time*. Kureishi took inspiration to write the screenplay, *My Son the Fanatic*, from this short story was later adapted into a film with the same title. The film was directed by an Asian director, Udayan Prasad, as the authenticity of the film can be established better or an understanding of the context of the film set up better by someone from the same ethnic origin. The main character, Parvez, is played by an Indian actor, Om Puri, and his son's role was played by a British actor of Indian descent, Akbar Kurtha. Like his other works, Kureishi is mostly concerned with immigration, racism, class, and identity in London and its suburbs; but for the first time, he sets this film outside London, depicting the provincial life of smaller cities like Bradford. While making the film, Kureishi did not expect that it would receive high popularity among the general masses. He expresses, "The film was almost a legacy of the 1960s and '70s, when one of the purposes of the BBC was to make cussed and usually provincial dramas about contemporary issues like homelessness, class and the Labour party" (Kureishi, 2011:242).

The aim is to make the audiences realise the difficult challenges that immigrants face in the light of the post-colonial era in Britain. It also shows how it is difficult for Parvez to accept his identity as a Pakistani Muslim with his Islamic education in Pakistan; and how his son Farid, born and brought up in Britain with Western values, needs spiritual transcendence which results in him blindly accepting radicalized violent practices. Part

of the film's aim is also to make the audiences understand the difficulty of having an identity in a foreign land, especially when you belong to a diaspora.

The title of the film, *My Son the Fanatic*, seems to be paradoxical as the father, Parvez, boasts about being Westernized and liberal but ironically, at the end of both film and short story, his liberal tolerance turns out to be fake as he tries to dominate his son's religious way of life. According to Susie Thomas in her book, *Hanif Kureishi* "…both the story and the film register the irony of the liberal position more dramatically than *The Black Album*. The paradox is that sceptical liberalism can be fanatical in its denunciation of fundamentalism" (Thomas, 2005:119). What the author is attempting to depict is far greater than a mere 'Who's Who' depiction of religious fanaticism. Parvez represents the fanaticism of his liberalism as he tries to suppress his son's religious fervor. Parvez, despite being a victim of racism or having never been invited by any whites in his whole life, still remains very much attached to and fond of Western society and ideology. Moreover, he insists his son follow the same Western lifestyle rather than inclining toward religious practices.

The story of the film is about an immigrant father from Pakistan who has been working as a taxi driver in Britain for twenty-five years. Despite his Islamic education and religious family background, he has turned agnostic. He does not hesitate to drink Scotch or eat bacon-butties, which are not permitted in Islam but rather strongly prohibited as 'haram*'* in Islam. Interestingly, the central theme of the film lies in the fact that Parvez has been educated in a conservative religious school in Pakistan embraces the Western culture and denounces his own religious ethos. On the other hand, Parvez's son Farid, raised up in Britain with Western education in a completely liberal environment, gets attracted to religious fundamentalism. Farid denounces music, alcohol, and pork and finally leaves his white girlfriend, Madelaine Fingerhut. His ultimate argument for the break-up of this relationship is expressed in the line, "Can you put keema with

strawberries?" … In the end our cultures … they cannot be mixed" (*MSF*, 39). He realizes that Madelaine and her family are completely different from his own family. In his words, "It is useless to grovel to the whites!" (*MSF*, 65). After he receives a very cold treatment from the Fingerhut family, Farid comes out with an opinion that there would always be a gap between the East and the West. A similar opinion is expressed by Chanu, in Monica Ali's novel, *Brick Lane* (2003), when he warns his wife Nazneen about making friends with the whites. He considers the whites can have double standards and be hypocrites at any time which he puts in his words, "All the time they are polite. They smile. They say 'please' this and 'thank you' that. Make no mistake about it, they shake your hand with the right, and with the left they stab you in the back" (Ali, 2003:58).

Unlike *The Black Album* where Kureishi distinctly explains how the characters face the wrath of racism that drives them to get into extremism, *My Son the Fanatic* does not present a clear picture of the process of radicalization of Farid in the film and Ali in the short story. However, the film signals his disillusionment and anger against the English after he and his family are humiliated by the Fingerhut family. Farid clearly realizes a sense of dismay and disdain in the reactions of the white family, which his father Parvez refuses to recognize. Neither in the film nor in the short story are Farid or Ali shown to be the victim of violent racial attacks or harsh cultural discrimination. It is obvious that to join an extremist organization one does not need to be personally victimized by racial attacks or prejudices and social discrimination. The fact that religious extremism for these people like Farid or Ali as a whole is a medium of building their identity and getting recognition in society, which at that time was very crucial in Britain. The violent protest against the prostitute organized by Farid in the film *My Son the Fanatic* or the 'book burning' episode carried out by Riaz and his followers in *The Black Album* are nothing but the means of associating oneself with the organizations of religious extremism. Stuart Hall calls this "Identity Politics One, is the first form of identity politics. It had to do with

the constitution of some defensive collective identity against the practices of racist society. people were being blocked out of and refused an identity and identification within the majority nation, having to find some other roots on which to stand. Because people have to find some ground, some place, some position on which to stand. Blocked out of any access to an English or British identity, people had to try to discover who they were. [. . .] It is the crucial moment of the rediscovery…" (Hall, 2000:148). The opportunist leaders such as Riaz use 'Islam' as their umbrella body to gain sympathy from the general Muslim masses. Apart from prostitution, there are many anti-social and immoral activities going on in their society, such as drug dealings, which significantly affect the wider section of the society. But the extremist group in the film targets only the prostitutes. At the end of the film, the maulvi and his followers lead a violent demonstration against the prostitutes, shouting slogans, and swear at them. Of course, Islam, in no way, promotes these types of actions and curses. True and pious Muslims should never use dirty and indecent words against anyone but ironically the outburst of profanity is common among these so-called Islamists. Ed Husain in his memoir, *The Islamist,* also notes while commenting about the members of Hizb ut-Tahrir in relation to their communication with other members and their comments on the non-Muslims (nonbelievers). Pious Muslims generally avoid profanity, but he as a member of Hizb ut-Tahrir found, "There was nothing particularly Islamic about our personalities" (Husain, 2007:99). Ironically, one of the protesters in the film is a taxi driver, Rashid, who had been with one of the prostitutes a week before the protest against them. Another example in this context is Karim, in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane,* who works as an active member of the radical organization, The Bengal Tigers, and who suddenly adopts a stereotypical Islamic appearance by growing his beard. At the same time, however, he maintains an illegitimate sexual relationship with Chanu's wife Nazneen, which is strictly prohibited in Islam. This kind of double standard approach among these protesters reveals the fake religious and selfish motive behind their actions.

As Kureishi's works emphasize, these ignorant youths are unable to realize how they are being utilized at the hands of the opportunistic leaders such as Maulvi in the film, *My Son the Fanatic* or Riaz in *The Black Album*.

Fig. 2-1: A scene of mass protest against the prostitutes by religious extremists Maulvi and his group in the film still *My Son the Fanatic* (1997).

These politicized religious organizations propagate anti-Western and patriarchal ideologies which they try to impose on their members in the light of religion. Farid, in *My Son the Fanatic*, is one such example when he suddenly comes up with anti-Western education and anti-Semitic ideology. He thinks, "Western education cultivates an anti-religious attitude" (*MSF*, 69). British values of democracy, mutual respect and tolerance, rule of law and individual liberty fail to shape his character. He wrongly interprets that studying Accountancy is anti-Islamic as it involves meeting women, drinking alcohol, and taking usury, moreover, accountancy is an offshoot of capitalism which, as Farid says, is a kind of Jewish propaganda to exploit the Muslim youths. In Farid's words, "And

accountancy… it is just capitalism and taking advantage. You can never succeed in it unless you go to the pub and meet women" (*MSF,* 69). Kureishi illustrates similar ideas by one of his acquaintances in Pakistan, whose name is also Ali in the "Introduction: The Road Exactly" where he mentions, "… to get anywhere you had to grovel, or go to the bar and drink and exchange unpleasant banter. Sometimes you had to shake hands with women" (*MSF,* viii).

2.5 Concept of Religion: From the Perspective of First-Generation and Second-Generation Immigrants.

The concept of religious identity varies among first and second-generation immigrants. Unlike the first-generation Muslim immigrants, the second generation discovers their lack of belonging due to their inability to fit into their ethnic culture and the discrimination faced from the white racists. Thus, they create a societal and political space of their own in the name of their Islamic ideology. For many first-generation Muslim immigrants, religion played a functional role as an identity marker necessary in the process of community building and micro-politics. This begins to change among the second-generation Muslim immigrants who started to acculturate themselves into British society (Geaves, 2010:301). This tension becomes more complicated when they struggle to justify their Britishness in the context of multicultural Britain. Multiculturalism, which encourages assimilation into the Western values, in many cases opposes the cultural values of the South Asian Muslim communities who feel trapped between secularism and their own religious doctrines. These South Asian young people are more vulnerable due to their lack of belonging to their ancestral roots in contrast to their first-generation counterparts or their parents.

For the first generation of Muslim immigrants in Kureishi's works, religion remained a simple matter of faith and practice which they considered a source of spiritual attainment

and discouraged violence. It is mostly limited to the congregational prayer in the mosque. Their source of religious knowledge is only limited to their family and religious books, where there is less possibility of getting deviated from the mainstream religion. The first-generation Muslim immigrants take religion for the process of their community building. But many among the second generation of Muslim immigrants accept religion to shape their identity. For a number of people in this generation, religion acts no more as a spiritual guide but as a medium of gaining political recognition in British politics. Their knowledge of religion is often attained from unreliable sources such as the internet, social media, and lectures from extremist leaders. They are often not acquainted with the authentic sources of Islam such as the Holy Quran and 'Hadith' (Teachings of the Prophet) which is why there is a greater chance of deviation from the mainstream religion and ultimately, they become vulnerable to radicalization. One such example is, in Kureishi's short story, "My Son the Fanatic" with the protagonist Ali's sudden shift from studying accountancy or practicing music to embracing religious extremism. He vehemently rejects his father's advice to continue with his studies. Rather, Ali accuses his father of advocating Jewish and Western propaganda. This kind of shift from a Western lifestyle among such second-generation immigrants towards religious fanaticism becomes an overwhelming concern for the first-generation immigrants. In the context of the concept of fundamentalism in 1980s Britain with the outburst of the Rushdie affair, Kureishi states, "The fundamentalists I met were educated, integrated, as English as David Beckham. But they thought that England was a cesspit. They had an apocalyptic view of the future. They lived in a parallel universe. They had no idea of what life would be like in an Islamic country but they yearned for everything sharia. And they had a kind of Islam that would have disgusted their parents" (Malik, 2009). A similar concern has been raised by a first-generation Muslim in the mosque in the *My Son the Fanatic*. He reveals the motives of these youngsters like Farid disapprovingly in these words, "These boys are not welcome.

They are always arguing with the elders. They think everyone but them is corrupt and foolish. … They are always fighting for radical actions on many subjects… - they're not afraid of the truth. They stand up for things. We never did that" (*MSF,* 58). Contemporaries like Husain explain the same concern when Husain diverts into religious extremism from the traditional practice of Islam. He explains in his book, "My parents were becoming seriously concerned about my sudden outburst of religious fervor. Even in a pious family like ours my behavior was at odds with my parents' faith" (Husain, 2007:39). Husain's experience is quite similar to that of Ali in the short story who, unlike Farid, in the film shows no sign of violence or protest. Although it is just a simple matter of choice of faith for Ali but it is alarming for his father, Parvez. Parvez's reaction at the end drives him to be violent when he expresses his frustration in the form of a physical assault against his son Ali.

This rift in the context of Islam between the first-generation and the second-generation Muslim immigrants is common when the latter slip away from the peaceful practice of Islam. Husain's father called these so-called Islamists "the enemies of the Prophet, the cursed of God, allies of the devil, and the rejects of the Muslim" (Husain, 2007:44). In a similar way as Ali is beaten and kicked out of the house by his father at the end of the short story, Husain's father gives him an ultimatum to either leave "Mawdudi's Islamism or leave my house" (Husain, 2007:44). It is noteworthy to mention that in film, short story, and memoir, the opportunist religious leaders hold and propagate misconceptions. They strongly believe that no relationship is more important than the relation between God and His servants and that everyone should be judged individually according to their fulfilment of God's commands. They believe that God tests us in different ways or in different situations, and that even God's Messengers will not be spared but face the consequences on the day of judgement. These opportunists are well aware of how to manipulate the contradictory statements and emotionally blackmail the vulnerable young

Muslims such as Chad, Farid, or Ali. Not only this, they also misquote the prophet's statements, for example, Husain reveals that how Hizb-ut-Tahrir justifies the distorted statement issued by Qutb about the Prophet. Hizb-ut-Tahrir propagates that, "Qutb taught us that the Prophet had declared war on the infidels of Mecca because it was in the nature of Islam that it must dominate" (Husain, 2007:51). It does not reveal the true identity of Qutb, who was only an Egyptian writer and later hanged in 1966 by the Egyptian government for writing a controversial book, *Milestones*, establishing the Islamic movement. Similarly, the cadres of YMO UK (Young Muslim Organization UK) put forward the words before Husain to comfort him when he has had to leave his family, "Your parents will be an obstacle to your commitment to God's work, the Islamist movement. Ours is the work of prophets, and they were opposed by their families. Abraham was rejected by his family. And in turn Abraham rejected his father" (Husain, 2007:41). In reality, the prophet Abraham left his father with respect and goodwill without any rejection. Later Husain himself discovers a hadith that reveals how important it is to take care of elderly parents in Islam rather than going for jihad. Husain questions the Hizb-ut-Tahrir, "How could the people in the Hizb reject their parents so easily? Don't they know about the man who wanted to go on a military expedition and the Prophet said that looking after elderly parents was more important…" (Husain, 2007:155). In the film *My Son the Fanatic*, Parvez asks his son Farid to join him for dinner at Fizzie's restaurant. But Farid flatly refuses to join him with the excuse of a meeting with his friends. In this context, Farid's response to his father is a denouncement of the Prophet's teaching of respecting one's parents. With a sense of regret, Parvez questions his son pointing out to him that isn't it written in this book (the Holy Quran) to respect the father.

In the 80s and 90s, the young generation was involved in experimenting by breaking away from their parents and exploring their life on their own. Kureishi in the "Introduction: The Road Exactly" mentions that the youngsters were fascinated by the idea of pleasures

- pleasure of sex and music, of clubbing and friendships, and the pleasure of moving away from one's parents for independent thinking" (*MSF,* vii). In this context, Farid's denouncement of his father's request is not something he learned from the religion but from the generation, he grew up with. Farid's rejection of his father is not influenced by his religion Islam; rather he follows the Western ideology of freedom and liberty.

The first-generation parents seem to be more aware and perceive the real opportunistic motives of these extremist leaders. Husain's father wisely reveals the truth behind these recruiting leaders, such as Riaz or Maulvi or other heads in Hizb-ut-Tahrir. He discovers that these extremists do not involve their own children in their opportunistic propaganda; rather their children are well-educated in Britain and live a decent life far from this false notion of religious fanaticism. For example, Husain's mentor Gulam Azam's son graduated from Manchester University and was working for Hackney Council and others in the business. But ordinary people such as Husain are caught up in "jihad and martyrdom" (Husain, 2007:52). Husain and other victims should realize their propaganda of misusing innocent young people for their benefit. The impact of religious opium is so deep in their mind that no they ignore the actual reality around them. They are hypnotized in such a way that they can see only their leaders' sacrifice of life to establish the Islamic movement; about their children, they are least bothered. They remain indifferent to know about their leader's personal life but follow their ideology and focus on the dream to establish the Islamic State. Farid in the film is not in a position to realize that the maulvi's prime aim is to find a channel to immigrate into Britain by using him and his friends as a platform. Religious teaching and spiritual guidance for the community are his secondary concerns. Unlike Farid, Shahid in *The Black Album* is able to discover the real motive of Riaz when he organizes to burn the *book* on the college campus. Finally, Shahid abandoned Riaz and his religious fanaticism.

In reference to the above context with regards to Kureishi's characters, it can be argued that the first-generation immigrants in Britain are more engaged with the traditional practices of Islam; rather than following the then ongoing emergence of religious groups led by different religious leaders. But the second-generation immigrants such as Riaz, Chad, Farid or Ali are more enthusiastic about experimenting with their religious identities which make them vulnerable to self-style religious extremists.

2.6 Representation of Islam from the Perspective of Kureishi's Works.

Kureishi, although belongs to a Muslim family from the Indian sub-continent, he considers himself to be an atheist. His interest to discover Islam emerges from the reactions of the British Muslims in the aftermath of the publication of Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*. To acquire knowledge about Islam, he starts visiting religious places such as mosques and interacting with general Muslim masses. He ignores the authentic or valid sources of acquiring knowledge about Islam such as religious scriptures and Prophet's words. Thus, his representation of Islam remains incomplete and inadequate.

Kureishi represents Islam in his works during a time period in Britain when it is no more a simple matter of faith or belief but becomes an emblem of one's identity and culture. For example, wearing a head scarf or a particular Islamic dress code in public is often seen more as a representation of one's cultural identity rather than a religious fundamental belief. This era also witnesses the emergence of various Islamic organizations that promoted their personal thoughts and ideologies which are more political and less spiritual in nature. The popular Islamic groups of this period included Young Muslim Organization in Britain, Jamat-e-Islami, Tabligh-e-Jamat, and the most notorious one is Hizb-ut-Tahrir. These groups form their own agendas and adopted "self-taught, unqualified individuals to address gatherings" (Husain, 2007:108) and groom the vulnerable Muslim youths. Their teachings avoid the traditional or moderate Islamic

scholars. Mostly they choose college or other educational campuses to target the Muslim youths. One such example can be traced from the key message of Jamat-e-Islami activists of that time which is "… that Islam was not merely a religion but also an ideology that sought political power and was beginning to make headway" (Husain, 2007:22). In Kureishi's novel *The Black Album* or in the short story, "My Son the Fanatic", Islam has been presented with a negative connotation or rather contradictory to play with the sentiments of the Asian immigrants. For example, the Asian immigrants such as Riaz's group burn the book, Chad firebombs the library and Farid violently protests against the prostitutes. Due to the existing socio-political crisis of that time in Britain, the Asian Muslim immigrants have been left in a miserable condition which makes them vulnerable to or aggravated them to join religious extremism operated at that time. These groups use religion as a tool to radicalize the youths emotionally and try to make them realize that how their fellow Muslims have been left deprived and tortured in Britain and worldwide. As these Muslim youths are already in a cultural limbo due to their Asian roots and English upbringing, they are easily targeted by extremist leaders. Husain in his book says, "Cut off from Britain, isolated from the Eastern culture of our parents, Islamism provided us with a purpose and place in life" (Husain, 2007:73). This generation of young Muslim youths finds a purpose in their association with these religious organizations. They are so much obsessed with the idea of gaining recognition by identifying themselves with the group's ideology that they fail to judge the consequences and consider that fundamentalism will provide them with social safety and security. Kureishi explains the concept of fundamentals and liberals in the essay, "Introduction: The Road Exactly" in his words, "For the fundamentalist, as for all reactionaries, everything has been decided. Truth has been agreed and nothing must change. For serene liberals on the other hand, the consolations of knowing seem less satisfying than the pleasures of puzzlement, and of wanting to discover for oneself" (*MSF,* xii). For a liberal father Parvez, pleasure

overpowers the racial, religious and ethnic barriers whereas his fundamentalist son Farid mostly relies on the fixed and presumed radical ideology or rather he believes in falsity.

2.6.1 Riaz: Symbolic Leader of Religious Extremism in the 80s and 90s Britain.

Kureishi's character, Riaz in *The Black Album,* symbolizes the extremist leader of fundamentalist religious groups in Britain. He, like the other representatives, tries to universalize the fact that Muslims are tortured all over the world and suggests that it is the duty of the other Muslim brothers to fight for the cause of their people, which means declaring war against the oppressors or the West in general. An opportunistic leader like him uses their common agenda of oppression against Muslims in Palestine or Kashmir or any other part of the world and universalizes it for their own cause in Britain. This is a very common strategy among all the extremists to exploit the political issues around the world and redirect them into religion. Husain in his book mentions a similar strategy of the YMO (Young Muslim Organization UK) to exploit the global issues in the mosque in London. They try to blackmail the mosque caretaker in the name of Allah when he is trying to stop them from lecturing the global political issues in the mosque, "Bosnia is being massacred, Palestine is under occupation, and you stop us from discussing these issues. Fear Allah, brother. Fear Allah…" (Husain, 2007:115). Another example of a character, Karim, a radicalized member of the Bengal Tigers in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane,* can be compared to Riaz and the YMO UK when he justifies their extremist activities to revolt against the West. Karim considers that Muslim brothers and sisters are tortured in Bosnia and Chechnya. He states, "It's a world-wide struggle, man. Everywhere they are trying to do us down. We have to fight back. It's time to fight back" (Ali, 2003:200). He further establishes fake propaganda to the members of the Bengal Tigers in the words, "What are we for? We are for Muslim rights and culture. We're into protecting our local ummah and supporting the global ummah" (Ali, 2003:198).

The vulnerable youths are easily targeted by opportunistic leaders such as Riaz, Karim, and the members of the YMO UK. These people who join the extremists are mostly misinformed or have very little knowledge about Islam. A similar kind of argument has been put forward by Tufyal Chaudhury in the article, "The Role of Muslim Identity Politics in Radicalization", where he mentions, "a lack of religious literacy and education appears to be a common feature among those that are drawn to radical groups. The most vulnerable are those who are religious novices exploring their faith for the first time as they are not in a position to objectively evaluate whether the radical group represents an accurate understanding of Islam" (Chaudhury, 2007:6). They do not bother to know the authentic Islam, instead, they are remote-controlled by the group leader. When Riaz and his followers are burning the book at the college campus, Deedee, a lecturer at the same college forcefully asks Riaz whether he has read this book or not. Surprisingly, not only Riaz himself but none among them, she finds, have read this book. Significantly, the first command from God to our Prophet sent down by angel Gabriel is 'Iqra' or 'Read'. Yet authoritatively all of them condemn the author and his book without reading it. Chad further reiterates the fact that anyone refusing to fight is doomed to hellfire.

Shahid as a racial and social victim gets some opportunity to belong to Riaz's radical group and create a new identity as a British-born young Muslim. He is there to join the fight; he considers himself no more an ordinary Muslim now but a superior one and this is the beginning of his metamorphosis. He accepts, "We should call ourselves the Foreign Legion… His blood was warming; he felt a psychological pride in their cause, whatever it was. He was one with the regiment of brothers and sisters" (*BA*, 82-83). Shahid at this point is actually motivated by the extremist religious group and not by any intellectual or for any grand cause. Here, Riaz and his group use religious beliefs and ideologies to justify their actions of radicalizing the vulnerable such as Shahid or Chad. Of course, in reality, their beliefs would clash with the vast majority of the people of the same faith.

Most of the followers of Islam do not believe in extremism, rather they strongly denounce this extremist ideology. They believe that violence is against the tenets and teachings of Islam as this propagates peace and condemns violence. The powerful local Arab devotees of pagan deities were harassing the early believers in Muhammad's message, the Qur'an 25:63 praised "the servants of the All-Merciful who walk humbly upon the earth—and when the ignorant taunt them, they reply, 'Peace!'" However, religious extremists use the strategy of highlighting the less important and distorted dogmas of Islam; instead of genuinely preaching it. Riaz and his followers use the same strategy of propagating religion to define identity and prepare a force to fight for their own organizational and ideological purpose. They are unified against the political agenda of that period and also prepare a stronger force to fight racism in Britain. Riaz's group is actually a manifestation of religious groups such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir, Jamat-e-Islami and many other religious extremist groups prevalent in the late 80s and early 90s Britain. Riaz in *The Black Album* and Farid in *My Son the Fanatic,* are typical representations of the members of Hizb-ut-Tahrir or other Islamic groups of that period who address occasional meetings and distribute pamphlets, organize demonstrations in public, assert their faith more genuinely through their outfits such as hijab and salwar kameez.

The maulvi in the film, *My Son the Fanatic*, is yet another representative of Islam. The maulvi has been invited by Farid, whose main agenda is not to create religious awareness among the young generation in Britain but to fulfil his personal interest to settle in Britain. He has been projected as a mere source of influence for the youngsters in the short story but his role in the movie is more sinister, opportunistic and quite hypocritical. His approach towards Parvez for the help of immigration of his family into Britain is a very true and authentic reality of the 80s and 90s when the people from the former colonies dreamt of settling down in this dreamland, Britain. Ironically, at the same time, the opportunistic maulvi calls Britain an immoral country which needs spiritual guidance.

Some of the young Muslim characters such as Farid or Ali, and Chad from Kureishi's works set in 80s and 90s Britain are easily radicalized by extremists like Riaz and the maulvi. The extremists have always tried to target young minds to misuse religion and propagate their personal agenda. It has always been easy to exploit this section of people because of their lack of understanding of true Islam and the lack of developing critical thinking skills. During the 80s and 90s, the use of pamphlets, speeches, posters, and public meetings were common media of communication but in present days the use of social media, and online videos, have made propaganda even more easily accessible to people. The extremist propaganda videos are very much alluring for the young generation because they are well aware of young psychology. The recent case of Shamima Begum in Britain can be presented as an example of how young people are still groomed by extremists. Shamima Begum, an underage girl, fled Britain along with her friends to join ISIS in Syria at the age of 14 in 2015. The ISIS recruiters used their propaganda videos to entice young teenagers like Shamima Begum, showing the good and glamorous life in Syria. At present, she is living in a camp in Syria and is desperate to return to the UK (Shamima Begum, BBC News, 2019).

Kureishi does not only portray religious radicalism in his works but also highlights the religious concerns of the immigrants who feel so much insecure and vulnerable that they are intimidated to establish their existence through religion. Kureishi condemns fundamentalism as "profoundly wrong, unnecessarily restrictive and frequently cruel" (*MSF*, xii). He presents the concept of Islamic fundamentalism from the perspective of Riaz and his group's fundamentalism which cannot be a true representation of Islam as a religion.

2.6.2 Charles Jump: A Conception of Islamophobia.

Kureishi presents Charles Jump, who is Zulma's new partner, as an example of Islamophobia in *The Black Album.* Charles considers anyone like Riaz, Chad, and Farid in Kureishi's works and Karim in Ali's *Brick Lane* who is associated with extremist groups, identified as terrorists or militants of Muhammad and murderers. He also considers the mosques are the breeding grounds for anarchy and disorder. Charles accuses Shahid by referring to the entire Muslim community as planning the mass killing of non-Muslims in the following words, "You will slit the throats of us infidels as we sleep. Or convert us. Soon books ... and …bacon will be banned. Isn't that what you people want?... Surely this invasion of terrorists must be eradicated from society like a disease?" (*BA*, 191). He fails to distinguish between the extremists and other Muslims. It can be established from his statement that the immigration of Muslims into Britain as traders is not a today's new phenomenon but has its roots long back. He forecasts an influx of Muslim immigrants in Europe in his words, "we know they are entering France through Marseilles and Italy through the south. Soon they will be seeping through the weakened Communist regions, into the heart of civilized Europe, often posing as jewellery salesmen while accusing us of prejudice and bigotry" (*BA*, 190). Charles's prophecy establishes the fact that present-day Islamophobia in Britain is nothing new but has always been existing since the beginning of Muslim Immigration into Britain. However, Charles's opinion about these radical Islamists does not come on its own but is the consequences of the hate speeches of the leaders of the extremist group such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir, Jamat-e-Islami and others. The extremist leader, Omar Bakri, who is a Syrian political asylum seeker and the founder of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Britain, famously declared that "…it was *halal*, or permissible, for Bosnian Muslims to eat Serbs, because they were at war, so there was no question of sending money for food. What Bosnia's Muslims needed was the assistance of the army of the Islamic state" (Husain, 2007:81). A similarity can be established

between the leader of Hizb ut-Tahrir and the leader of Bengal Tigers in Ali's *Brick Lane*. In one of the meetings organized by the Bengal Tigers, a Multicultural Liaison Officer who is black speaks about unifying all Muslims in the world. He acts as a custodian of Islam and calls for unifying all Muslims under one state-Islamic State without referring to the exact verses from the Quran. He says, "…that being a Muslim brings many heavy responsibilities. Not just the praying, and laying off drinks and laying off bacon and women and laying off every other manner of thing. It also has it written in the Qur'an that every Muslim should work towards one, unified Islamic state across the world. It is written, Khilafah is fard" (Ali, 2003:347). Arabic word 'Fard' or 'Fardh' means 'duty'.

Iran's revolutionary leader Khomeini's call for the killing of Salman Rushdie is very similar to the Hizb ut-Tahrir leader Omar Bakri's call for the assassination of the British prime minister John Major because of his involvement in the Gulf war. He proudly pronounced, "Major is a legitimate target. If anyone gets the opportunity to assassinate him, I don't think they should (waste) it. It is our Islamic duty and we will celebrate his death" (Husain, 2007:96). Expression of such extreme views is not something unprecedented among these hardliner extremists; whether it is Khomeini or Omar Bakri. But in reality, this kind of violence and brutality has no place in the nature of true Islam. In one of the hadiths, the prophet Muhammad says: "Do you know what is better than charity, fasting and prayer? It is keeping peace and good relations between people, as quarrels and bad feelings destroy mankind" (Muslim Hadith). It can be realized by the prophet's statement that Islam encourages peace and maintains good relations among mankind and discourages violence in any form. Kureishi's character, Chad's act of throwing bombs at the library in *The Black Album* or Farid and his group's violent protest against the prostitutes in *My Son the Fanatic* are totally contradictory to prophet's teachings. Their attempt to link their cause with Islam is unjustifiable. It can be realized that either they are completely unaware of Islam or are using Islam as their Trojan horse.

Charles's statement about Islam is also inappropriate in this context as it is confined to his own opinion which is the consequence of the politicized statements given by self-interested religious leaders. Charles in the novel represents an Islamophobic character. He does not differ from Riaz or any other religious extremists because their opinions have the same consequences of spreading hatred and violence among the general masses. It can be argued that majority of Muslim characters in Kureishi's works live happily with their non-Muslim counterpart.

2.7 Extremism: A Parallel concept between *My Son the Fanatic* and *The Black Album*.

Kureishi draws a parallel concept of extremism in the film *My Son the Fanatic* and the novel *The Black Album*. The characters in both works are more concerned with convincing their followers to adhere to their self-confessed propaganda rather than teaching the tenets of Islam. Nowhere in the novel or the short story we can see that these religious leaders are emphasising the need to understand the Holy Quran or implement the teaching of the Prophet in their lives. Their motive is to exploit religion in the name of identity politics by catering to the cultural, ethnic, racial, religious or social interests of the Muslim community in Britain during the 80s and 90s.

In the novel, *The Black Album,* Community leader Riaz persuades his followers through his common propaganda such as the Muslim brothers being tortured worldwide and that they should stand together to fight back against the oppressors. They completely ignore the Gandhian principles of 'Non-Violence', 'Tolerance' and the principle of 'An eye for an eye leaves the whole world blind'. In contrary to the extremism, Gandhian doctrine preaches, if someone slaps on one of your cheeks, rather to retaliate, turn your other cheek to him. The Gandhian principles underpin the ethics of multicultural society but these are no more valid for these immigrants. Just like Riaz, Ali in the short story "My Son the

Fanatic" also uses the same statement, "All over the world our people are oppressed" (MSF, 14) to legitimize his cause of actively supporting the religious extremists. Kureishi, in the short story, does not explicitly highlight how Ali in the short story inculcates hatred against the West and joins radical Islam, though at some point Ali expresses to his father Parvez the reason is, "Living in this country" (MSF,12). However, in the essay, "Introduction: The Road Exactly", Kureishi mentions one of his acquaintances of the similar name Ali, who works in the store of a supermarket even though he has a degree, says there's too much freedom in the West. Ali says, "The West's freedom made him feel unsafe. If there was too much freedom you had to make less of it" (*MSF,* ix). Ali does not like many things about the West because Western freedom and democracy fail to control endemic crime, homosexuality, poverty, and drug and alcohol abuse. Ali's opinion in the short story "My Son the Fanatic" about the West is quite similar to Ali (the acquaintance of Kureishi) when he thinks, "The West was a sink of hypocrites, adulterers, homosexuals, drug takers, and prostitutes" (MSF, 12). This is a very common propaganda used by the Islamic organizations such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir and Jamat-e-Islami etc against the West. Ali also believes that the Muslims have endured much, and now it's time to take revenge. He speaks to his father Parvez in a very sharp tongue, "If the persecution doesn't stop there will be jihad. I, and many of others, will gladly give our lives for the cause… For us the reward will be in Paradise" (MSF, 12). A similar strategy used by a religious extremist in Husain's memoir, *The Islamist,* to motivate others, "… the primary duty of all those who aspire to please God to launch an organized struggle, sparing neither life nor property for this purpose" (Husain, 2007:34). Ali in the short story, "My Son the Fanatic", further challenges his father in disgust, "Real morality has existed for hundreds of years. Around the world millions and millions of people share my beliefs. Are you saying you are right and they are all wrong?" (MSF, 15). Similarly, Shahid in *The Black Album* tries to establish the credibility of his faith and his loyalty to Riaz's group by arguing with Deedee

in his words, “I don’t always want to be on the outside of everything” … I want to follow the rules. There must be a reason for them. Those rules have been followed by millions of people for hundreds of years” (*BA*, 160-161). Ali tries to establish his opinion about Islam in such a way that he is a custodian of the religion by God and if he does not fulfil his duty he will be doomed to hellfire. Like Ali, other major characters such as Shahid and Riaz in *The Black Album* or Farid in *My Son the Fanatic* possess a very superficial knowledge about Islam*;* firstly, due to their lack of interest in acquiring authentic knowledge about Islam and secondly, maybe, their non-religious family background. They embrace the religion Islam only at the time of crisis in their life, and ironically, they follow the distorted form of it.

2.7.1 **Radicalization of Chad: A Societal Phenomenon**.

The most vulnerable character in the novel, *The Black Album,* is Chad who falls victim to Riaz’s false propaganda. Chad’s radicalization is the result of the discrimination he faced in the society he grew up from an early age. It is very important to have an insight into his childhood background in the British society. Chad as a young child was adopted by a white couple in the countryside where he was part of English culture and Christianity. He was identified with a Christian name Trevor Buss. Ironically, although his upbringing took place in a liberal English culture but did not get accepted in the white society because of his color and race. As a child, he tolerated racial slurs, because of his Pakistani background, from the mother who adopted him. He had been forced to realize that he is a Paki, a black Asian and inferior in the society. Unlike Chad, most of the immigrants who live in bigger cities like London are often a part of a wider community of their own. In Chad’s case, it is obvious that living in the countryside where the majority is white, he gets little opportunity to mix up with his own community. His childhood experience of racial discrimination and misery makes him vulnerable to join religious extremism. His

psychological frustration is so extreme that he wants to kill all those who abused him. From the beginning of his life, he is cut off from his original root, culture and people. In an effort to know more about his origin in Pakistan, he desperately joins the Urdu classes, but he remains a misfit there too because of his English accent. Consequently, he alienates himself from society. He even tries to become a member of the Labour Party to get recognition but unfortunately, the Party is too racist. In the course of time, he, like others, tries to be a racist, developing intense hatred against the white community. In Kureishi's words about Chad, "In England white people looked at him as if he were going to steal their car or their handbag, particularly as he dressed like a ragamuffin. But in Pakistan, they looked at him even more strangely. Why should he be able to fit into a Third World theocracy?" (*BA*, 107). In the company of Riaz, he finds a purpose as his company gives him recognition in their fight against the social injustice that Chad has already passed through. Kureishi presents that opportunistic people like Riaz often act as catalysts to aggravate the resentment of vulnerable young such as Chad whom they use to fulfil their unethical motives in the name of religion. Riaz grooms him up as a rebel and convinces him to become a comrade for their purpose. Unlike Shahid, Chad is a very whimsical and shallow character, and without any question, he blindly accepts Riaz's command. He has been represented as a typical religious fanatic in this novel. He openly condemns Rushdie's novel, *The Satanic Verses*, without reading it. He says, "That book been around too long without action. He insulted us all- the prophet, the prophet's wives, his whole family. It's sacrilege and blasphemy. Punishment is death. That man going down the chute" (*BA,*169). However, Shahid considers this radicalization of Chad from a different perspective when he argues with Deedee. Shahid comments about Riaz in his words, "He took Trevor in hand and his mixture of kindness and discipline sorted him out better than any rehabilitation centre could have" (*BA,* 110).

A recent article, “Salman Rushdie radicalized my generation” by Mobeen Azhar, published in BBC News (14th February 2019) narrates the experience of some Muslim immigrants in Britain who were directly influenced by the Rushdie Affair, which had a greater impact on their identity. Interestingly, they had been radicalized not by any Islamic extremist ideology but by the White Liberals like Charles Jump in this novel because of their hostility against the Muslims after the Rushdie Affair. In this article, Alyas Karmani’s story of radicalization is much in common with Chad’s radicalization and Shahid’s identification with Riaz. It was more about establishing their Muslim identity rather than any spiritual or moral identity. Karmani reveals in this article, “I thought these friends understood and accepted me but now they were pointing fingers. The conversations went like this: 'What's wrong with you people? Why are you doing this? Why have you put a death threat on Salman Rushdie? What side are you on? Are you with us or against us?' It was really as stark as that” (Azhar, 2019). It created a Muslim Global identity which acted as a counterculture against such Islamophobic ideology. According to Karmani,

> It was a counterculture. It had a dress code and a language. I left my non-Muslim friends and when I left university, I completely devoted myself to the movement … It all started with the publication of the Satanic Verses and how people pushed me away. That's why I always say I am one of Rushdie's children. I was radicalised by white liberals (Azhar, 2019).

A similar story of a renowned journalist, Yasmin Alibhai Brown, has been presented in the same article. Brown describes the disgust of the White Liberals when she said anything against Rushdie. When Muslims started burning the book, many of Yasmin's white friends were disgusted. She expresses, “It very quickly became 'them and us. At dinner parties, if I said anything about disagreeing with Rushdie, people would walk out! That's how difficult it became” (Azhar, 2019). In the late 80s Britain, the religious extremists became so active and engaging in society that even a normal practicing Muslim would indisputably be designated as militant or militant Muhammadan. Even a naïve

white like Charles Jump easily associates Shahid or anyone of his type with violence and the perpetrator of antisocial activities. He questions Shahid, “Isn’t it a fact that you have joined the militant Muhammadans?” (*BA,* 190).

2.8 Politicised concept of Islam in Kureishi’s works.

Kureishi in his works presents a new breed of Islam or Islam in its politicized form which is different from true Islam as portrayed in the Holy Quran and in the teachings of the Prophet. It is important to note that an era of this kind of politically motivated Islam has its roots outside Britain. One of such politicised Islamic organizations is Jamat-e-Islami, the then-largest Islamic organization in Asia, which was founded in 1941 by an Indian-born journalist, philosopher, and imam, Abul Ala Mawdudi. Mawdudi and his followers are thought to have been the pioneers of creating and promoting a new brand of Islam, a political Islam. This new breed of Islam was necessary, he thought, to preserve Islamic culture and free it from the evils of secularism, nationalism and socialism and all the other forms of Western imperialism. Thus, he supported an Islamic State in Pakistan. Husain says in his memoir, “Mawdudi… was the first Muslim to reject Islam as a religion and rebrand it as an ‘ideology’, This ‘ideology’, political Islam, was actively propagated by the organization he had started in 1941 in British India: Jamat-e-Islami” (Husain, 2007:22-23). Eran Lerman in the article, Mawdududi’s Concept of Islam, calls this new brand as “Mawdudi’s version of Islam” (Lerman, 1981:492-509). Similarly, the key objective of other radical organizations such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir and Al-Muhajiroun (The Emigrants) who considered that this society is corrupt and they should “… transform it… by establishing an Islamic state (not just in Britain but all over the world…) in which the Sharia would be implemented in its entirety.” (Ansari, 2002:20)

During the time period of Kureishi in Britain, a large number of second-generation Asian Muslim youths are inclined toward this new brand of Islam under the influence of many

religiopolitical organizations. These organizations preached their own respective religious ideologies which they refashioned according to their motives and ignored the interest of the general masses. This new breed of Islam is not rooted in the fundamentals of Islam but has grown with many offshoots which are politically motivated in different ways. Burning book, protests or demonstrations against Salman Rushdie and his novel *The Satanic Verses* is more a political affair than a religious disgrace. One way or the other, the Rushdie Affair played an important role to create such a process of Islamisation among the second-generation Muslim immigrants in Britain. Ansari in his article 'Muslims in Britain' states that "The Rushdie Affair provided further impetus to efforts to bring British Muslims organizationally under one roof." (Ansari, 1981:20). Interestingly, this new breed of Islam is not confined to Muslim youths only but is also supported by opportunist politicians such as George Rugman Rudder in *The Black Album*, for their political gain. The representatives of the Muslim youths working in collaboration with such political leaders are mainly concerned with sustaining their leadership; and for societal development, they are least bothered. Kureishi thinks that this is a process of Islamisation, of re-explaining and repossessing Islam for their own purposes, and ignoring the welfare of the masses. In his autobiographical essay, "The Rainbow Sign", Kureishi observes, "Islamisation built no hospitals, no schools, no houses; it cleaned no water and installed no electricity. But it was direction, identity" (RS, 15). Finally, it can be established that this new Islamisation or politicized Islam is more self-centered in its nature and is less connected to the true Islam, the Islam of the Holy Quran and in the teachings of the Prophet.

2.8.1 **Aubergine**: **A Symbol of Fanaticism.**

The aubergine show in *The Black Album* plays an important role to symbolizes religious mockery at the hands of the so-called Muslims. Kureishi sarcastically presents Islam in this episode through Riaz and his followers' religious fanaticism. How people are

superficially motivated by false religious notions can be realized through this episode where Riaz and his Muslims are fanatically driven towards ignorance and darkness. Kureishi makes the point that these fanatics are not driven by their reason but by religious emotions. The lack of reasoning and sense of judgement makes them vulnerable and easily susceptible to violent or anti-social activities in the name of religion. A leader like Riaz becomes the mouthpiece of extremist leaders such as Mawdudi when he uses universal propaganda that Muslims around the world are victimized, in this case, in the hands of white racists in Britain. He raises concerns about how Muslims are racially victimized, economically deprived and socially abused in Britain. The most vulnerable section among them is the second-generation Muslim youths, represented through Chad, Hat, Tahira and Sadiq who are ignorant about true Islam and possess a very superficial knowledge about it. As a result, they consider a trivial thing such as an aubergine can be a holy symbol sent from God. Interestingly, British politician like George Rugman Rudder actively participates in this kind of Riaz's foolish aubergine exhibition and takes advantage of it for his own political gain. He promised to restore this aubergine in the House of the Miracle because he realizes that by pleasing them in this way, they could be used as an additional vote bank. In this aubergine episode, Kureishi also reflects on how shallow their faith is and how easily they can be kept away from the light of knowledge. On one side these naive people condemn and burn the *book*, a symbol of knowledge and creativity, on the other side, they are trying to find out the message of God in aubergine and ironically such a message has been testified by a religious Maulvi such as Maulana Darapuria. Kureishi satirically presents these ignorant Muslims and their naivety in these words, "… God had inscribed holy words into the mossy flesh. Moulana Darapuria had given his confirmation that the aubergine was a holy symbol" (*BA*, 171). This sort of religious fanaticism is the practice of ignorant Muslims and they remain completely

oblivious to the fact that how they are being exploited at the hands of opportunist leaders such as Rudder, Riaz, or Maulvi.

Kureishi very subtly presents how religious emotions have been exploited in the British politics. He observes the reality of the Labour Party and questions their genuine attitude towards voicing the cause of the ethnic minorities in Britain. Rudder as a representative of the Labour Party shows a similar motive in these words, "It is because our party supports ethnic minorities, you have my fullest assurance of that" (*BA*, 178). Riaz ignores to recognize the hypocrisy of Rudder's political party's (the Labour Party) agenda of winning the election with the support of these ethnic minorities. For them, representing the working class for the Labour Party was more important than sharing political power with the blacks. Kureishi explains in the essay, "The Rainbow Sign", the controversy within the Labour Party regarding racism through which the party leader tries to gain support from the ethnic minority in Britain. Kureishi calls racism the "Trojan Horse" (RS, 30) within the labour movement which might be because the party played a trick of addressing racism against the ethnic minorities in Britain. Dave Gunning's comment on George Rugman Rudder's visit to the aubergine show possibly be one of them. Gunning says, "The assimilation of Muslim concerns into an opportunistic municipal antiracism shown… to win votes" (Gunning, 2010:75). According to Kureishi, "The Labour Party failed to show that it is serious about combating racism and serious in representing the black working class. There are few black councillors, few black parliamentary candidates…, no blacks on the NEC… and trade union movement" (RS, 30). Kureishi also observes that black people are discouraged from joining the Labour Party and those who have already joined are discouraged from canvassing in case they discouraged white racists from voting Labour and others in the party believed that racism was a 'sub-issue' and the more relevant concerns for them were addressing the class-related issues like housing, unemployment, education and maintenance of the social services (RS, 30).

Moreover, this entire aubergine episode projects a complete misconception about the Islamic monotheism in the novel. The concept of Islamic monotheism is based on believing and worshipping only one God, the Almighty, Allah. This concept has been misrepresented by Rudder when he comments on the crowd gathered to exhibit the so-called miracle of God, the aubergine, "What a marvelous crowd, worshipping the fruit of the earth! What a popular aubergine, top of the vegetable table! What a sound method of communication the miracle is! Thank God a Tory borough wasn't chosen!" (*BA*, 177). Being a non-Muslim, Rudder, might not be aware of the concept of Islamic monotheism but it is, however, expected from Riaz who so far pretends to be a custodian of his religion among Muslims to protest Rudder's wrong comment on Islam. Kureishi presents Riaz as a hypocrite character as he supports Rudder who, through his comments, axes the core of the Islamic monotheism which can be considered even more severe and derogatory than Rushdie's blasphemous representation of Islam in his book, *The Satanic Verses*. Riaz's hypocrisy is revealed when he chooses to boycott Rushdie and applaud Rudder. Moreover, Riaz expresses his eternal gratitude and acclaim for Rudder's presence in the aubergine episode to recognize his community which he thinks is often put down by other leaders. Riaz's silence proves him to be an opportunistic and biased community leader. Ironically, one of the white onlookers who is present at the aubergine episode easily realizes Rudder's intention of recognizing this episode, which Riaz as a leader fails to realize. He refers Rudder as 'The Rubber Messiah' and laughed loudly (*BA*, 177).

2.8.2 **Censorship and Book-Burning: A Curse to Creativity and Imagination.**

Kureishi, in this novel, deals with the whole matter of censorship as a cutting satire. He satirically presents the reaction of the Muslim community against Rushdie's controversial novel, *The Satanic Verses*. The book-burning episode is the microcosm representation of the protests and demonstrations by radical Muslims all over the world against Rushdie for the publication of *The Satanic Verses*. The streets in major cities like New York,

California and London were full of demonstrators and threats were issued against many sellers and publishers of this book. Even some of the libraries were bombed (Mander et al. 2023) and many explosives were detected in bookstores and places that sold this book in Britain and worldwide (J. Willard Marriott Library Blog, 2021). The attack on the book as well as on its author forced everyone to think afresh about the place of literature in society. However, Kureishi as an author and a reader does not find any controversial elements that would hurt Muslim sentiments or incite the fundamentalists. He expresses his opinion about the book, "I first read *The Satanic Verses* in proof copy. I didn't notice anything about it that might rouse the fundamentalists. I saw it as a book about psychosis, about newness and change. The 1980s was an age of fusion- in music, in food, in literature. *The Satanic Verses* was part of that postmodern fusion" (Malik, 2009). The reaction against the book was very surprising for Kureishi who could not accept the fact that an author can be killed for writing a book. The fatwah issued by Khomeini against Rushdie astonished him. He expresses his shock in his interview with Kenan Malik in *Prospect* Magazine, "It seemed mad to imagine that someone could be killed over a book. I was flabbergasted. How could a community that I identify with turn against a writer who was one of its most articulate voices?" (Malik, 2009). From the perspective of the overall reaction against Rushdie, it is clear that a writer should be aware of self-censorship while writing in a plural society with mixed values and beliefs. Commenting on the post-Rushdie affair, Kureishi expresses, "Nobody would have the balls today to write The Satanic Verses, let alone publish it. Writing is now timid because writers are now terrified" (Malik, 2009). Kureishi, according to Kaleta, "… a man of strong opinions, he took a vocal stand against the censorship, violent threats, and terrorism, and used his celebrity to bring attention to the controversy" (Kaleta, 1998:121).

The image in the next page shows the unrest and protest carried out by the general Muslim masses in Bradford in form of burning a copy of Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses.*

Fig. 2-2: A Demonstration against *The Satanic Verses* in Bradford, England in 1989. Photograph: Sipa Press/Rex Features. (The Guardian).

Shahid in *The Black Album* becomes a mouthpiece of Kureishi. Shahid is unable to accept the fact that a book which is a medium of story-telling can adhere to the elements of censorship; how can an author follow certain norms of dos and don'ts to write a book? It's surprising to Shahid that how could a writer's imagination be set to its limit. It's obvious that any creative work would lose its grandeur if controlled. Shahid believes that "A free imagination ranges from many natures, its purpose is to look into itself and illuminates others (*BA,* 183). He asks Riaz, "And story-telling. … What mustn't be said. What is taboo and forbidden and why. What is censored. How censorship benefits us in exile here" (*BA,* 182). Shahid realizes that the world outside is "more subtle and inexplicable" (*BA,* 133). Shahid realises that the conflict lies in the very ideological foundation of Riaz's group which considers imagination "would poison all, rendering their conviction human, aesthetic, fallible" (*BA,* 133). The later violence of the group towards the *book* which they burn openly is the outcome of their adherence to their rigid religious principles that reject creativity or imagination. This conflict forms the ground for the central battle between liberalism and religious fundamentalism in *The Black Album*.

Riaz as a group leader justifies their cause to protest against this book because, he believes, this sort of fiction reveals a corrupt nature. But to Shahid, this is just a story-telling and a mere work of imagination and nothing else. Riaz considers, fiction as just a form of lying and distortion of the truth which pleases us and by nature, they are not offensive. Some writers like Rushdie, according to Riaz, gain recognition by indulging in controversial issues by hurting the sentiment of a particular community which they think they are expressing the truth of the common masses but in reality, this is just a medium of gaining false publicity. This publicity makes them so-called great authors and they are actually sponsored by the elite class whites. Riaz angrily calls them uncultured and half-literate fools who know nothing about the masses, "These yarn-spinners have usually grovelled for acceptance to the white elite so they can be considered 'great authors'" (*BA*, 182). To Riaz, Muslims such as Salman Rushdie are the same as non-believers and hypocrites as their motive is to earn global fame and attention. Just before burning the *book*, Riaz gathers the student community to tell them the cause of their protest against it. Deedee tries to stop them as she considers this an illegitimate protest. Riaz uses the concept of democracy and freedom of expression as a tool to shut Deedee's mouth. For him, it is obvious that Deedee should realize if Rushdie's work can be justified in the name of freedom of expression, then the protest against this *book* could also be accepted for the same reason. Riaz's group is a typical representation of ideological groups like Hizb ut-Tahrir whose strategy to defeat a rational and legitimate reason was mainly by provoking the masses with outrageous speech. Explaining such outrageous confrontation, Hussain describes "Our style of debate and discussion was confrontational, designed to provoke outrage, to destroy concepts, as we called it. Our strategy was to obliterate those ideas that controlled people's behaviour or influenced their psyche and then supplant them with new ideas: our ideas" (Husain, 2007:105).

This episode of book burning at the college campus takes a catastrophic turn to burn and bomb the libraries and riots in the streets in many places in Britain. For the first time, the young Asian Muslim Immigrants in Britain made this protest a common ground to voice out their existence in the British society by using college campuses and educational institutions as their platforms.

2.9 Conclusion.

Kureishi's works *The Black Album* and *My Son the Fanatic*, aim to present the existing scenario of the British Muslim immigrants who are repossessing the fundamentalist aspect of Islam as a defensive strategy to protest against the socio-political issues in the 80s and 90s Britain. However, in doing so he interprets Islam in a very inadequate manner. Many critics have commented on Kureishi's representation of Islam and Muslim characters in his works in various ways. I would like to quote some of the comments on Kureishi from those critics. One of the critics, Ranasinha comments on Kureishi's representation of Muslims in *The Black Album* and *My Son the Fanatic* that he does not portray moderate Muslim believers or fails to show a positive view of Islam (Ranasinha, 2002:89). Similarly, another critic, Maya Jaggi writes that Kureishi fails to 'challenge' the representation of Muslims as 'fanatics and book-burners,' (Jaggi, 1995). Professor Akbar Ahmed criticizes the representation of Muslim characters as 'tired stereotypes' in *My Son the Fanatic*. (Ranasinha, 2002, np). Harvey Thompson in his review on *My Son the Fanatic* sees the treatment of fundamentalism and Islamic extremists as 'frenzied, almost clownish' (Thompson, 29 May 1998). Further, Susie Thomas in *Hanif Kureishi*, argues "… that academics were, in general, supportive of Kureishi's refusal to produce 'cheering fictions' and positive stereotypes of British Asians in *My Beautiful Laundrette* and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*, but they seem far more disturbed by his refusal to provide positive images of devout British Muslims" (Thomas, 2005:129).

Kureishi as a writer should have realized while presenting a complex and critical picture of Islam that his readers not only include intellectuals and academicians but the common masses too. From his works, the common masses will superficially judge Islam as a religion of extremists and terrorists whose actions are limited only to the ridiculous aubergine exhibition and rioting and burning down the books and halls. Even an academician like Deedee misunderstands the practices of Muslim immigrants and generalizes them to the entire community. She fails to distinguish the extremists and other Muslims. Rather, she considers Muslims, in general, to be intolerant and rigid to those who oppose them. She thinks that Muslims are very susceptible to violence and other anti-social activities such as burning books, bombing places and rioting. Being an educated and intellectual person, Deedee fails to realize why Riaz who is a writer himself and his followers who are the students in the college collectively burn this particular book, *The Satanic Verses*. She questions, "What sort of people burn books and read aubergines? ... Presumably, libraries will be replaced by greengrocers" (*BA*, 210). Shahid replies to Deedee that these people, who exhibit aubergine, are very simple and less educated from the remote areas. He persuasively expresses that Islam is a faith like any other faith and everyone should respect it. He says "We have to respect the faiths of others- the Catholics say they drink Jesus's blood and no one jails the Pope for cannibalism" (*BA*, 209).

Islam as a religion symbolizes peace and tolerance. Islam firmly establishes that unjustness or unlawful killing of a human being is the killing of entire mankind (The Noble Quran, 5:32). The activities of Riaz and his group are defiance of this teaching of the Holy Quran. Rather, Riaz and his followers are hypocrites who claim themselves as true representatives or agents of their religion, Islam. Ironically, rational and intellectual people like Deedee and Charles Jump judge Islam by gauging the activities of these fake representatives of Islam such as Riaz, Chad, Farid, Karim (in *Brick Lane*) and Ali. These

members of Islamic organizations are mostly inclined toward promoting and carrying out activities which are less religious and more political. The leaders use a very sophisticated medium of communication with their members to radicalize them. Nowhere in the novel, Riaz is shown to preach the principles of Islam such as how to recite the Holy Quran and the fundamentals of Islam which are the foundation of every follower of Islam. They often present things out of context in distorted forms to misguide their followers. They talk more about Islamic jihad, the Islamic State, and enemies of Muslims in the world and ignore the basic tenets of Islam and the Holy Quran. A similar notion is presented in Ed Husain's memoir *The Islamist*. An instance has been illustrated by Husain when mentioning a newly converted to Islam, Eisa, who started to preach about Islamic jihad, the need to establish *khalifa* (caliphate) and other extremists' concepts but he is unaware of the basic tenets of Islam such as praying, giving charity, be kind to our parents, neighbours and fellow Muslims. Husain explains, "He was someone who had entered Islam and started preaching to Muslims about the need for the Islamic State, jihad, and the destruction of the West without having learnt how to pray" (Husain, 2007:131).

Being a true Muslim, one should observe the five pillars of Islam, be highly tolerant and practice non-violence, be trustworthy and loyal, wear a decent dress, never drink alcohol or consume pork or take drugs, and never indulge in sexual intercourse other than his/her spouse. According to Islamic principles, a person lacking any of the above traits should not be considered an ideal or true Muslim. Kureishi himself presents the concept of a good Muslim in his autobiographical essay, "The Rainbow Sign", when he describes a Pakistani lawyer as, "… intelligent, articulate and fiercely representative of the 'new spirit' of Pakistan. He didn't drink, smoke or f**k. Out of choice. He prayed five times a day. He worked all the time. He was determined to be a good Muslim…" (RS, 22). Many Asian Muslims during the 80s and 90s in Britain joined extremist organizations to become true Muslim or better Muslims under the guidance of Islamic scholars. They never

realized that they would be victimized and be utilized at the hands of those so-called true Muslim representatives. In the name of religion, the leaders misused and misguided their members where necessary. Husain in his book explains this bitter truth behind joining such an organization, "I had committed myself to Islamism because I wanted to be a better Muslim, a complete Muslim, not in order to divide Muslims" (Husain, 2007:109). Most of Kureishi's characters in *The Black Album* cannot be considered Muslims in the true sense but Muslims by names only. Characters like Chad, Hat, Sadiq, and Tahira may be practising Muslims but their violent mode of protest such as burning books or libraries, and exhibiting the aubergine is unacceptable in Islam and thus they cannot be true Muslims. Moreover, their leader Riaz is misguiding them and using them for his purpose. He is an imposter who is misusing Islam for his own benefit. It is a common practice in most of the so-called Islamic organizations such as Hizb ut-Tahrir, Jamat-e-Islami or any other extremist organizations to misguide the vulnerable youths. According to Husain's father, the leaders such as Riaz are running, "… sinister political organization, use Islam as a political tool and demean the Prophet's teachings" (Husain, 2007:27). Riaz is more an opportunist and aggressive than a genuine Islamic scholar. Shahid also cannot be categorized as a true Muslim because he drinks alcohol, and indulges in sex with Deedee, a deceiver of Riaz's literary work. He is a hypocrite and whimsical person. In the company of Riaz, he visits a mosque and offers prayer but in the company of Deedee, he does not hesitate to have sex or drink alcohol or take drugs which are strongly prohibited in Islam. The other characters such as Chili, Zulma, and Papa are Muslims by name only but none of their actions is in accordance with the Islamic tenets or the Quranic teachings. Chili's character represents a drug addict and a drunkard. Zulma is a lavish and extravagant lady far from Islamic ideology. Shahid's father, Papa is apathetic towards Islam. His only religion or faith or interest is to make money from his business and nothing else could motivate him.

Kureishi portrays the Asian Muslim immigrants in Britain in such a way that reflects mostly the extremist image of Muslims. As Ranasinha observes, a distinguishing feature of *The Black Album* is its "irresolvable opposition between community and individual: there is no representation of the communal that is not fundamentalist" (Ranasinha, 2002:100). Kureishi mainly deals with two extreme categories of Muslim characters in his works; they are either extremist or indifferent towards religion. As a result of this, a concept of an ideal Muslim or a good Muslim does not find expression in his works which makes it difficult for general readers to get a complete image of a real or true Muslim. This limitation of Kureishi's writings compels the characters such as Charles Jump or Deedee to rush in their comments on the Muslim community as a whole because they fail to differentiate between the extremist Muslim and an ideal Muslim. Charles vehemently expresses his fear to Shahid by referring Shahid to as an extremist who will slit their throats when asleep or convert them, soon books and bacon will be banned (*BA,* 191). He gives this hateful statement commenting against the burning of Rushdie's book. Charles fails to realize that this protest is a politically motivated one and the vast majority of the Muslim community also, just like him, condemns such protests. He also does not want to recognize this particular protest with any other movements such as the Black movement and Feminist movement in Britain. Moreover, he overlooks the violent attacks and racial slurs on the Black Asian immigrants, especially on the Bangladeshi Muslim family, at the hands of the white working-class racists. The character of Charles in the novel can be considered biased and Islamophobic.

In representing the concept of Islam, Kureishi has not followed authentic sources to frame his opinion about Islam. The authentic sources are the religious book, the Holy Quran and the set of Hadith which are the teachings of the Prophet. The Holy Quran is the compilation of the words sent from the Almighty Allah to the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The Hadith is the compilation of practices and teachings of the prophet

Muhammad. The Holy Quran is the theoretical structure of Islam whereas Hadith is the model of a truly Islamic lifestyle led by the prophet Muhammad which can be realized from the following verse of the Holy Quran,

Allah says (interpretation of the Arabic version) to the prophet We have also sent down to you (Muhammad) the reminder and the advice (the Noble Quran), that you may explain clearly to men what is sent down to them and that they may give thought [al-Nahl 16:44, nd:352-53] "… and whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it…" [al-Hashr 59:7, nd:753]

It's always incomplete to conclude any Quranic explanation without consulting Hadith. For example, it is mentioned in the Quran that every Muslim must pray but it does not explain how to pray, how many times to pray in a day, who is exempted from prayer, and what are the other principles of prayer. For a complete understanding of the praying, one must consult the Hadith. Drugs and alcohol are prohibited in Islam except for use for medical purposes. It is clearly mentioned in the Holy Quran and in the Hadith that consuming alcohol and drugs is totally prohibited. It is a major sin to consume them for pleasure and addiction. One of the verses of the Holy Quran explains,

"O you who believe! Intoxicants (all kinds of alcoholic drinks and drugs), gambling, Al-Ansab, and Al-Azlam (arrows for seeking luck or decision) are an abomination of Shaitan's (Satan) handiwork. So, avoid (strictly all) that (abomination) in order that you may be successful. Shaitan (Satan) wants only to excite enmity and hatred within you with intoxicants (alcoholic drinks and drugs) and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah and from As-Salat (the prayer). So, will you not then abstain?" (The Noble Quran 5:90–91, nd:161-62)

'Ibn 'Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said that Every intoxicant (all kinds of items which cause intoxication to a

person) is Khamr (wine) and every intoxicant is Haraam (unlawful) (Hadith: Sahih Muslim).

Identifying alcohol and drugs by different names like Whisky, Gin, Rum, Vodka, Cocaine, Marijuana, Salvia and many more does not change their intoxicating properties in them and thus they remain prohibited in Islam. But Kureishi's Muslim characters are often seen indulging in drinking and taking drugs which are strongly prohibited in Islam. In doing so, Kureishi remains unsuccessful in presenting a true picture of an ideal Muslim. Rather his representation of Islam misinforms the readers about it.

One of the reasons for Kureishi's misrepresentation of Islam is, maybe, due to his perception of Islam developed from his interaction with unreliable sources such as "visiting mosques, talking to Islamists" (Malik, 2009) instead of directly researching the Holy Quran and Hadith, teachings of the prophet Muhammad. Kureishi also developed his opinion about Islam from his interactions with ordinary Muslim masses who possess their personal concept about Islam. His interaction with the lawyer in his autobiographical essay, "The Rainbow Sign", is worth mentioning here. During their visit to an exhibition selling Pakistan-made imitations of Western things such as TVs with stereos attached, bathrooms in chocolate and strawberry, fans, heaters etc. made the lawyer felt frustrated and agitated. The lawyer comments, "These were Western things, of no use to the masses. The masses didn't have water, what would they do with strawberry bathrooms? The masses wanted Islam not space-invaders or …" (RS, 23). The lawyer's comparison between the Western things and Islam is irrelevant as it would mean that those general masses who can have access to clean water or strawberry bathrooms do not need Islam. The lawyer gives a very irrational comparison between Islam as a religion with any other things. In this context, Islam has been misrepresented by Kureishi when views Islam from the perspective of the lawyer's opinion. Similarly, Husain discovers a shortcoming of gaining knowledge about Islam among the British Muslim youths in *The Islamist*. To

teach Islam, he finds that most schools in Britain chose a book, which was not written by an Islamic scholar. It is obvious that in such cases one is very unlikely to get an authentic knowledge of Islam. Husain comments on Sarwar's book when it is selected in the school curriculum to teach Islam in these words, "…Sarwar was a business management lecturer, not a scholar of religion… Sarwar's book was not the dispassionate educational treatise it purported to be" (Husain, 2007:21). In the age of multimedia, it is very common that the Western concept of Islam is gathered by reading books written mostly by others than the religious scholars themselves. And this may be the cause that there remains a gap in understanding the authentic concept of Islam.

On another occasion, when the author visits the buffer zone between Afghanistan and India where Pistols, knives, Russian-made rifles, and large lumps of dope and opium were available like "tomatoes and oranges" (RS, 20), the heroin trade was easily accessible through Pakistan because the police, the army, the judiciary, and the customs officials were all involved. Kureishi becomes wrongly judgemental without consulting the Hadith in expressing his opinion about the lawful use of heroin in his comment, "After all, there was nothing in the Koran about heroin, nothing specific" (RS, 20). As mentioned above, the Holy Quran and the Hadith clearly state that all intoxicants (alcoholic drinks and drugs) are prohibited in Islam. Since heroin is one of the intoxicants, its consumption is strongly prohibited in Islam. Kureishi also mentions, "I was even told that its export made ideological sense. Heroin was anti-Western; addiction in Western children was a deserved symptom of the moral vertigo of godless societies" (RS, 20). No doubt the general masses in Pakistan and Afghanistan think that they are the victims of atrocities of the West and consequently develop an anti-Western attitude. Exporting heroin to the Western countries was an outcome of their personal revenge against them which has no connection with Islam or with the Holy Quran. But Kureishi wrongly connects their personal reactions to Islam and the Holy Quran. On the other way, paradoxically, Kureishi presents the

reactions of common masses of Pakistan and Afghanistan regarding exporting heroin to the West that, "… was a kind of colonial revenge. Reverse imperialism, the Karachi wits called it, inviting nemesis" (RS, 20). Justifying their cause to export heroin to the West in the name of Islam and Quranic reference is, in every way, unjustifiable and unacceptable. Thus, these people defame Islam and Muslims all over the world.

Kureishi presents the concept of Islam in his writing from the perspective of his experiences which are based on the opinion collected from his interaction with the general Muslim masses who cannot be considered the authentic source of Islam. He neither has formed his argument from references to the Holy Quran and Hadith nor has he quoted any Islamic scholars before representing the concept of Islam in his works. In this process, Kureishi not only remains incomplete and inadequate in presenting Islam in its theological perspective in his works but also has misrepresented it.

Chapter: 3

The Changing Phenomenon of Race, Colour and Identity under the Aegis of Multicultural Britain:

3.1 Introduction:

This chapter intends to explore how multiculturalism in Britain during the 80s and 90s brought demographic changes with the arrival of immigrants of different cultural, national, religious, and racial backgrounds. This chapter also investigates how this composite and multicultural Britain celebrates diversity in one way, while, in another way, it triggered violent racism and raised questions about the assimilation of immigrants' culture, colour, and religion into British society. Further, it tries to explore how, during Kureishi's time, a more deprived and impoverished section of the white British population targeted the Asian immigrants, whom they considered to have encroached on their opportunities and benefits. In response to this crisis, some Asian ethnic minorities are left with no choice but to adopt different identities such as religious extremism, feministic, queer, and political in defence against racism and discrimination. To explore these questions, I am analysing the works of the British Asian author, Hanif Kureishi, with special reference to his novels *The Buddha of Suburbia* and *The Black Album*.

3.2 Context of Multiculturalism in Britain.

Multiculturalism is often referred to as the phenomenon which challenges cultural homogeneity and embraces cultural diversity and heterogeneity. Although the term 'multiculturalism' is most commonly used in popular culture and in political discourse it also includes a series of other discourses such as anti-racism, religious freedom, immigration, language, educational procedures, legal rights, land rights etc (Ashcroft & Bevir, 2019:1). As multiculturalism is a multi-disciplinary term, so it is frequently referred to as a concept in political and social studies, law, philosophy, history and anthropology. The historicity of multiculturalism can be traced back to the beginning of

the human race but the modern concept of multiculturalism starts after the Second World War. It became prominent in 1970 when Canada and Australia adopted official state multiculturalism (Ashcroft & Bevir, 2019:6). In Britain, multiculturalism as a demographic fact started after the Second World War in 1945 when non-white immigrants started arriving here. Ever since Britain became a multicultural nation, there have been numerous debates and discussions on its national identity, citizenship, and ethnicity as they are the fabrics of multicultural Britain.

Multiculturalism in Britain in the 80s and 90s not only celebrates the beauty of ethnic diversities or unity in diversities of different nationals, and cultural and religious backgrounds; but also, has inspired violence and hatred in British society. On one side, it is a unifying force for different ethnic and cultural identities, but on the other side, multiculturalism in Britain has also resulted in division and clashes between white and non-white cultures and communities. To some extent, the issues related to racial violence, the concept of color bar, the question of ethnicity, cultural fragmentation and the country of origin emerged when Britain started celebrating its multiculturalism. Rather it can be said that the question of race, color, class, gender and ethnic identity are the offshoots of multiculturalism in Britain. Some politicians and intellectuals like Trevor Phillips discouraged multiculturalism and stated that Britain should 'kill off multiculturalism' because it 'suggests separateness' (Baldwin, 2004). Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron also criticised Britain's multiculturalism as a "'barrier' that divided British society" (Cameron, 2007). He also argued that "the doctrine of 'state of multiculturalism'" has encouraged culturally different people to live apart from one another and apart from the mainstream (Cameron, 2011). He further complained that multiculturalism allowed "And when it comes to fighting violent extremism, the almost fearful passive tolerance of religious extremism that has allowed segregated communities to behave in ways that

run completely counter to our values and has not contained that extremism but allowed it to grow and prosper" (Cameron, 2011).

Kureishi as an author closely observed and critically analysed the scenario of the plight of the black Asian immigrants in white-dominated Britain from within. He as a child, as a teenager and later as a writer, witnessed the changing phenomenon of Britain under the umbrella of multiculturalism. His works explore different facets of multiculturalism which initiate the process of identity formation among his characters and their struggle to stand with their identities amidst racial hatred and violence which can be said to be the inevitable by-product of the multicultural nature of society. The quest for identity among the immigrants exposes them to cultural discrimination, racial prejudices, and the question of their class status and ethnicity. Referring to Kureishi's protagonists, Buchanan comments, "The best Kureishi's young British-Asian heroes can do is accept their lot in a world driven by hypocrisy, selfishness, racism and class confusion, and by, immersing themselves in the pleasures of consumption, salvage what personal enjoyment they can… they manage to enjoy themselves a good deal, even amid the ruins of their former naïve idealism" (Buchanan, 2007:42).

One of the factors of immigration from the colonies to Britain is that it has always been considered the land of dreams and prosperity by its colonies. The colonies have always visualized Britain through the eyes of their colonial masters. Whether it's the Windrush generation from the Caribbean countries or the Asian immigrants who migrated to Great Britain, they always possessed a profound image of this country, especially of London. But what is ironic is the fact that Britain with the immigrants from different colonial states no more remained a safe haven of prosperity for them anymore rather it turns into a place of insecurity and discrimination. In the land of the colonizer, which has been absorbing so many elements of colonies, it became obvious that the immigrants must confront political enemies and endure ghosts from the past almost as if they were back home. The

immigrants' dream of being somewhere better becomes in reality a battle with "the disillusionment, alienation, and loss of identity that acquiring their dreams has cost them" (Kaleta, 1998:195).

After the Second World War, many Asians migrated to Britain with high social, cultural and economic expectations and aspirations due to their perception of London as a utopia. They did not realize that they would be seen as different from the British people or that they might be perceived as inferior because of their race, culture, and faith as compared to the British community. Kureishi states, "Most whites considered 'Asians to be inferior', less intelligent, less everything good. Not that we were called Asian then. Officially as it were, we were called immigrants, I think. Later for political reasons, we were 'blacks'. But we always considered ourselves to be Indians" (Kureishi, 2009:55). Most of the first wave of Asian immigrants who came to Britain, represented through the characters such as Haroon, Anwar, and Shahid's Papa, belonged to the upper-class society in their own country but unfortunately these immigrants become inferior to even the lower working-class British people. They are called as pakis, blackies, shit-face, and curry-face by most of the working-class whites in Kureishi's works. This section of whites tends to be intolerant towards the immigrants as they consider these immigrants contaminate their monolithic culture and nation. As a result, the immigrants are rendered psychologically, politically, and existentially stranded in this host country. A sense of alienation prevails over their lives. Moreover, a section of immigrants with rigid and conservative values refuse to integrate and assimilate into British society. As a result of their lack of assimilation and integration, they become targets of ill-treatment and face racial slurs at the hands of the white racists. They are forced to remain confined to a minority community that is culturally and ethnically marginalized in society. When they find themselves culturally nowhere among the whites, they start yearning for self-identity. These immigrants, even though living in Britain for a long period of time, could neither

completely abandon their own ethnic culture nor completely accept the contemporary British culture or become part of it. Rather, they create a new hybrid identity of their own. They become afraid and unable to live a life of freedom. As a result, the generation they raise is forced live in a state of segregation and their belongingness to Britain as well as to their ancestral land comes into question. The characters such as Haroon, Anwar, Bilquis and Parvez make relentless effort to get accepted in the British society but their sense of belonging remains unsuccessful. Kureishi asserts in The Rainbow Sign that the British wanted the Pakistanis should be exactly like them (Kureishi, 1992:7) but interestingly some characters such as Parvez, Haroon, Anwar's wife Jeeta, and Karim although try to integrate and assimilate with British counterpart, they are rebuffed in every aspect of their life.

Kureishi tries to portray the struggle of class, race and postcolonial identity among the Asian immigrants on the one hand; and post-imperial vacuity, anti-immigrant attitude and xenophobia among the whites on the other. Moreover, Kureishi as an author also tries to describe how the loss of empire and aftermath of the Second World War devastated the social, political and economic stability of contemporary Britain, which led the British people to experience a sense of insecurity and face the challenges of existence in their own society.

3.3 Britain: A Multicultural Melting Pot with its Unfolding Racism with Special Reference to "The Rainbow Sign".

Kureishi's autobiographical essay, "The Rainbow Sign", was published in 1986. The essay's title has been taken from the epigraph of the book, *The Fire Next Time* (1964) by the African-American writer James Baldwin. The title of the essay comes from a line of an African American spiritual "God gave Noah the rainbow sign, / No more water, the fire next time" (James Baldwin's influence on Hanif Kureishi, British Library). The book

addresses the dire consequences of racism on black people in America in the mid-20th century and the detrimental effects of Christianity on the Black community in America. Consequently, Baldwin abandoned the church because he experienced repressive practices there. Kureishi's essay "The Rainbow Sign" expresses a similar pattern of racism in the 80s Britain and its effects on Asian immigrants. Moreover, the significance of the essay lies in the fact that it draws a historical line about the relationships between Pakistan and Britain and addresses how British society has to change and amend with the changing scenario of multicultural Britain.

During the 80s and 90s, the number of immigrants was much higher as their second-generation children started to grow and became more visible in different sections of British society. They started to appear in pubs and clubs, jobs and business, towns and cities in Britain. Even some places, especially the metropolis such as in Bradford, London, and Birmingham were felt to be unrecognizable and the English language was hardly spoken in public due to their mass concentration of immigrants which presumably could be the reason of fear among the whites that Britain was turning into a foreign land with its own population. For example, in London, locations like Tower Hamlets and Whitechapel were mainly populated by Bangladeshi communities; Brixton has a significant number of Jamaican, Trinidadian and Guyanese immigrants, Indians and Pakistanis are settled in Southall, and Earl's court is renowned for the presence of Australians and New Zealanders, Hampstead is dominated by South Africans (McLeod, 2004:4). London as a city no longer remained a centre of white supremacy but was felt to have become a cocktail of postcolonial multicultural and mixed-racial identities. A large number of these mixed-race immigrants was a very big concern for the white British in London. Kureishi in his article, "Knock, Knock, it's Enoch" mentions that Britain had been undergoing a tremendous crisis, especially after losing imperial power over colonized states and as the effect of the Second World War. A massive influx of migrants

into Britain escalated the burden on Britain in the form of homelessness, and joblessness which created a void generation that drifted towards poverty, prostitution, and drug addiction. This kind of social and economic crisis was seen by many whites as a consequence of the influx of immigrants which led to the growth of intolerance among the whites. They turned to be xenophobic and as a result of that, they exercised hatred against these immigrants. The circumstances of occupancy by the immigrants made the whites very much concerned about their position and also forced them to realize that if they do not restrict and restrain the immigrants, they would themselves turn to be strangers in their own country. John McLeod in his book, *Postcolonial London: Rewriting the metropolis*, cites from Patterson's *Dark Strangers* (1964), how London was changing as a consequence of migration and settlement in the immediate post-war years. Patterson's study of Caribbeans in Brixton in the same book also made an important attempt to expose and address many of the difficulties facing newcomers to London such as their preconceived dreams and expectations, created in their home countries, and the discrimination they faced in jobs, governments, and housing. Patterson's study further illustrates that Brixton's diasporic peoples, like many other new Londoners from countries with a history of colonialism, would be subjected to a series of attitudes which frequently objectified and demonized them, often in terms of race, while questioning their rights to citizenship. The perpetual identification of these peoples and their families as 'strangers' in, rather than citizens of, London was the result of the profoundly polycultural character of the city in the post-war years and bears witness to a number of reactionary responses at the levels of state and street which refused to accept the newcomers' legitimacy and rights of tenure (McLeod, 2004:2). The city of London in its postcolonial era has undergone multiple changes on different levels such as cultural, social, economic, and political. Thus, it has become a multicultural cosmopolitan city in a very difficult condition. As John Eade writes, "Black and Asian settlers from former British colonies

have played the major part in creating London's multicultural society, but it is they who experience some of the highest levels of poverty and discrimination" (Eade, 2000:2).

The hatred of white working-class people against the immigrants was also fuelled by right-wing politicians like Enoch Powell and Margaret Thatcher, who openly criticized the mass immigration into Britain. Enoch Powell, the white populist figurehead, in his incendiary speech, "Rivers of Blood" on 20th April 1968 in Birmingham, strongly criticized mass immigration, especially from Commonwealth countries. There was a sudden increase in the numbers of his supporters as if these white working-class people had been waiting for a messiah-like Powell or Thatcher who represented a silent majority of them. Race relations problems continued to threaten social stability during the 70s, with the rise of the extreme right-wing National Front organization, which organized violent demonstrations throughout the decades, while Enoch Powell continued to enjoy a high level of public support for his views on immigration (Powell, 1968). Powell's popularity among the white people can be realized when the newspapers published his speeches and graffiti displayed in London streets (RS, 6). He played a greater role in inciting these lower-working class people who were already facing a sense of deprivation due to the social, political, and economic crisis in post-imperial Britain in the 70s and 80s. In his essay, "The Rainbow Sign", Kureishi expresses how he felt 'embarrassed and afraid' when being introduced to the parents of his friends 'both lower-middle-class and working-class' who often told him, "… they were Powell supporters" (RS, 7). Politicians like Enoch Powell and Margaret Thatcher made immigration their political agenda and aimed to stop mass immigration from Britain's former colonies. In her provocative speech before the election in 1979 Margaret Thatcher directly opposes immigration from the Commonwealth countries and expresses her concern in the words,

> "… if we went on as we are then by the end of the century there would be four million people of new commonwealth or Pakistan here. Now, that is an awful lot and I think it means that people are really rather

> afraid that this country might be rather swamped by people with a different culture, and, you know, the British character has done so much throughout the world that if there is any fear that it might be swamped people are going to react and be rather hostile to those coming in" (Nataranjan, 2013).

Kureishi's works celebrate the multicultural aspects of Britain under the bitter truth of racial prejudices and at the same time he highlights discrimination not only of the whites against the ethnic minorities but also of the British middle-class against the British working-class people. Through his works, Kureishi presents a quite nuanced and sophisticated perspective of racism and class inequality in society, which can turn physically violent if the marginalized 'others' (here it's the immigrants and the British lower working-class) refuse to accept the superiority of the British upper-class. His works can be seen from the perspective of class-based discrimination and color-based racism. The class-based discrimination is mainly prevalent between the upper-class and lower-class white British. But the color-based racism is predominantly visible among the white working class and the immigrants in his works. In "The Rainbow Sign" Kureishi also highlights that there is a correlation between class inequality and racism, which go hand in hand. He presents a very complex picture of class inequality and racism in both English and Pakistani societies in the words,

> …racism is a kind of snobbery, a desire to see oneself as superior culturally and economically, and a desire to actively experience and enjoy that superiority by hostility or violence. And when that superiority of class and culture is unsure or not acknowledged by the Other… as with the British working-class and Pakistanis in England, then it has to be demonstrated physically (RS, 26).

Kureishi in this context echoes Marxist ideology that race is "largely determined and explained by economic structures and processes" (Loomba, 2005:107). Robert Young points out that "If, according to Marxism, race should be properly understood as class, it is clear that for the British upper class was increasingly thought of in terms of race" (Young, 1995:96). According to Loomba, the concept of racism has its root in colonialism, in colonies like India where the concept of caste marked a social, economic and religious

hierarchy overlaid with connotations of purity and pollution which is similar to those that shape the idea of race in Britain (Loomba, 2005:107).

Kureishi's concept of racism is revealed in, "The Rainbow Sign" where he notes "a society that is racist is a society that cannot accept itself, that hates part of itself so deeply that it cannot see, does not want to see- because of its spiritual and political nullity and inanition… This is why racism isn't a minor or sub-problem: it reflects on the whole and weighs the entire society in the balance" (RS, 29). In the same essay Kureishi further condemns racism in the words, "… it is a violation not only of another's dignity, but also of one's own person or soul; the failure of connection with others is a failure to understand or feel what it is one's own humanity consists in, …" (RS, 29).

Kureishi ends the article, "Knock, Knock, it's Enoch", with a final characterisation of racism as he describes,

> Racism is the lowest form of snobbery. Its language mutates: not long ago the word 'immigrant' became an insult, a stand-in for 'paki' or 'nigger'. We remain an obstruction to 'unity', and people like Powell, men of ressentiment, with their omen and desire to humiliate, will return repeatedly to divide and create difference. The neoliberal experiment that began in the 80s uses racism as a vicious entertainment, as a sideshow, while the wealthy continue to accumulate. (Kureishi, Knock, knock, 2014).

A recent article, "The Asian women who defied the driving taboo" published in BBC news, narrates the story of an Asian immigrant teacher, Suraksha Asar, in the 70s who faced racial abuse on her way to work through West Bromwich. Shockingly, some of the abusers, she says, were her former pupils, "They used to swear and spit. It was very uneasy and unhappy" (Rack & Woods, 2019). A teacher becomes a target of racism by her own white students, and conversely, Karim, in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, as a student becomes a target of racism by his class teachers. Color of skin and ethnicity play major roles to racially victimize the immigrants and abuse them, no matter who the person is or

how important the person is to British society. In Monica Ali's novel *Brick Lane* (2003), Razia's comment to Nazneen is noteworthy in this respect of racial abuse they encounter with the racists while looking at the price tag on an outfit displayed in a shop. She comments, "Look how much these English are paying for their kameez. And at the same time, they are looking down onto me. They are even happy to spit on their own flag, as long as I am inside it. What is wrong with them? What is wrong?" (Ali, 2003:328). The racists are not ready to accept these immigrants even though these immigrants render greater services to this country, from business to education, the health service, and other major industries.

During this time, under the circumstances of fear and hatred, the Asian immigrants feel stranded and find nowhere in their dreamland, Britain. They start realizing that they are a different entity of inferior quality and very much different from the whites who consider themselves superior beings. The immigrants are made to realise that they are socially inferior because of their culture, race, education, religion, and lifestyle. They receive a very limited space to breathe and live in. They are compelled to dream only after realizing this subaltern identity and their dreams are preconditioned in the shape of faith, skin tone and ethnicity. Their faith, race, and culture would decide who they are and what their destiny would be. As a result, they become victims of the white people's sentiments.

In relation to the racism and discrimination faced by immigrants in Britain during the 80s and 90s, I would like to cite a recent report, "How racist is Britain today? What the evidence tells us" published in *The Conversation*, which finds a shocking picture of racism experienced at this time, "It's starkly evident that major ethnic and racial inequalities persist in employment, housing and the justice system. Black and Muslim minorities have twice the unemployment rate of their white British peers and are twice as likely to live in overcrowded housing. They are also much more likely to be stopped and

searched by the police. We could also add to the list the alarming ethnic differences in deaths from COVID-19" (How racist is Britain today?, *The Conversation*, 2020).

It is evident that racism and discrimination are still experienced in and out by the minority immigrants in Britain which is more intellectually exercised in various institutions. It is no more exhibited in a violent or cruel manner but rather practiced in a very subtle and sophisticated way. After the Labour Party came into power in 1997, the Party adopted policies which promoted the need for a national identity which embraces the culture, art, fashion, cuisine and music of the immigrants from different nations. Even after decades of adopting measures to combat racism, inequality and injustice through legislation and British Values which are taught from the beginning of primary education, racism has not been uprooted from the society. Rather, their efforts have been criticised as non-viable because of their irrational approach of integration of the immigrants as British citizens without assimilating them into the British society due to the unreachable barriers of class, race and religion.

3.4 Powellism and the Immigrants' Challenge: A Threat to Multiculturalism.

During the 70s, Britain was changing demographically and culturally due to the immigration from different colonies and it was eventually transforming into a multicultural nation. During this period Britain was also recovering from the aftermath of post-World War with an era of promises, newness, and equality for the immigrants as well as for the native population. Amidst this changing Britain, there appeared a challenging British Conservative politician, Enoch Powell, who agitated against the immigrants. Kureishi as an immigrant teenager closely observed the impact of Powellism on the life of immigrants and how it fuelled the right-wing and anti-immigration groups to instigate racism, hatred, and rioting in Britain. According to Kureishi in his article "Knock, Knock", the 1970s was a dangerous time for immigrants, especially in South

London. The cadres of the National Front were highly active and violent against the non-whites. They attacked the lower class and unprotected immigrants who left their home country for their dreamland, Britain. Powell and his followers held the immigrants responsible for infiltrating their culture and land. They also held the immigrants responsible for the unemployment, lack of housing and poverty in Britain. The image below demonstrates the resentment of the whites against the immigrants who they believed have deprived them of their benefits such as jobs and housing.

Fig. 3-1: A protest against the black minorities. Back to the future: what the turmoil of the 1970s can teach us today- New Statesman.

Enoch Powell was a middle-class struggling man who was socially inept and repressed (Kureishi, Knock, Knock 2014). He secured his place in military intelligence in India and was an obedient, relatively undistinguished servant of the state. Like any other British imperialist, he also liked the concept of the British empire and colonialism. He was more powerful and highly respected in India than he had been in Britain. In 1945 he joined politics and later became a notoriously racist politician. He believed that giving up the

empire would be a disaster. In his words, “I had always been an imperialist and a Tory” (Kureishi, Knock, Knock 2014). With his provocative speeches, he targeted the non-whites and threatened to deport them to their country.

In the same article, Kureishi himself briefly discusses Enoch Powell’s perception of the Asian immigrants in 70s Britain, and how Enoch Powell became a symbol of terror and figurehead for racists in his teenage school life. The post-imperial vacuity is reflected in the speech of Powell and frequently quoted by his followers like Helen’s father, ‘Hairy Back’ in this novel, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, to frighten the immigrant community in Britain. Helen’s father is a by-product of the Conservative Party’s racist politician Enoch Powell and his anti-immigration agenda. Out of anger, Karim calls Helen’s father ‘Hairy Back’. He shouts at Karim when Karim wants to meet his daughter, Helen, “We don’t want blackies coming to the house… many niggers there are, we don’t like it. We’re with Enoch” (*BoS,* 40). Helen’s father typically represents the far-right which resists discourses of contemporary inter-cultural relations and which insists that mergings between cultures are undesirable, divisive and socially degenerative in tendency because of ontologically-grounded differences between the cultures involved (Gilbert, 2001:195). Similarly, in the essay, “The Rainbow Sign”, Kureishi speaks about the resentment of his girlfriend’s parents who considered that their girl would gain “a bad reputation by going out with darkies” (RS, 6). White people in the suburbs of London started supporting Powell and showing solidarity with Powell’s anti-immigrant policy. Powell created a rift between the whites and the non-whites on the basis of color, creed and ethnic origin. An image in the next page displaying the demonstration of Powell’s supporters voicing against immigration.

Fig. 3-2: Anti-immigration protestors march to the Home Office in August 1972. Photograph: Hulton-Deutsch Collection/CORBIS.

Powell like any other racist and right-wing politician used to spew venom at the outsiders, and minorities, and threatened the survival of the black Asian community in Britain. Powell suggested establishing a Ministry of Repatriation that would send the children of immigrants back to their home country as formulated by Kureishi, "A policy of assisting repatriation by payment of fares and grants is part of the official policy of the Conservative party" (Kureishi, Knock, Knock. 2014). Kureishi in the same essay, "The Rainbow Sign", also defines Powell's attitude to the Asian immigrants whom he thinks are unsuitable in this country. In 1965, Powell said, "We should not lose sight of the desirability of achieving a steady flow of voluntary repatriation for the elements which are proving unsuccessful unassimilable" (RS, 6). Powell would rather become the Viceroy of India than live in post-imperial multicultural Britain. His xenophobia and frustration with the Pakistani community are quite direct and biased when he says, "… because of the Pakistanis 'this country will not be worth living in for our children" (RS,

6). Other politicians like Duncan Sandys also adopted the same anti-immigration and xenophobic attitude as Powell. Sandys clearly reflected his xenophobic nature in the following statement, "The breeding of millions of half-caste children would merely produce a generation of misfits and creates national tensions" (RS, 6). For him immigrants were a threat to this country and deportation would be the best policy to downsize the number of outsiders in Britain. Out of his frustration, Powell made racism his political agenda to divide the mass into natives and non-natives, Self and Others in Britain. The 'Self' represented the white British and the 'Others' represented the immigrants irrespective of their Asian, African, Jamaican etc. backgrounds. As a result, the Asian immigrants were targeted with racial slurs such as 'Paki' 'curry-face' or 'shit-face'. In his more recent memoir, *The Islamist* (2007), Ed Husain also explains a similar wave of anti-immigrant agenda for the Asian immigrants among the cadres of the National Front. They shouted slogans, "Pakis! Pakis! F-off back home! The hoodlums would shout…. I can still see a gang of shaven-headed tattooed thugs standing tall above us, hurling abuse as we walked to the local library to return our books" (Husain, 2007:2).

Kureishi compares Powell with the Nazi leader Adolf Hitler because of his physical appearance as well as for his attitude and sentiment toward the minority immigrant community in Britain. Powell was a terrifying figure, as described by Kureishi, which in his words "… wide-eyed piccaninnies – was a monstrous, scary bogeyman" (Kureishi, Knock, Knock, 2014). The influence of Powell, the ghost of empire as commented by Kureishi, is still felt in British politics. Immigration always remains a subject of national debate in Britain. John Clement Ball comments, Powell's infamous speech, "Rivers of Blood" in 1968 in Birmingham further aggravated Britons' growing hostility to "New Commonwealth" immigrants over the post-war decades (Ball, 2004:187). The influence of Powell's speech, "Rivers of Blood" was so powerful that even one of the great artists like Eric Clapton urged his followers to vote for Powell. Clapton said, "Britain should get

the wogs out, get the coons out" and "Keep Britain White" (Kureishi, Knock, Knock). The terror seems to be state-sponsored and institutionalised when regulated by educated people or politicians such as Powell and by the teachers or fellow students in schools and colleges. The immigrants or the non-white community faced discrimination and challenges very badly during this period. The misery of the situation is evident in the immigrants like Kureishi who perceived themselves as belonging nowhere. Kureishi, being English by birth, would face the same situation if deported to India because he is the 'offspring', the child of the immigrant, and as such belongs to nowhere. He imagined himself a parentless unwanted mongrel hunting for food in the woods nearby (Kureishi, Knock, Knock, 2014).

Fig. 3-3: 9th June 1970, British Conservative politician Enoch Powell electioneering in his Wolverhampton constituency as his wife hands out election literature from their land rover. (Photo by Leonard Burt/ Central Press/ Getty Images).

Powell didn't fit in the multicultural British society, but he certainly liked to disorient and traumatize the Asian immigrants and called them 'a roomful of gunpowder' and further Kureishi says, "After he spoke, we were in freefall; we didn't know where or who we

were" (Kureishi, Knock, Knock, 2014). Powell took this anti-immigrantion attitude as his challenge and attested all the immigrants as outsiders and unwanted to this country, which in return inculcated the power of resistance among the immigrants to survive the wrath of racial hatred inspired by Powell. As John McLeod mentioned in his book, *Postcolonial London*, quoting from De Certeau's work, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, "Their activities contribute to the subversive practices of everyday life as tactics of resistance and survival: 'Innumerable ways of playing and foiling the other's game… that is, the space instituted by others, characterize the subtle, stubborn, resistant activity of groups which, since they lack their own space, have to get along in a network of already established forces and representations" (McLeod, 2004:9). The hatred and malign approach of politicians like Powell escalated the fear and concern among the minorities to establish their identities. In the novels and memoirs, this is signalled to lead, in turn, to the formation of different groups and organisations like the Bengal Tigers in Ali's *Brick Lane*, Hijb-ur Tahrir in Husain's memoir, *The Islamist*, and many other minority organisations such as Riaz's group in *The Black Album* or Black Protest in *Sammy Rosie Get Laid* etc. It can be established that these radical organisations were formed to counter discrimination and racism in Britain.

Powell brainwashed the white racists with his sense of superiority, hatred and provocative speeches against the immigrants living in Britain. Instead of focusing on how to recover Britain plunged into an economic, social and political crisis caused by the aftermath of the Second World War, he targeted the immigrants, ignoring their contribution to the uplift of this country. Being a politician, he ignored the sacrifice of the armies from the colonies who fought for Britain in the Second World War. Later he was attacked and condemned by students wherever he travelled. He was not ready to acknowledge the social changes coming through this country nor the future of its young generations. He was highly pessimistic, didn't believe in collective efforts and cooperation. As Kureishi

points out, in its recovery, Britain survived Powell, racism, and the great war (Kureishi, Knock, Knock, 2014).

Finally, in the same article, Kureishi presents a paradoxical treatment of immigrants in Britain. He projects that how Britain as a nation desire to prosper with the help of immigrants on one hand, but on the other hand tries to implement anti-immigrant policies. In this regard, Kureishi shares an example of Guyanese-born and Cambridge-educated writer ER Braithwaite, who worked in the RAF before becoming a teacher in the East End of London. Because of his race, he could not get a job as an engineer. In his works, he outlined the dire situation of race in the late-40s and mid-60s: the everyday humiliations, hatred, rage, abuse and remarks they had to face after being invited to work for the NHS and transport systems. For a better future for the nation, Britain needed the best doctors, engineers, and professionals of all kinds. In this context, Braithwaite critically projects two contrary sides of Britain: on the one hand it is a torch bearer for fairness, liberty, and patriotism; but on the other hand, it is planning for the repatriation of the immigrants (Kureishi, Knock, Knock, 2014). Other contemporary writers of Kureishi's generation such as Salman Rushdie, Abdulrazak Gurnah and Caryl Phillips respond implicitly or explicitly to the experience of living in Britain at this time period when its outburst of racist and anti-immigrant rhetoric from Enoch Powell or Margaret Thatcher or any other prominent members of the establishment. It is also noteworthy to see how the liberal institutions and the members of the public responded to the crisis created by the white supremacists. Many schools and universities in Britain in the late 70s and 80s sought to revise the literary curriculums to include works from Asian, African, and American and black British writers such as Chinua Achebe, John Agard, Anita Desai, Farrukh Dhondy, Ralph Ellison and Toni Morrison (Innes, 2007:192-3).

3.5 **The Concept of Multi-cultural Britain and Kureishi.**

Hanif Kureishi, an author of colour, born and brought up in Britain with mixed racial backgrounds of Asian father and English mother, is himself a multicultural bi-product. In the last decades, there have been remarkable works published in the form of articles, researches, and journal publications on both the postcolonial author Kureishi and his major works such as *The Buddha of Suburbia, The Black Album, My Beautiful Laundrette, Sammy and Rosie Get Laid, My Son the Fanatic, London Kills Me,* and his autobiographical essay, "The Rainbow Sign". Some of the articles are written by the author himself discussing the background of his works. The major themes of his writings revolve around the political turmoil, social problems, economic crisis, racism, and discrimination against immigrants in the 80s and 90s Britain. In his works, Kureishi is not merely trying to represent his own Asian community in a traditional way, rather he tries to explore Britain: the making of multicultural Britain, the diminishing Leftist ideology, the growing religious fundamentalism, the exploration of and experimentation with sexual identity, popular culture, art, music, and drugs. As an author, Kureishi beautifully portrays his ideas through different characters: their attitudes, their retrospections and reflections in these works.

Kureishi's first novel, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, published in 1990, critically satirizes both the white British as well as the black Asians. The novel also examines the ethno-English identity, the prevalence of racial prejudices, class distinction and cultural incompatibility in the characters in the post-imperial era of 80s Britain. These in turn are the determining factors for constructing the identity of various Asian immigrants in Britain. In the novel, Kureishi tries to answer, how and why the ethnic minorities in Britain are presumed to be rootless and subcultural pawns. He tries to investigate in his writing if the treatment of ethnic minorities is the result of xenophobia or the universal superiority complex of the West over the East. Kureishi describes the plight of the Asian immigrants in multicultural

Britain who are perceived by the West as irrational, ridiculous and hysterical. The novel also depicts the harsher realities of racism faced by Asian immigrants amidst the socio-economic crisis of Thatcherite Britain. These immigrants are portrayed as colonial 'others' because of their culture and ethnicity which the racist whites consider weird and strange. In Kureishi's works, those immigrant characters, who survived in this multicultural Britain such as Karim, Haroon and Jamila in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, become the hybrid subjects of Bhabha; and those who remain misfits in this crisis such as Anwar and Gene, either slip into liminality or are left frustrated and suicidal. Kureishi also projects that these non-white, middle-class immigrants, though economically secured, are socially and culturally marginalized.

Kureishi in the novel explores the issues inherent in different facets of British-Asian identity. He depicts a gap between the first-generation Asian immigrants such as Haroon and Anwar, born in India but living in Britain, and the second-generation Asian immigrants such as Karim and Jamila, born and bred in Britain. He also intends to portray very complex and contradictory hybridized characters whose cultural and racial identities are inextricably linked with both a British upbringing and Indian roots. Although the novel mainly deals with the ethnic minorities in Britain, a major aspect of the novel also concentrates on the changing phenomenon of British national identity framed under the backdrop of gender and cultural performances due to its multicultural identity. Commenting on *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Susie Thomas opines that the novel, "shows Englishness as changing and unstable, varying according to class and gender as well as over time. National identities … are inevitably presented as matter of cultural performances" (Thomas, 2005:64). In this context, Kureishi's protagonists such as Haroon masquerades as a Buddha and Karim adopts the identity of Mowgli in the novel to fit themselves in multicultural Britain because this is how the changing British society wants to see them.

The novel echoes the Dickensian style of beginning where the narrator Karim Amir expresses his identity as "My name is Karim Amir, and I am an Englishman born and bred, almost. I am often considered to be a funny kind of Englishman…having emerged from two old histories" (*BoS*, 3). The beginning of the novel reveals Karim's frustration, sense of dislocation, disorientation, loss of inheritance, and dispossession of his life. He is compelled to narrate about himself in this self-introductory manner emphasizing a psychological struggle to fit in the society which is not ready to accept him as he is. His identity could be revealed automatically to the readers in the course of the narration of the story as it keeps unfolding. But ironically, Karim has to reveal who he is at the very beginning of the novel which becomes his urge and obligation.

3.5.1 Gautama Buddha and Haroon as a Suburban Buddha.

The title of the novel "*The Buddha…*" has been taken from an ancient Indian saint "Gautama Buddha." The word "*buddha*" derives from "bodh*",* which means "knowledge" or "wisdom". Here it represents the superior quality of knowledge or the awakened one or the enlightened one. It is important to draw the outline of Gautama Buddha's short biography for a better understanding of this novel. According to many ancient historians, Gautama was born in Nepal in 563 BCE or 480 BCE in Lumbini, near Kapilavastu (now in Nepal). He was a prince and his father shielded him in the palace from the realities of this world so that he would become a great king instead of a great religious leader. Legendary biographies tell the story of how Gautama left his palace to see the outside world of human suffering. One day while travelling outside his palace with his charioteer, he discovered the different ill facets of life: old people struggling to walk, decaying corpses, a world full of suffering, and sickness which made him depressed. He became restless to find out the mystery of this world and the purpose of this life. Finally, one day at midnight, he abandoned his father, his wife Yashodhara and infant son Rahula to live the life of a wandering ascetic. He left everything behind in search of the actual reality of

the world, aspiring to the great attainment of knowledge. The followers of Gautama Buddha's ideology (Buddhism) are called "Buddhists". Gautama was in search of true reality and the meaning of life. He achieved sainthood after six years of his search for enlightenment. Some historians believe that he achieved Buddhahood on the night when his son was born. (Lopez, 2017: Religious Britannica).

Is Kureishi's Buddha, Haroon, truly a Buddha at all? He is a big fraudster, who tries to sell his ethnicity dishonestly. According to the narrator, Haroon is "… in the suburban night air, to the wailing of Christian curses from the mouth of a renegade Muslim masquerading as a Buddhist?" (*BoS,*16). Haroon's Buddha business is a fraudulent adventure that he uses to make himself marketable to the British. Haroon is a subcultural element on the English ground, a charlatan deceiving people around him, falsely claiming the knowledge of Buddhism. People in the West, especially in the 60s and 70s, experimented with a new trend of the cultural revolution of Buddhism or the ideology of Buddha which Haroon realizes. Referring to his own time, Kureishi, explains how the 60s with the end of an era of Enlightenment was experimenting with new ideas and beliefs, "It was during the sixties that weird cults, superstitious groups, new agers, strange therapists, seers, gurus, and leaders of all kinds came to prominence" (*MSF,* viii). The entire role of buddha is itself a satire as Haroon being an atheist with a Muslim name plays the role of a religious ideology of Buddhism to adore the Westerners, who are ignorant of Indian culture and the difference between a Buddhist and a Muslim. At another level, Kureishi also satirises the British people who practice racism against the immigrants but they themselves are being tricked by an immigrant character Haroon.

However, Haroon's Buddha identity is not only an experimentation with a new cultural identity, rather it is the outburst of his frustration with and resentment of the huge slippage in class since his arrival in Britain, from an upper-class Indian at home to a lower-working class British lifestyle. Looking back to his sophisticated and aristocratic life in Bombay,

Ball comments that when Haroon moved from Bombay to London, he left a quasi-aristocratic freedom for a workaday prison: "His life, once a cool river of balmy distraction, of beaches and cricket, … was now a cage of umbrellas and steely regularity" (Ball, 2004:233). Back in Bombay, he never worked in his house, never washed his clothes or cleaned the house. Many servants worked for them in their large house. He could not visualize the picture of a kitchen as he had never been there. He went to school in a horse-drawn carriage. His English wife, Margaret, is proud of Haroon's family as she believes, "They're higher than the Churchills" (*BoS,* 24). This confirms the fact that there is a difference between Haroon and the "swarms of peasants" who came to Britain after the Second World War (*BoS,* 24). In this perspective, Haroon's embracing the identity of Buddha can be perceived as his obligation to mitigate this Indian-British class slippage.

3.5.2 Haroon as Buddha: The Attainment of Third Space.

Haroon came to Britain to study law, much like the Indian politicians Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Muhammad Ali Jinnah. His family wanted him to be a qualified lawyer and sophisticated English gentleman upon his return to his home country, India, but it never happened. Unlike Gandhi and Jinnah, he started working as a Civil Service clerk, an underpaid job, which didn't match his qualification, in London. He had never imagined in his life what he is doing now in his dreamland, Britain. He becomes frustrated and void from inside in the South London suburbs. He is looking for a stable place to survive, a third-space where he can breathe freely, where he can get attention and recognition among the white British. In his book, *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha explains the nature of his concept of the "Third Space": "These in-between spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself" (Bhabha, 1994:2). Haroon spent years of trying to be a true Englishman by copying the English accent, culture and lifestyle but he utterly failed

and remained a subject of mockery among them. It is a continual journey to adjust to his life in Britain. Gautama Buddha abandoned his family in search of the true meaning of life and the mystery of the world. Ironically, our so-called modern Buddha (Haroon) leaves his wife, children and later on his job in search of his own pleasure, securing his permanent place in the suburbs, building his identity and establishing a higher social as well as economic class in the society.

Haroon in this context is taking refuge in a Third Space by sticking to orientalist traditions and philosophies; the condition which Dayal explains: … diasporics may position themselves as resisting assimilation, liminally situated on the borders or fault lines, alive to the play of contradiction and to the unregulated possibilities of such a positioning" (Dayal, 1996:46-62). According to Bhabha, "…liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white… This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy" (Bhabha, 1994:5).

Although Haroon achieves his Third Space by the identity of Buddha, he remains unstable because he is aware of the fact that he is not a true Buddha. He realizes his brutal grievances done to his caring wife and his children. As his son Karim notes, "… waves of regret rippled across his face. Regret and guilt and pain just overwhelmed him," he also confesses, "I feel like a criminal" (*BoS,* 116). He also acknowledges that his wife didn't deserve to be hurt and this guilt and regret could damage them all since it is almost impossible for him to be out of that torment in his heart. His so-called knowledge of Buddhism has been acquired from ordinary books, "books on Buddhism, Sufism, Confucianism and Zen which he had bought at the Oriental bookshop in Cecil Court, off Charing Cross Road" (*BoS,* 5).

Haroon realises that the whites will never promote any Indian as long as they exist in this world. He moans, "We old Indians come to like this England less and less and we return to an imagined India" (*BoS,* 74). That is why, at last, he wisely identifies himself with the saint Buddha to secure a place among the whites. He says "You don't have to deal with them- they still think they have an Empire when they don't have two pennies to rub together" (*BoS,* 27). This kind of exciting and interesting adaptation of Buddha identity by Haroon is essential to get recognition among the white British. Despite being subjected to endless mockery and humiliation from the whites as well as his own family, Haroon is desperate to continue with his Buddha business. One of the Englishmen, in the first demonstration of mystic art at Eva's house, whispers to his friend, "Why has our Eva brought this brown Indian here? Aren't we going to get pissed?" (*BoS,* 12). Even some whites from Margaret's neighbours object to her being with Haroon, a brown Indian. Margaret's sister Jean and Jean's husband, Ted, never call Haroon Amir by his Indian name. In the office where he works as a clerk, he is considered a low-grade lazy Indian who has run away from home. There is mockery behind his back and before his face from his colleagues in the office. The mockery has gone to an extent that a newspaper publishes a picture of a bubble coming from his mouth projecting, "Dark mystery of life solved by dark charlatan -at taxpayers' expense" (*BoS,* 115). The actual reality which he is aware of is that he deceives everyone around him, including himself, by adopting this orientalist identity of Buddha. He pretends to be an Asian holy man who can teach people how to gain happiness in this world but ironically, he keeps his own family in a state of continuous suffering. His wife Margaret's mental trauma and wretchedness are the outcomes of his selfish felicity of life, which is in Karim's words, "Mum's wretchedness was the price Dad had chosen to pay for his happiness. How could he have done it?" (*BoS,* 116). He does not regret depriving his family of their legitimate rights. Haroon is also responsible for separating Ted from his wife Jean in the novel. Ted is a simple, honest

and innocent English man who proves to be one of the true disciples of Haroon. In his crisis, he seeks mystic guidance from Haroon but Haroon exploits him for his purpose, in Karim's words, "Ted had lost his life in order to find it. So, Ted was Dad's triumph; he really was someone Dad had freed" (*BoS,* 101). Haroon not only devastates his own family but Ted's family too. Under the influence of Haroon's mysticism, Ted ruins his business, his family, and the life of his wife Jean.

Haroon has been settled in Britain for the last twenty years but still oscillating from one place to another to fit into the English stereotype "… guru business would eventually fall off in London, but it was clear now that he would never lack employment while the city is full of lonely, unhappy, unconfident people who required guidance, support and pity" (*BoS,* 279). Throughout the novel, he remains insecure, alienated and fragmented. Ironically, he claims: "I have lived in the West for most of my life, and I will die here, yet I remain to all intents and purposes an Indian man. I will never be anything but an Indian. When I was young, we saw the Englishman as a superior being" (*BoS,* 263). The paradoxical nature of his life is that although he represents a spiritual guru or a source of peace for the other people in the garb of Buddha, he himself remains an unhappy man throughout the novel. Karim comments that on one side his father evokes himself in the matrix of Eastern ideology (Buddha) to find the intricacies of life, on the other side, he could not even find his way to Beckenham.

3.6 Kureishi's Class Politics and the Brown Man's Burden in *The Buddha of Suburbia*.

In his portrayal of multicultural Britain, Kureishi tactfully highlights the interdependency and relationship between the coloniser and the colonised subjects in his works. Kureishi's class politics are prevalent both within family and society. In this regard, Buchanan comments "Karim's family represents an ambiguous mixture of class identities"

(Buchanan, 2007:17). Margaret's marriage with Haroon promotes her from a pretty working-class girl of the suburbs to a lower middle-class woman. In contrast, Haroon's social status has lowered from an Indian aristocrat to a marginalized British civil servant. Haroon felt superior to the British in his childhood. The British, for him, were ridiculous, stiff, and unconfident. They were ousted and exhausted; their empire was gone; their day was done and it was a turning point. In *The Black Album*, Shahid's uncle, Asif, an influential journalist, also upholds a similar kind of notion just as Haroon about the British people in Pakistan. Asif's satirical comment on the challenges of 80s Britain is quite interesting, "Your country's gone to the wogs! He labelled this as 'the brown man's burden" (*BA,* 6). Haroon's Buddha identity can also be considered a burden shouldered by a brown man to guide towards enlightenment. Asif believes Britain lost its grandeur after losing its empire, it is now merely a country crowded with immigrants, suffering political and economic breakdown, and now the burden is on the immigrants to fix this country by running businesses, playing sports, and presenting news etc. The role is reversed and it is now the brown man whose endeavor can help Britain gain its lost magnificence and splendidness.

Kureishi closely observes in, "The Rainbow Sign", that when colonizers and colonized engaged in a relationship, colonized people like Haroon always try to copy the colonisers. The colonised people even imitate those habits and force themselves into cultural practices that are prohibited or are uncommon in their own culture and religion, like drinking whisky, reading *The Times*, and listening to English music (RS, 21). The immigrants' efforts to assimilate in the English culture ultimately remain unsuccessful as the coloniser/colonized subjects fail to bridge the gap created under the framework of race, class and identity. Rather they become the subject of mockery and abuse by the ex-colonisers. Kureishi explicitly reveals this attitude in his essay when the white British

people judge the Pakistanis with their preconceived worldview of "…dirty, ignorant and less than human- worthy of abuse and violence" (RS, 7).

Haroon represents the social articulation of difference which according to Bhabha is a complex and ongoing negotiation from the minority perspective to authorise cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of "historical transformation" (Bhabha, 1994:3). In a similar context, the character of Mrs. Islam, in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane,* breaks the stereotype of purdah associated with the burkha and adopts a moderate attire of cardigan, headscarf and anoraks to fit in-between her Islamic identity and the Western culture. "I don't wear burkha" Mrs. Islam. "I keep purdah in my mind, … Plus I have cardigans and anoraks and a scarf for my head. But if you mix with all these people, … you have to give up your culture to accept theirs. That's how it is" (Ali, 2003:22). Kureishi satirises this kind of assimilation since Haroon represents a fake Buddha and his son Karim embodies a colonial stereotype that he does not approve of.

3.7 Karim: The Role of Mowgli as Third Space and the Formation of Hybrid Identity.

The concept of hybridity by the postcolonial cultural theorist, Homi K Bhabha received a wide currency around the world in terms of his postcolonial theory. It simply refers to the making of a new transcultural identity in the context of the coloniser and colonised relationship. The term has been used in biology to refer to cross-breeding or cross-pollination between two different species or breeds to create a new or hybrid one through sexual reproduction. The concept of hybridity has been used in different spheres ranging from linguistics to politics and culture to racial perspectives. Bhabha uses the term 'hybrid' in the context of coloniser versus colonised to refer to the interdependence and mutual construction of their subjectivities.

In dealing with Kureishi's works, literary critics have mainly addressed his adaptation of the concept of hybridity both as a cultural strategy and as a political ideal- and how far it is politically enabling and progressive or otherwise. As the concept of hybridity is itself highly fissile and unstable in contemporary cultural theory which is because of its cognates, such as 'in-betweenness'- that it has been in danger of becoming either 'vacuous' or a 'can't' term (Gilbert, 2001:194). In addition, Robert Young also notes in his genealogy of the term in *Colonial Desire*: "Hybridity is … itself a hybrid concept" (Young, 1995:21). Gilbert states, hybridity is conceived as a dialectical and processual movement, whereby two (or more) initially separate and different traditions, identities or cultures combine to produce a new, third, term (Gilbert, 2001:195).

The outspoken and vibrant character in *The Buddha of Suburbia* is the protagonist Karim Amir who has been forced to be elusive and weak because of his mixed racial identity belonging to nowhere. At times he becomes a black Asian Muslim, at times a short, wog, '*Mowgli.*' His father, Haroon has a nostalgic past 'India' to identify with but Karim has none; neither 'India' nor 'Britain'. He struggles to adopt the culture and tradition of his Asian roots, and neither can he seamlessly fit into Western values. Karim is in limbo because of his cultural differences: one based on his Asian roots and the other based on his Western upbringing in Britain. He says, "I felt ashamed and incomplete at the same time, as if half of me were missing, and as if I'd been colluding with my enemies, those whites who wanted Indians to be like them" (*BoS*, 212). As a postcolonial Asian second-generation immigrant Karim represents the perfect epitome of Bhabha's postcolonial cross-cultural exchange who carries the burden of "in-between" space, which is why it becomes essential for him to attain his hybrid self. According to Bhabha, this hybrid cultural identity is constructed in a space that is called the 'Third Space of enunciation'. This entire process of overcoming the cultural diversity and empowering the hybrid identity is described in Bhabha's words, "It is significant that the productive capacities of

this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descent into that alien territory- … may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity" (Bhabha, 1994:56).

Karim represents a hybrid and fluid character in the novel because of the shifting nature of his sexual identity. He enjoys a sexual relationship with both genders: male and female. He is keen to have sex with his female partners Jamila and Helen but his pure love is Charlie whom he desperately misses. The ambivalence nature of his identity is even perceptible in his gender identity when he expresses about himself, "the odd mixture of continents and blood, of here and there..." (*BoS,* 3). He is a mixed-racial British teenager searching for his self-identity and fulfilment in the 1980s London. His sense of emptiness in life can be realised in his words, *"*I always wanted to be somewhere else, I don't know why" (*BoS,* 5). Against a backdrop of class and racial tension, Karim tries to discover who he is, and what he wants while also discovering the true concept of home and familial relations. He is not sure about his real home or home country or where he belongs to. Karim is tossed from one sphere to the other sphere of his life but he is not satisfied with any of them. It appears that his life is determined not by his personal instincts but by the external circumstances or forces of society. Karim's unstable state of being can be compared to the work of Renée Green, the African-American artist, which has… "a lot to do with a kind of fluidity, a movement back and forth, not making a claim to any specific or essential way of being" (Bhabha, 1994:4).

Karim represents a universal plight of in-betweenness, non-belongingness, and ambivalence among the immigrants in Britain. He struggles to identify himself as an Englishman because of his colour and he is indifferent to his Asian heritage. Narrating his own experience as an immigrant in his autobiographical essay, "The Rainbow Sign" Kureishi himself describes a similar state of limbo during his visit to Pakistan. He realizes

his nostalgia for Britain when he discovers that even Pakistan, the country of his ancestral roots, is not ready to accept him, which makes him nostalgic to return to Britain. He expresses this clearly: "Didn't I already miss too much of England? And wasn't I too impatient with the illiberalism and lack of possibility of Pakistan? So, there was always going to be the necessary return to England. I came home… to my country" (RS, 33). Kureishi, in the same essay, distinctly realizes his identity crisis even though he is with his own people in Pakistan. At a party in Pakistan when he tries to assert his nationality as an Englishman, people laughed at him because they cannot believe that, Kureishi being a brown Asian with a Muslim name can be an Englishman. He has to face an even a more embarrassing situation when a Pakistani makes him realise that he would always be a 'Paki'- derogatory slang for Pakistani to the white racists. Ironically, in Pakistan, Kureishi feels proud and confident to identify himself with his Englishness but ultimately, he becomes a subject of mockery in his English identity. In his words, he expresses, "…the fact that I couldn't rightfully lay claim to either place" (RS, 13). Britain is not ready to accept him and he cannot fit into his Asian roots.

During the period of struggle with the in-between space and the state of liminality, Karim is offered the role of Mowgli (a character from Kipling's *The Jungle Book*) by Shadwell, the director of London's theatre society. The role of Mowgli appears to give him an opportunity and space to get recognition and to express an authentic identity; and also, it helps him to negotiate the cultural differences between the 'Self' and the 'Other'. According to Bhabha, this "in-between' space 'becomes the process of symbolic interaction" (Bhabha, 1994:5). He is chosen because of the authentic color of his skin which is suitable for the role and also, he can copy an Indian accent which Shadwell puts in his words, "Karim, you have been cast for authenticity and not for experience" (*BoS,* 147). He has to accept this role of Mowgli and smear himself with "shit-brown cream" (*BoS,* 146) to exploit his racial and cultural identity and find a space for himself and

establish his ethnic identity in this racist society. Shadwell ridicules him because of his racial background in these words, "In fact, you are Mowgli. You're dark-skinned, you're small and wiry, and you'll be sweet but wholesome in the costume" (*BoS,* 142). This, according to Buchanan, is a humiliation which symbolises the many false attitudes Karim feels compelled to adopt to please what he terms "those whites who wanted Indians to be like them", the very "enemies" with whom he feels he has been "colluding" (Buchanan, 2007:45). Shadwell probably makes him realize much bitterly about his identity in the white society in these words, "That must be complicated for you to accept- belonging nowhere, wanted nowhere. Racism" (*BoS,* 141). Shadwell also sarcastically teases him to realize that he is an Indian and should know the Indian accent. He compels Karim to practice the Indian accent violently not in order to make Karim a good actor but to exploit a racist cliché and to make his own profit. He insists that Karim goes to India and smells the dust of his country. Shadwell sneers at Karim, "What a breed of people two hundred years of imperialism has given birth to. If the pioneers from the East India Company could see you… And you're from Orpington" (*BoS,* 141). Shadwell's comments on Karim and his jeering treatment establish the truth of the beginning of the novel, "…of belonging and not, that makes me restless and easily bored" (*BoS,* 3). His fate is such that he is happy and miserable at the same time. He realises the hostile world around him and tries to adjust himself to the society where he has to tolerate all the forms of racism and hostility new and fresh every day. In Karim's words, "We became part of England and yet proudly stood outside it. But to be truly free we had to free ourselves of all bitterness and resentment, too. How was this possible when bitterness and resentment were generated afresh every day?" (BoS, 227). Despite all the hostilities, criticism and racial slurs by Shadwell, Karim uses the in-between space to establish his identity as 'Mowgli' and is able to negotiate with the liminal space to emerge as a hybrid character in the novel. Karim or Haroon as immigrants have no identity or place in the society, they are only

accepted when Karim becomes 'Mowgli' and Haroon becomes 'Buddha'. According to Bhabha, "To grasp the ambivalence of hybridity, it must be distinguished from an inversion that would suggest that the originary is, really, only an 'effect'. Hybridity has no such perspective of depth or truth to provide: it is not third term that resolves the tension between two cultures..." (Bhabha, 1994:162). Haroon's transformation into an Eastern mystical Buddha figure and Karim's Mowgli role for drama "become faux-Indians, successfully marketing back to the English warmed-over versions of their own popular appropriations of Indian culture" (Ball, 2004:233).

Ruvani Ranasinha's comment on the novel, *The Buddha of Suburbia,* is quite remarkable when she says,

> …illustrates two defining features of Kureishi's work. First, it exemplifies the liminality of Kureishi's position as an 'in-between' or insider/outsider, which relates to the ironic distance that characterizes the novel, and is linked to Kureishi's specular function. From this position as an 'in-between', Kureishi (via his deeply autobiographical Karim) holds up a self-ironizing and satirical mirror to the white and minority communities that he moves between… This pervasive ironizing is linked to the second characteristic: the subversive, anarchic streak in Karim/Kureishi that resists all forms of authority. Karim/Kureishi is not simply positioned against the dominant culture, he takes that form of resistance as given: he questions all forms of subcultures, affiliations, and collectivities (Ranasinha, 2002:64).

In her article, "An Introduction to *The Buddha of Suburbia*", Rachel Foss beautifully analyses the themes of race, identity and performing the self. She speaks, "Paradox of paradoxes: to be someone else successfully you must be yourself". All of the characters in the novel are victims of an identity crisis: some are under racial tension, abused, and living under threat; others are victimised by societal class struggle, gender identity and sexuality. Every character is constructed and re-constructed throughout the novel. The very first example is the representation of Karim's role as Mowgli, a typical racial stereotype of an Asian character suitable for the jungle book. Shadwell picks him because of his natural background. Another theatre director, Pyke, is also encouraging Karim to

find someone of his own background for inspiration. Karim tries to fit in almost all the spheres of life; socially, sexually, and politically. He keeps on moving towards an unending self and remains unrealized. The novel ends with Karim's unstable condition; both happy and miserable at the same time (Foss, 2016).

Kureishi's works primarily deal with multiple facets of identity and belongingness such as individual, racial, ethnic, sub-cultural and national. And more specifically, the socio-political implications of Kureishi's works have always been the topic of critical debates and discussion. Shahid in *The Black Album* also finds that everyone tries to identify with a particular group or community to obtain significant recognition. He realizes after moving to his college in London that being human is not everything in life, one should be either White or Black, Asian or European, gay or lesbian, lower or upper social class, Jew or Christian or Muslim etc. Shahid discovers: "These days 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, too, wanted to belong to his people" (*BA*, 92). The radicalization of these Muslim youths such as Chad in *The Black Album*, and Farid in *My Son the Fanatic* can be compared to Charlie when he wears a swastika as a mark of rebellion against the existing cultural and political establishment of 80s Britain. This according to Buchanan,

> … Charlie's later identification with Nazism as a punk (he wears a swastika), suggests pop's power metaphorically to explode the comfortable certainties of British culture… Charlie's motives for his outlandish behavior are plainly more Machiavellian than political, as Karim suggests by his analysis of Charlie's mastery of what he calls 'the friendship trade (Buchanan, 2007:46).

Identity plays a very contentious role in the 80s Britain for the young generation. For Chad and Farid or Ali, it is their religious identity which they are exploring. Whereas for Charlie, he finds a new identity of a punk hero.

3.7.1 Karim as an Anti-Hero in the Novel.

In the article, "From Victim to Survivors: The anti-hero as a Narrative Strategy in Asian Immigrant Writing" and with special reference to *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Seema Jena argues that the concept of the anti-hero is adopted as a powerful narrative tool in the novels of Kureishi. With the medium of this style, Kureishi tries to handle the moral dilemma of representing his community without offending it. The writer acts as an interpreter or a mediator in between the British and the Asian community to please them both. Jena emphasizes,

> …above all the means by which they try to impart the message of survival (in their case to continue writing) in spite of the hurdles that confront them (Jena, 2008).

Jena argues this point with the example of Karim Amir as he continuously struggles to find his moral and social identity. He tries to locate and relocate himself to achieve success in this white community. In actual reality, it is not Karim's identity but the novelist's identity projected through Karim. Kureishi's tension and confusion are infused in Karim and he subscribes to the philosophy of self-help and survivalism. This kind of infusion of moral and social identity crises into their protagonists is a common phenomenon among British Asian writers. Jena strengthens her point from the opening paragraph of *The Buddha of Suburbia*,

> My name is Karim Amir, and I am an Englishman born and bred, almost. I am often considered to be a funny kind of Englishman, … Perhaps it is the odd mixture of continents and blood, of here and there, of belonging and not, that makes me restless and easily bored (*BoS*, 3).

The opening statement from Karim resembles Kureishi himself since both of their backgrounds are the same. Although Kureishi suggests that his encounters with racism such as being beaten up by his own white classmates or called 'Pakistani Pete' by a

teacher were responsible for most of the internalized racism which occasionally comes in his works, he seems to be less interested in portraying himself or blaming the English in general than exploring the class issues raised from racial divisions (Buchanan, 2007:14). The use of 'almost' represents the confusing situation with their identity; the identity of an immigrant writer. They are like gypsies; belonging nowhere: always like 'here and there'. They are bound to locate and re-locate themselves between the cultures or both. Jena further makes this point stronger by giving the example of Karim's anxiety to face up to a social, emotional and cultural crisis. His fear of failure provides him with ambition, an impetus to get rid of the lower working-class status and climb the social ladder. In Karim's words,

> One strong feeling dominated me: ambition. Until this moment I'd felt incapable of operating effectively in the world. Now I was beginning to see that it didn't really have to be that way. My happiness and progress and education could depend on my own activity at the right time. I felt strong and determined. It would lead me upwards (*BoS,* 155).

Karim's family life is ruined due to the break-up of his parents; his social life is destroyed due to continuous racial abuse and his academic life is a complete failure. His life is full of the tension of race and social class. A sense of guilt and disloyalty surrounds him all over, which he expresses in the words, "… feeling I'd betrayed everyone- Changez, Mum and Dad, and myself" (*BoS,* 109). He is the 'picaro' in the novel. David Galloway in his essay, "The Absurd Man as Picaro" defines the figure of the picaro,

> A picaro is a metaphysical outsider dangling between commitments and value systems. An author who transmits through this form is acutely aware of the profound dislocation in his social and political universe (Galloway, 1980:87).

According to Jena, Karim in the novel has been given a very limited choice under traumatic circumstances. When the theatre director Pyke asks him to find a suitable character to act upon, he chooses his best friend Charlie Hero as a character in the drama.

Karim wants to show how a suburban boy, Charlie, becomes a famous singer and moves to America. But Pyke does not approve of his choice of Charlie. In Pyke's view, Karim being a black, small, weird, and mystic person should not choose a white character to act upon as his inspiration. He has to find someone from his own black Asian background. The cast has been decided not on the basis of professionalism but on the basis of color and creed. He is forced to find someone from his own people. Then he chooses Uncle Anwar and later on Changez because Pyke rejected the character of Anwar as well. Initially, Karim is not aware of Pyke's real motive for presenting such a humorous character. But it is only through Tracey, another black actress from the minority community in the same cast, makes Karim realizes Pyke's real intention in her words,

> I am not sure we should show it!... I am afraid it shows black people…Your picture is what white people already think of us. That we're funny, with strange habits and weird customs. To the white man we are already people without humanity, and you go and have Anwar madly waiving his stick at the white boys…You show us as unorganized aggressors. Why do you hate yourself and all black people Karim? (*BoS*, 180).

From Tracey's statement, it can be established that Pyke is in fact a racist director. He is biased towards black Asian people. He is trying to portray these people of color for the purpose of entertainment, selecting the cast as an item or a subject or a commodity of amusement for the whites. Pyke's refusal of Anwar's hunger strike and acceptance of the ridiculous character of Changez on the stage shows how he is sarcastic toward black Asians. Karim wanted to present Anwar as an Indian father who can undertake a hunger strike to force his daughter to marry a man of his choice. He also wanted to showcase the frustration of a typical oppressive, authoritarian and patriarchal mentality. But for Pyke, it is a representation of racist stereotype, the maniacal Indian attitude, uncultured, uncouth and so he rejected Karim's representation of Anwar. On the contrary, he chooses the character of Changez because he could be an absolute source of entertainment for everyone (Jena, 2008).

Similarly, the character of Shahid in *The Black Album* has also been projected as an anti-hero in the novel. His crises can be realized when, in the psychological complexities of his chaotic selves; romance, excitement, self-control, and religion, he transforms Riaz's poetry into erotica. When he works with Riaz's poetry, his mind delves into the retrospection of his love-making moment with his girlfriend Deedee, "… bathing in the warm memory of the love they'd made and the pleasures she'd introduced him to, which they could delectably repeat and extend into the future ..." (*BA*, 130). He is ashamed of what he has done to Riaz's work. He realizes that he has deceived Riaz and the group and lost their trust. Tahira, one of the members of Riaz's group, becomes suspicious about Shahid's loyalty to their group and the agenda when she comments on him as, "an egotist with an evil smile" (*BA*, 235). Similarly, in Hat's words, Shahid is, "… a raving evil spirit and a double-agent working for some other people" (*BA*, 234).

3.7.2 Monolithic Suburbia vs Multi-Cultural London: Karim's Discovery of Utopia.

Sukhdev Sandhu in his article, "Suburbia" compares the changing phenomena of British suburbs during the 20th century. Suburbs in Britain were described as perfect and vital places to live in, a place of order, rationality, and harmony; their homes and gardens sang an essentially patriotic song. The majority of English people desired to move to the suburbs (Sandhu, 2016). The rise of the suburbs was a good thing.

Sandhu also put forward some examples of how the suburbs were reflected in the books of 19th- century and early-20th-century writers. In 1891, journalist Sidney Low pointed out, "The Englishman of the future will be a suburb-dweller". Low speaks about London as essentially delinquent and degenerate. In 1892, George and Grossmith's *The Diary of a Nobody* also speaks highly about suburbs, their people and life. However, it was in the

1930s when the writers started defining the life of suburbs as subaltern, people in the suburbs were minor, as Sandhu defines,

> Values that are championed in contemporary critical theory-ambivalence, liminality, in-betweenness: all of them invoking a kind of creative ambiguity-had scant value in the context of suburbia which was damned for being culturally stranded, for being neither rural nor urban (Sandhu, 2016).

In the 70s and 80s, Karim's dream of his teenage life is escaping from the suburbs in search of belongingness. During his upbringing in Bromley, he feels hapless, dull and boring. He realised that life is chained, with limited opportunities and there is an unending oppression of the children of the immigrants due to mainly suburban racism, which reflects a "wider social phenomenon that Kureishi himself encountered: snobbish scorn for the mass of non-white immigrants in Britain" (Buchanan, 2007:18). Karim insists that the suburbs like Bromley and other outer London countryside were a leaving place which according to Ball, "Karim's move from the suburbs to 'London proper' becomes a local, miniaturized version of postcolonial migrancy and culture shock-the move from ex-colony (country) to metropolis (city)" (Ball, 2004:232). He wants to run away from the suburb to a life of endless adventures, freedom, and fearlessness in London. He is craving a life of social and political idealism where one's identity is not defined by race, ethnicity, and faith. Kureishi's essay, "The Rainbow Sign", also narrates the same intolerant nature of the suburbs against the immigrants. In this essay, he ponders how he and his Pakistani friends were chased and beaten by the suburban lads. Kureishi says, "This is where the lads congregated to hunt down Pakistanis and beat them" (RS, 5). Kureishi reiterates the same sense of anger and frustration among the white youths against the immigrants in *The Black Album*. Most of the racist aggressors are twelve to thirteen-year-old children. Their mind is poisoned with hatred and racism against the immigrants because they feel insecure in their presence. They enjoy hurting these black Asian people who they think

are dangerous and unwanted in their society. Kureishi notes how the black Asians are targeted by the white racists in the following lines,

> The family had been harried-stared at, spat on, called 'Paki scum'- for months and finally attacked. The husband had been smashed over the head with a bottle and taken to hospital. The wife had been punched. Lighted matches had been pushed through the letter-box. At all hours the bell had been rung and the culprits said they would return to slaughter the children (*BA*,1995:90).

Penge is another place where Jamila and her family live. It is closer to London but much poorer, and more violent against Asian people. The residential area of the Asian immigrants is full of neo-fascist groups, hooligans, and thugs, "At night they roamed the streets, beating Asians and shoving shit and burning rags through their letter boxes" (*BoS,* 56). Princess Jeeta, Jamila's mother, is terrified by how they are being targeted day after day, "They threw a pig's head through the shop window as I sat there" (*BoS,* 171). According to Buchanan, "Jamila's geographic and socio-economic closeness to the working classes makes her both unwilling and unable simply to avoid their racism, as Karim attempts to do" (Buchanan, 2007:42). In the essay, "The Rainbow Sign", Kureishi explains his own painful experience of racial discrimination when he describes going to a launderette and receives a shocking response from the attendant when she refuses to touch his clothes. He also refers to an incident where a Pakistani family living in the East End was fire-bombed and a child was killed. The author reveals, "It is the pig's head through the window, the spit in the face, the children with the initials of racist organizations tattooed into their skin" (RS, 34), all physical manifestations of racism. As Kureishi's novels and his articles highlights, these are very common racial attacks to happen to immigrants frequently. How active these racists are against the immigrants can be realized when they conduct regular public meetings, distribute pamphlets and newspapers, and parade on the streets.

Kureishi as a young child always wanted to abandon and escape this suburban life to a safer place, away from hatred and violence. The consequences of racial brutality compel him to take refuge in his liminal space. In his own words, "I withdrew, from the park, from the lads, to safer place, within myself. I moved into what I call my 'temporary' period. I was only waiting now to get away, to leave the London suburbs, to make another kind of life, somewhere else, with better people" (RS, 5). Like Kureishi, Karim is also looking for an escape from the suburb to somewhere safe and better. It is in London that Karim does not feel exposed because of its multicultural nature. London gives him greater space for adventure. It is very exciting for him to be part of a youth culture where he is taught beside girls and their discussion about sex, drugs, abortion, heroin, and prostitution; and all sort of young misadventures in London. Kureishi's love for pop music comes into being in London- especially with David Bowie with whom he grows up in Bromley. According to Sandhu, London becomes Karim's Mecca. In the suburb, even education is not something of a better advantage for most of the people. Many of Karim's classmates in the suburb work as car mechanics or managers in TV and radio departments or local businessmen. Karim realizes that he is poorly educated when comes in the company of Eleanor in London, "… in Eleanor's crowd, I became aware that I knew nothing; I was empty, an intellectual void" (*BoS*, 177). Kureishi as a Londoner compares London of the 70s to the present-day London. Kureishi notes how 'multiculturalism' has changed London over the period of time and also compares with other major cities in the world. According to Kureishi those Sundays now and then in London: how vibrant and decorated now with its multicultural metropolis appeal which is less frantic than New York, and with more purpose than Paris. With its multilingual appearance, it grows more beautiful, busier, multiple and full of promises than those of 70s London (Kureishi, Knock, Knock. 2014).

According to Rachel Foss in the article, "An Introduction to *The Buddha of Suburbia*", the protagonist, Karim, is a mixed-race boy raised up in the suburbs of South London trying to escape from the bondage of the suburbs to the city of London. In a similar context, Rachel Foss also argues that the novel is divided into two parts: the suburbs and the city. In the suburb where Karim grows up, described as dull, boring and stifling, the inhabitants are narrow-minded, cold, shallow, and highly concerned with their physical appearance. His life is shackled and cannot wait to escape the suburbs, "The suburbs were over: they were a leaving place" (*BoS,* 117).

In another part, London represents broadness in possibility, lots of promises, cultural sophistication, and endless opportunity. When for the first time he comes across the company of girls in college in London, Karim is overwhelmed with the counter-culture, the hippie culture of the 70s when these girls have broken free from the traditional feminine mystique. He says, "These women were middle class but they'd broken away from their families. They were always touching each other … the lecturers and asked them for money for drugs … they were in and out of hospital for drug addiction and overdose and abortions" (*BoS,* 94). Karim leaves the suburbs to seek his future in London which offers him a sense of freedom and explore newness. This progress, according to Rachel, is a move from the margin to the centre. The cosmopolitan metropolis saves Karim from racial abuse and class inferiority. Foss defines,

> 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…there were all the drugs you could use (Foss, 2016).

Although Karim as an actor, Haroon as a Buddha, and Charlie Hero as an artist originated from the suburbs of South London, they cannot find their true recognition in this place. They have to break the shackles of the suburbs and escape to a new place of emerging

opportunities. Though Haroon holds his first performance of yoga in Beckenham, which is more affluent and cultured than the suburb of Bromley, he cannot carry on his Buddha business till the end. At the same time, this place makes Charlie Hero an emerging pop star like David Bowie but his destination is ultimately in America. In a similar way, Karim, a frustrated youth in the suburb is able to explore his talent on stage as Mowgli in multi-cultural London. However, London is not completely devoid of the complexities of class and racism. It is in London that Karim is abused by Pyke and exploited by Shadwell. Other theatre actors such as Terry, Gene and Eleanor are also socially and racially victimized in London.

The characters such as Shadwell and Pyke are upper-class theatre directors who cannot get rid of their stereotypical racist mindset. Pyke and his theatre company represent a very sophisticated form of racism distinct from the one represented by the lower white working class of the society such as Johnny and his group in *My Beautiful Laundrette* and Helen's father Hairy Back in *The Buddha of Suburbia* or the local hooligans who attack the Bangladeshi family in *The Black Album*. Karim is being tossed among the upper-class elites like Pyke, Marlene, or Shadwell, sometimes for sexual pleasure and sometimes to play the role of a character which suits his ethnic identity. He has been sexually exploited by Pyke or Marlene just like Shahid by Deedee in *The Black Album*. Karim very soon realises after being sexually abused by Pyke that "… although Pyke has essentially joined the elite, he still approves of the antagonism shown by those lower down" (Buchanan, 2007:48).

According to Foss, the novel also witnesses lots of experimentation in the actions of different characters in the historical time period and in a foreign land. The well-structured political and cultural evolution in the society that Kureishi puts forward is notable- music, popular culture, societal change and evolution in the 1970s, the ending of Leftist ideology and the beginning of Thatcherism. For the first time, culture and identity become part of

business, a commodity bought and sold like any other material. Charlie Hero becomes a pop star in America, selling his talent as well as his Englishness and getting a lot of money. Theatre director, Shadwell, sells Karim in the attire of Mowgli. So as the situation with Haroon's inexplicit identity in the garb of Buddha. Foss points out, "… the crisis of the individual seems to be reflected and magnified in the corporate life of society as a whole" (Foss, 2016)

The historical and political discourse about immigration and patriotism in the 70s has a greater impact in this novel. The emergence of right-wing politicians such as Enoch Powell and Margaret Thatcher with their Conservative ideological wrath and racism against the immigrants reshaped the British society. Powell's idea of deportation of the non-white immigrants back to their own countries made him an extremist right-wing figurehead for the National Front. People like Helen's father stands with Enoch Powell and threatens Karim that they are with Enoch.

3.8 Rafi and Alice: A Cross-Cultural Affair in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*.

Kureishi presents the characters of Rafi and his beloved Alice in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* as representations of the Victorian and Thatcherite ideology of heteronormativity. Both of them were raised in colonial India with the notion of civilized Britain as defined under colonialism. Alice echoes the Victorian authoritative mindset in the film. She condemns the violent as well as riotous activities of London's youth as disrespectful to this great land (London) and remarks to Rafi that, "I hate their (London's youths) 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" (*SRGL,* 253). She desperately justifies the eviction of the illegal occupiers and condemns them as, she thinks, they live on their whim by ignoring societal norms and orders. She is ignoring the fact that these occupants are the minorities and

marginalized section of the society who according to Rani and Rosie, "are the powerless just trying to find a place in this rotten society for themselves… they have no given place in this society!" (*SRGL*, 263).

The character of Alice resembles the character of Eva in *The Buddha of Suburbia* where Eva's relationship with Haroon and her love for Eastern ideologies such as yoga are the outcome of multiculturalism in 80s Britain. Both of them symbolize the nostalgia for the loss of empire and they still retain their love for the colonial past. Eva relives her colonial past through Haroon and his Buddhism whereas Alice preserves her colonial past through Indian memorabilia. Alice's colonial nostalgia is reflected in her house, which is full of Indian objects from the twenties and thirties. Her affinity for Jane Austen's novels and her suitcase full of old clothes, which she packed in order to elope with Rafi thirty years ago with the hope of true marriage, represents her as a typical Victorian woman who has been trapped in patriarchal English society. Her romantic love for Rafi can be realized when she shows him that suitcase and many diaries filled with love letters which she had written but never posted. Alice expresses her pain for longing for a true relationship in her words, "I waited for you, for years! Every day I thought of you! Until I began to heal up. What I wanted was a true marriage. But you wanted power" (*SRGL*, 254-55). Alice and Eva represent the epitome of traditional suburban English values. Kureishi represents a subtle ironic image of an English patriarchal middle-class society through Alice. She had been trapped between the nostalgia of the colonial past and the prevalent male-dominated English society. The nostalgia remains part of her life in the form of her unfulfilled love for Rafi and she cannot find a space in her middle-class post-imperial society. But Eva in *The Buddha of Suburbia* is successful and is able to challenge the middle-class patriarchal norms in her post-imperial English society. Unlike Alice, Eva successfully finds her space in her interracial relationship with Haroon. Rafi's notion of a civilized Britain has been defined under the realm of colonialism. England for a

postcolonial character like Rafi means Earl Grey tea, Jamaica rum cake, hot and buttered toast; all the things that Alice describes as middle-class creations.

Other characters such as Pyke's wife, Marlene, as well as Helen in *The Buddha of Suburbia* also develop inter-class and inter-racial amorous entanglements with Karim, a black Asian young man because of his kindness and innocence. Pyke's disgusting relationship with other actresses throws Marlene in dark. She is living a vacuous life with Pyke and now she wants to break up her relationship with him in search of relief from her vexation. Young and beautiful Helen, Hairy Back's daughter, also loves Karim and her relationship with him brings forth an example of the cultural assimilation between the East and the West. She is affectionate towards Karim and his family even though she knows about their culture, taste, and attitude. Once at a party at Anwar's house she starts retching at the sight of how Changez is eating by his good hand without a spoon and a fork. It is to her comfort of being with these black Asian people, and she consoles Haroon, "But this is your home, she said. We like you being here. You benefit our country with your traditions" (*BoS,* 74).

The significance of multiculturalism is projected through the unique relationship between East and West represented through Kureishi's characters such as Rafi's longing for London and Alice's love for Indian memorabilia. It is interesting to see a link between the romantic relationship and the nostalgia for empire in the characters such as Alice, Rafi, and Eva which highlight the middle-class attitude, and Western patriarchy of the 80s and 90s Britain. The cross-cultural relationship in Helen's innocent and honest feelings for Karim on one hand and Madelaine's love for Farid in *My Son the Fanatic* on the hand can be considered as the multicultural aspects of postcolonial Britain.

3.9 Shahid and Deedee: Representation of Mutable Urban Lifestyle Resulting from Multiculturalism.

The central character in the novel, *The Black Album*, Shahid Hasan, is of Asian descent but born and brought up in Britain. The novel begins with Shahid's exposure to London as a college student and for the first time, there, he comes across the Asian community. Shahid is exposed to quite opposite ideologies at the same time: on one hand, he adheres to his religious belief and at other times is persuaded by modern art, secular culture, and Western philosophy in the college. Instead of sticking to one, he moves back and forth between different ideologies. He works as an activist for the rights of the Asian immigrants with a group from his college represented by Riaz Al-Hussain, a leader of the Muslim minority Asian community in the same college in London. Shahid's creativity as an artist gets exposure in the company of a cross-racial relationship with a white woman, Deedee Osgood who is a senior lecturer in the same college. Deedee becomes a source of Shahid's adventure to his sexual desire, drug addiction, and pub culture. According to Kaleta, the dynamic relationship between Deedee Osgood and Shahid is a central theme of the novel. Other themes are gender politics, experimental love, love as a familial concept, sensationalism. Shahid and Deedee exemplify today's mutable urban lifestyle resulting from multiculturalism in Britain (Kaleta, 1998:134). Their powerful love affair has at its background the capital London, which is at times projected positively and optimistically although it's not free from complications with its multiculturalism. But the hybridity of the characters' perspective gives Shahid the power to see both critically and respectfully. His love affair turns out to be surrealistic where he experiences the most sensational ecstasy. The influence of his romance with Deedee is so profound and intense that even when he is in extreme danger - with Riaz's group guarding the Bengali family against racial attack- the retrospect of his affair remains ineradicable. Although Shahid contemplates his exotic and euphoric sense of pleasure in Deedee's romantic world, he is,

at the same time, also aware of the fact that it is just a mere hallucination created by drug addiction, "What illusions he'd been subject to! What torrents of drug-inspired debris he had allowed to stream through his head!" (*BA,* 130). He does not let his sweetest memories of the love affair and pleasure with Deedee fade away from his life. Instead, he wants to retain and recall them time again in the future. Kaleta also comments, "The monogamous relationship is what both characters need. Shahid finds in Deedee his dream lover-knowing, incentive, and erotic; and, likewise, Deedee finds in Shahid her dream lover-devoted, innocent, and prolific. Deedee's experience makes her attractive to Shahid; Shahid's youth makes him as attractive to her" (Kaleta, 1998:124).

Shahid who was once shy and could not express his creativity or focus on his interests due to familial dominance over him is now quite determined and confident in the company of Deedee. He was never encouraged by his family to exercise his freedom; rather he was suppressed to express his resentment of traumatic racial experiences as a black immigrant among the white racists. Deedee is playing a greater role to shape up his character when his own family fails to do so. In her company, Shahid becomes very confident and outspoken in his discussion even about the controversial and sensitive issues such as racism, religion, and politics. Shahid beautifully legitimizes the cause of joining Riaz and his group in his mission and justifies him when Deedee criticizes him. Shahid argues, "The thing, Deedee, clever white people like you are too cynical. You see through everything and rip everything to shreds but you never take any action. … But we're the victims here! And when we fight you say we're getting worked up about nothing! You sit smoking dope all day and abuse people who actually take action!" (*BA,* 110). According to Shahid, Riaz is fighting for a cause, for the deprived Asian immigrants in this country. But he cannot accept the fact that intellectual like Deedee just criticizes Riaz's activities and does nothing for anyone and for any victim of racism or for those who are suppressed or deprived in this country. This contemplation that Shahid reflects

is the outcome of Deedee's secular and Western influence on him. Kureishi presents this cross-racial relationship between Deedee and Shahid as a paradigm of multiculturalism which exceeds any racial, ethnic, and geographical boundaries.

3.10 Mosque: An Epitome of Peace and Unity in Diversity in *The Black Album*.

Kureishi's representation of the mosque as a place of worship, in *The Black Album*, plays an important role to unite Muslims from different national, cultural and racial backgrounds under one roof. The congregation at the mosque with a diverse community and free from any discrimination can be considered an epitome of peace and tranquility. Kureishi paradoxically presents the image of the mosque where people from diverse backgrounds are at peace with each other whereas outside the mosque there is hatred and discrimination. After a horrid and terrifying experience full of hatred and bitterness against the Asian immigrants, Shahid explores a calm and peaceful environment among diverse communities in this mosque where people from different ethnicity, culture, race, class and nationalities congregate unhesitatingly under one roof. The business persons are in their suits, some are in their work uniforms and old people are wearing salwar kamiz. Kureishi depicts the contrast between Shahid's previous experience of prejudice and discrimination and his present observation of oneness despite multiple differences, "Men of so many types and nationalities- Tunisians, Indians, Algerians, Scots, French- gathered there, … that it would have been difficult, without prior knowledge, to tell which country the mosque was in…There were dozens of languages. Strangers spoke to one another. The atmosphere was uncompetitive, peaceful, meditative" (*BA*, 131-132).

Shahid's tranquil and peaceful experience in the mosque brings his relationship with Deedee into crisis because he comes under a moral dilemma. Moreover, he realizes that to retain such peaceful experience, which is in contrast to the hostility and hatred of the outside world, he must abandon either Riaz or Deedee at this stage. The psychological

transition of Shahid from Deedee's romantic love affair to Riaz's ideological setup is reflected through the physical movement from the tranquil environment of the mosque to the bustling city. He discovers his sharp transition is very difficult to reconcile with. However, this transition is not permanent in Shahid because when he leaves Riaz and his group, the effect of their stories which he believes are the simple creation of men and women or which cannot be true or false vanishes just like the effect of cinema disappears at the end. Moving from one psychological state to another is Shahid's ambivalent nature which Kureishi explains through Shahid's transition from a confined family home to the multicultural city of London. Finally, Shahid rejects Riaz and his fanaticism. He feels ashamed for being with them when they burn the book. He considers these people mentally sick and expresses this in his words, "The stupidity of the demonstration appalled him. How narrow they were, how unintelligent, how … embarrassing it all was!" (*BA,* 225). He realizes that he cannot carry on with this kind of ambiguity anymore. So, he abandons Riaz and accepts life with Deedee in complete freedom and liberty.

3.11 Conclusion.

Kureishi's works reflect on the last decades of the 20th century when Britain is turning into a multicultural melting pot. It is the time period when Britain is undergoing a shift in its identity from its purely 'white' into a 'mixed-race nation' with many challenges. After the Second World War, Britain faced a huge crisis in labour forces in various sectors which were fulfilled by immigrants from its former colonies. These immigrants were from various racial and cultural backgrounds. This influx of immigrants changed Britain from a purely white nation to a mixed-racial or multicultural nation. Although the term 'multiculturalism' by definition connotes a glorifying and celebrated phenomenon in the society, the flipside of the term promoted racial violence, hatred, class discrimination, and xenophobia underneath. It also inadvertently creates a rift between the first-generation and second-generation Asian immigrants while either of them tries to locate

and establish their status and identity in Britain. From time to time, political figures like Enoch Powell, Duncan Sandys and Margaret Thatcher have emerged and challenged its multicultural entity with their anti-immigration agendas. However, polarizing the nation with purely white sentiment remained unsuccessful due to the mass-level presence of immigrants in different sections of British society. Moreover, the racial and cultural intolerance among the white working-class young British create the background force to spread violence and hatred in the mixed community which in turn threatened the peaceful co-existence in a multicultural society. A similar kind of concept has been given by John Rex and Gurharpal Singh in the article where they state, "In the United Kingdom, for example, when there were disturbances involving violent conflict between Asians and native British citizens, such conflicts were diagnosed as due to multiculturalism. Economic migrants or political migrants and refugees were seen as endangering the unity of society and this unity was seen as having to be defended against multiculturalism" (Singh & Rex, 2003). Under such circumstances, Kureishi's works show that to combat these challenges, the immigrants either turned to be a hybrid, become ambivalent and lived in liminality or fight back against the atrocities.

Kureishi's works try to interlink the socio-political issues of race and class with religious ideology in the multicultural Britain of the 80s and 90s. His works successfully analyze the lower-working class, marginal groups such as South Asian Muslim immigrants, radical university professors, young college students, prostitutes, drug dealers etc. However, Buchanan in the book, *hanif kureishi* states … "there is no possibility of establishing any meaningful class-based or racial solidarity that can protect one from commodification, exploitation, inequality and inauthenticity of contemporary British life" (Buchanan, 2007:41-42). The Asian immigrant community who feels insecure and vulnerable in the midst of racial tension, realize that they need a community leader like Riaz in *The Black Album* or Maulvi in *My Son the Fanatic* to represent them and their

communities. The immigrants especially the first-generation immigrants are afraid that their religious, as well as their cultural identity, is at risk due to the assimilation with the British culture. In Kureishi's novel, *The Black Album*, many college students from the minority community join Riaz's group to voice out their protest against the threats, exploitation and discrimination of the racist whites. Under Riaz and Maulvi, they want to be unified and fight back against the threats. One of the members of Riaz's group expresses the need to protect their people in the words, "There's an emergency on. Defence required. Our people under attack tonight" (*BA*, 82). The example of Tahira, who works as an activist in Riaz's group speaks about the consequence of wearing her Islamic outfit, hijab outside the home. She is jeered at in a public place, "Surely you've heard how hard it is to wear the hijab? We are constantly mocked and reviled, as if we were the dirty ones. Yesterday a man on the street said, this is England, not Dubai, and tried to rip my scarf off" (*BA*, 105). Growing intolerance, among the racists in multicultural Britain, instigate the immigrants to adopt defensive mechanisms in the form of violent protests. A similar argument has also been put forward by a critic, Simon Peplow in the book, *Race and riots in Thatcher's Britain*. According to Peplow, "Facing discrimination and racial attacks, minority ethnic groups in Britain organised themselves in self- defence and self-advancement, often influenced by transnational Black Power and Pan- Africanism ideologies; Gilroy has forwarded the 'Black Atlantic' as an arena of transnational cultural construction." (Peplow, 2019:3). The rebellious immigrants are no more inspired by the Gandhian principles of 'Non-Violence', and 'Tolerance' and the principle of 'An eye for an eye leaves the whole world blind'. Instead of going along with the Gandhian principles, these immigrants are armed with cricket bats, clubs, knives and meat cleavers: no more to tolerate now but to fight back to survive. According to Riaz, "We don't turn the other cheek. We will fight for our people who are being tortured in Palestine, Afghanistan, Kashmir! War has been declared against us. But we are armed" (*BA*, 82). Riaz and his

group typify any other radicalized groups which threatened the multicultural aspects of the then British society.

However, in recent years the inclusion policies of British values- democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law, mutual respect, tolerance and understanding of different faiths and beliefs led to the emergence of a 'British Identity' irrespective of race, color, and ethnicity. But even after decades, the recent protest like 'Black Lives Matter', an increasing number of hate crimes, and religious radicalisation in this era of multiculturalism and globalization, still question the concept of such a multicultural, tolerant 'British Identity' because Britain is still divided under race, class, culture, religion, and ethnicity. To conclude, although multiculturism has inadvertently been responsible to create divisions, discrimination, racism, and clashes in the British society, but the paradox is the aspect of multiculturism in the British society is indispensable, as today's British identity, Britishness or the British society is based on the ethos of multiculturalism. To avoid divisions in the British society, the celebration of otherness or multiculturalism is a necessity, and should not just be limited to the discussion in art, media, and politics.

Chapter: 4

Political and Economic turmoil in Britain: An Offshoot of Thatcherism with Special Reference to Kureishi's *My Beautiful Laundrette* & *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid.*

4.1 Introduction.

This chapter investigates the political and economic crisis during the 80s when Margaret Thatcher was the prime minister of Britain. During her tenure, how Thatcher's free-market policies affected the working-class population despite her effort to diminish the economic class hierarchy and also how only a handful of Asian immigrants successfully flourished and established their businesses. Further, this chapter delves into the factors of how a particular section of the society is benefitted from her economic policies and the majority of the society is deprived as the wealth was not equally divided. The chapter also explores how the political and economic turmoil affected the British film industry as there was a shift from the nostalgia of Britain's glorious past in heritage films to the more social realist movies like *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985) and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* (1987). The playwright, like Hanif Kureishi and the director like Stephen Frears, delved into the grim realities of the British society, under the leadership of Thatcher, where poverty, unemployment, economic crisis, and drug smuggling had been looming.

4.2 Rise of Thatcherism and its Impact on Film and Literature.

Margaret Thatcher, the first female and the longest-serving (1979-1990) prime minister of Great Britain influenced not only the politics of the country but also left a major impact on British art, culture and literature. She is known as the 'Iron Lady' who set her country on a rightward economic course (Gregory, 2013). Her uniqueness as a leader laid in her uncompromising politics and leadership style. After becoming the prime minister of Great Britain, her policies have eventually been known as 'Thatcherism.' Throughout her political career, she remained a controversial figure due to her economic and ideological policies. She has been portrayed in art and literature in various manners; both applauded

and criticized at times. The most recent drama film on Thatcher is *The Iron Lady* released in 2011 which establishes her as a significant figure in British politics. Some of the television drama series like Patricia Hodge's portrayal of Thatcher in *The Falkland's Play* (2002) and Lindsay Duncan's portrayal in the 2009 film *Margaret* have been very critical of her economic policies and repressive policies against immigrants. In a similar way, Hanif Kureishi's films also explore the complexities of the personal lives of the immigrants and the white natives of Britain in the 1980s under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher. Bruce King also notes in the essay, "Kureishi's plays and screenplays of the 1980s were part of an angry response to Thatcher's government and its dismantling of the Welfare State … Kureishi felt the excesses of the Left … were partly responsible for England's problems" (King, 2005:89). According to Buchanan, "Thatcherism is the single most important political ideology in his [Kureishi's] characters' lives, having outlived Marxism, racial solidarity and feminism" (Buchanan, 2007:24). During Thatcher's eleven years in power, the post-war migrants to Britain faced hostility from the working-class white British people who had often blamed the migrants from former colonies for taking away their jobs and housing and taking advantage of the state welfare services. The hostility and frustration among these British working-class people against the Asian immigrants were further prompted by the resentful speeches of Right-wing politicians such as Enoch Powell and Thatcher. In one of her speeches before the election in 1979, how Thatcher targeted the immigrants and commented on their increasing numbers, which has already been illustrated in section 3.3 (Britain: A Multicultural Melting Pot with its Unfolding Racism with Special Reference to "The Rainbow Sign"). Thatcher's speech is quite provocative and overtly establishes the fact that her idea of Britishness is the one that does not embrace cultural differences and rather it opposes integration into the British society. The victory of the Falklands war in 1982 was a moment of triumph for Thatcher whose actions were aimed at recovering a national

identity of Britishness, free from the ideas of allegiance, desire, history and character; rather it would be defined by the ties of the British blood. She introduced, for the first time, three tiers of British Citizenship: those born in Britain, or the children and grandchildren of those born in Britain… "Ties of blood, not allegiance, desire, history or even character made Britons" (Nataranjan, 2013). But by doing so, she plunged Britain into the crisis of unemployment, the catastrophe of racism, the marginalization of working-class people, and hostile confrontation with the miners.

Kureishi's works have been greatly influenced by Thatcher's socio-economic policies in the early 80s. His works like *My Beautiful Laundrette* and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* mainly deal with Thatcher's repressive policies against immigrants, the welfare state, privatization, free-market policy and entrepreneurship.

4.3 Changing Phenomenon of the British Film Industry during Thatcher: A Shift from 'Heritage Films' to Social Realist Movies.

There were significant changes in the film broadcasting industry during the Thatcherite rule due to the impact of her socio-economic policies. The devastating impacts of the Second World War and the loss of the Empire left Britain in a state of stagnant economic growth, industrial decline, political polarization and social unrest. To fill the nostalgia of the prosperous past, there was a huge demand for 'heritage films' among the middle-class audience. Andrew Higson suggests that the success and demand of the British cinema in the 1980s lies in the appearance of these 'heritage films' with their representation of a marvellous 'national past', and a vivid evocation of the Britishness (Higson, 2006:91). However, the 'heritage films' were criticized from the socialists' point of view as they mainly focused on the upper class or aristocrats with their portrayal of splendid historical English settings and a lavish lifestyle that only satisfied a particular section of the society and ignoring the majority of the working-class people. The socialists criticized these films as these films were influenced by Thatcher's conservative ideology in their depiction of

Britain in the decades of the 19th century and pre-World War-Π in a nostalgic fashion, and projecting it as a prosperous, powerful and socially cohesive nation even in the era of social, political and economic crises during the fall of British Raj.

Higson also characterizes such an approach as colored with a conservative response which tried to compensate for the 'collective, post-imperialist anxiety' by recreating a picture of national identity that was 'pure' and fixed. (Higson, 2006:104). But the critics like John Hill reject this perspective on the British cinema of the 80s as only preoccupied with nostalgia or the sense of post-imperial vacuity. Rather he argued that there was also "a more unorthodox, and socially aware cinema that was concerned with the present" (Hill, 1999:133). The British working class has always been represented in varied ways in British cinema over the decades. However, going back to the period of 1960s there has been a significant decline of interest among the working-class audience for the British cinema as although the films show the industrial settings and the emphasis on the representation of the working-class characters, they by no means showed a progressive image of the society (Shafer, 2001:3-14). According to Hill, a new trend in British cinema emerged in the 1980s when contemporary social issues and the concerns of the working classes were combined with 'art-cinema' (Hill, 1999:66-7). British cinema during this period portrayed the consequences of the economic policies of Thatcher and was overtly critical of Thatcherism. Writers like Hanif Kureishi, Salman Rushdie, and Angela Carter were attacked for being critical of Thatcher and the Tories. Kureishi himself states, "We were attacked… mostly for not celebrating Thatcher's achievements at a time of censorship, attacks on the unions and the welfare state, increasing poverty, escalating redistribution of wealth from poor to rich, and the creation of thuggish yuppies" (Kureishi, 1992: ix). The director of the film, *My Beautiful Laundrette*, Stephen Frears was also critical of Thatcher's social and economic policies. In his statement, Frears says, "Thatcher has divided the country between the … employed and the unemployed [and

the] rich and poor" confirming the desire to "address the nation" (Barber, 1993:210). Kureishi and Frears, both being outright critics of Thatcher, captured racism and social injustice which caused anger and despair among the white working-class people and immigrants during her rule. The working class under the Thatcherite rule was,

> divided into the respectable working-class, the *working* working-class, the guys who became builders and car salesmen, the entrepreneurial hustlers that Thatcher so worshipped, and the under-class, who were on the dole, who were involved in drugs and alcohol, and couldn't get involved in the so-called Thatcher revolution…The other thing in terms of class in Britain was the huge influence of Asians and Afro-Caribbean people... who joined the working class, and then transformed it in the last twenty years in other ways as well (Buchanan, 2007:113-14).

The social realist movies of Kureishi such as *My Beautiful Laundrette, Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*, and *London Kills Me* which took over British cinema during this period screened the marginalised section of the British society, mainly the ethnic minorities and the working-class British who were utterly shocked by the 'materialistic culture' produced by Thatcherism (Lay, 2002:78). In Gilbert's words "The utopian implication of Kureishi's films is that contemporary Britain has … the possibility of expanding traditional conceptions of national identity to create for the first time a genuine and revolutionary, though always contradictory rather than blandly harmonious, unity-in-diversity" (Gilbert, 2001:92). These films also depict the decline of the post-war consensus and also herald "the possibility of a new sense of national community built on the idea of pluralism and of non-hierarchical conceptions of difference" (Gilbert, 2001).

The film *My Beautiful Laundrette,* written by Hanif Kureishi and directed by Stephen Frears, was broadcast on *Film on Four* which is a part of `Channel Four' broadcasting group. It was Karin Bamborough, of Channel Four, who wanted Kureishi to compose something for *Film on Four*. Kureishi reveals in his essay, "About *My Beautiful Laundrette"*, "I was extremely keen. For me *Film on Four* had taken over from the BBC's *Play for Today* in presenting serious contemporary drama on TV to a wide audience"

(Kureishi, 1992:110). Lord Annan, Chairman of the Committee of the Future of Broadcasting stated about the changing phenomenon of future broadcasting under the impact of a multicultural society,

> Our society's culture is now multi-racial and pluralist: that is to say, people adhere to different views of the nature and purpose of life and expect their own view to be expressed in some form or other. The structure of broadcasting should reflect this variety (House of Commons, 1976-1977:30).

The channel 4 played an important role in producing such low-budget films as *My Beautiful Laundrette* when there was very little finance available for British cinema. This partnership between film and a television channel had a great impact on British cinema during the 80s and 90s. It created a new era for British cinema opening up opportunities for new talents and shifting from the traditional topics of British film culture.

4.3.1 *My Beautiful Laundrette* under the backdrop of Thatcherism: Challenging Stereotypes of 'Heritage Films'.

Kureishi's screenplay, *My Beautiful Laundrette*, was published in 1985 and was later adapted for film and directed by Stephen Frears. Following its success at the Edinburgh Festival, the film gained international fame. Later, in 1987, it was nominated for an Oscar for the best screenplay and was also nominated for the 1986 BAFTAS (*My Beautiful Laundrette*, British Library). Kureishi won the New York Film Critics' Best Screenplay Award for the film. The film centres around a young Pakistani character Omar (played by Gordon Warnecke), whose school friend and lover, Johnny (played by Daniel Day Lewis) represents a typical street punk working-class hero of 1980s Britain. The other major characters include Papa, Omar's father representing an intellectual socialist (played by Roshan Seth), and Nasser, Omar's uncle representing a wealthy entrepreneur and businessman (played by Saeed Jaffrey). Kureishi generated the idea for this film from his experience of visiting the launderettes of one of his father's friend. His uncle also suggested him to run a launderette business. But as he realized that washing was not his

vocation, instead he used this experience to develop the script of *My Beautiful Laundrette* (Kureishi, 1992: vii). This film was a breakthrough from the then-contemporary themes in its subversion of stereotypes where an ethnic minority group is shown as superior and economically prosperous who are able to establish themselves as successful entrepreneurs with the help of Thatcher's economic policies. It depicts the period of Britain under the leadership of the Conservative party. Whether it is Thatcher or Powell or Sandys, their political motives were mainly targeted the Asian immigration into Britain. They adopted the policy of speaking for the silent majority of the white British to gain mass support. These Conservative politicians considered the Asians as inferior to others, culturally unsophisticated and economically backward. But ironically Kureishi's film projects the white working-class characters as inferior, vagabonds and economically dependent on the affluent Asian immigrants. Apart from the theme of Thatcherism and unemployment in Britain, the film itself is a form of amusement in spite of its portrayal to encompass the wrath of racism, gender and sexuality, and the grim reality of the Asian male-dominated family setup.

The film was the first collaboration between the writer, Kureishi and the director, Stephen Frears, while both were opponents of the then political orthodoxies of Thatcher and the Tory government. As a result, the film is a critique of Thatcher's political and socio-economic policies, and defied the tradition of the 'heritage films'. Kureishi as a scriptwriter didn't like such a setting for this film; rather they chose an abandoned place with "many railway lines dipping and criss-crossing beside and above it…" (Kureishi, 1992:113) associating the music of maracas. Using an old shop as the location for the launderette off the street where people queuing for washing made the setting of the film more authentic. Kureishi expresses this desire to make a new type of film, "… I was tired of seeing lavish films set in exotic locations… a hot country, new technology and were

capable of aiming the camera at an attractive landscape… stood a star in a perfectly clean costume delivering lines from the old book" (Kureishi,1992:112-3).

The screenplay begins with the quotation painted on the window of a large detached house illegally occupied by Johnny and his friend Genghis which has recently been bought by a rich Pakistani businessman, Salim, "Your greed will be the death of us all" and "We will defeat the running wogs of capitalism" and "Opium is the opium of the unemployed" (*MBL*, 39). These words echo the utter bitterness among white working-class people in the 1980s against the immigrants whom they blamed for their unemployment, lack of opportunities and benefits overlooking the failure of the government. These words target Thatcher's policy of so-called economic opportunities for all. But in reality, the young generation is completely dependent on government benefits as Papa comments on Omar's idle situation, "He's on dole like everyone else in England. Just roaming and moaning" (*MBL*, 43) depicting the miserable condition of young people like him in the 80s Britain. It is important to note that even the white British working-class represented by Johnny and his gang in this film are also the victims of this enterprise culture of Thatcher's competitive free market policy. Her economic policies of free market and enterprise created a sense of unethical greed for wealth and money. Indeed, Thatcher's policy for equality of fairness and opportunity raised certain self-interested entrepreneurs eventually, which in turn, increased violence and attacks. As Leonard Quart critically explains the scenario of the impact of Thatcher's policies which according to him,

> …turned England into a more morally callous, crude, and desperate society where a falling quality of life was covered over by a rising standard of living. She helped create an England where the rich got richer and consumed more conspicuously, while the ethic of social responsibility began to unravel. Her policies, which included cuts in public spending, tax reductions weighted towards the affluent, and, where possible, the privatization of social services, have led to the growth of a visible, embittered underclass - 20% of the people living under the poverty line, the number of the homeless up to 1 million (150,000 under the age of 25), and the highest per capita prison population within the European

> community. Clearly, one of Thatcher's prime legacies was to produce a more impoverished life for a sizeable portion of the population (Quart, 1991-92:33-41).

Asha Sen in her essay, "Re-writing History: Hanif Kureishi and the Politics of Black Britain", explains, "Quart's description of Thatcherite England provides an effective backdrop of Kureishi's films. Like other immigrant writers, Hanif Kureishi attacked England's Conservative government for its discrimination against minorities and the working-class" (Sen, 2000:62). This can be further justified by Kureishi himself from the essay, "Introduction", where he explains,

> This row between us and them [the Tories and the Conservative press] was also an argument about language and representation. These people wanted to control the freedom of the imagination. They were afraid of anyone who saw Britain as a racially mixed, run-down, painfully divided, class-ridden place. For their fantasy was of a powerful, industrially strong country with a central, homogeneous, culture (Kureishi, 1992:x).

The image below shows the skinhead cadres of the right-wing organization, National Front protesting to defend the rights for the whites.

Fig. 4-1: Reportage photo of Skinheads, National Front Rally, Fulham, London 1981, 30 August- Report Digital.

The resentment among the young working-class lads like Johnny and his gang towards the economically affluent Pakistani immigrants like Salim and Nasser can be compared with the cadres of National Front during the time of 1980s in Britain. This is the time period when the white youths were very active. Their anger and frustration against the immigrants can be realized from the statement of one of the squatters when swears at Cherry, "you pig, you scum, you filthy rich shit, etc." (*MBL,* 41). Bart Moore-Gilbert also notes Kureishi's perception when projecting the anger of the white working-class, "… the most immediate and violent expressions of racism have tended to emerge from working-class formations" (Gilbert, 2001:10). These white working-class young generations engaged in a mental war against the Asian immigrants because they could not accept the economic discrepancy they are living with and moreover they thought that these immigrants had taken their jobs and opportunities and these immigrants were responsible for their miseries. This hostile feeling of resentment was further fuelled by political leaders. When Salim and his wife Cherry try to occupy their new house by throwing out the squatters Johnny and his friend Genghis with the help of the Jamaicans, Genghis wants to fight back rather than leave the house, "No, we've got to fight" (*MBL,* 40). Genghis's words are symbolic of the frustration against the wealthy Pakistanis whom he thinks have benefitted from Thatcher's economic policy by depriving them. Genghis is representing a generation with a similar hatred against every immigrant living in this country. Even Johnny, one of the racist punks, reveals their hostility towards the Pakistani immigrants, "… Pakis just come here to hustle other people's lives and jobs and houses" (*MBL,* 77). As Whiteman argues, "…the resentful, marginalized and disillusioned working class [fails] to control and integrate post-war immigrants into Britain. This political sacrifice blamed multiculturalism for white working-class socioeconomic disparities, when, in reality, they were marginalized through ineffective housing and

employment policies" (Quoted in Bhat, 2016). Kureishi writes about the time in Britain when inequality could be realized through race, class and ethnic identity in the country.

Monica Ali in her novel *Brick Lane* (2003) also reflects on the same feeling of resentment among the lower working-class white community. Chanu, Nazneen's husband, worries about his promotion in the company he works for. The Asian immigrants are at the bottom of the economic hierarchy, just next to the white working-class who are the most resentful towards the immigrants when they see the immigrants rising above in the hierarchy. Chanu, in *Brick Lane*, explains this in the context of competition between him and a white underclass co-worker like Wilkie who is afraid of Chanu. As long as Wilkie is above Chanu, Wilkie is socially and economically secured. In Ali's words, "… we [immigrants] are the only things standing in the way of them [white under-class] sliding totally to the bottom of the pile. As long as we are below them, then they are above something. If they see us rise then they are resentful because we have left our proper place …" (Ali, 2003:29). A similar kind of opinion has been presented by Kureishi in the Introduction: The Road Exactly where Ali, one of his acquaintances, applied for jobs but never got them. Ali says, "Anyhow, the Asians didn't get promoted. A reason for this, … was that the major businesses were run by Jews" (*MSF,* viii). Like other extremists, the characters such as Ali or Farid and Chad are antisemitic and openly come up with anti-Jews propaganda which has nothing to do with Islam. In Kureishi's words, "Every self-confessed fundamentalist I have met was anti-Semitic." (Kureishi, 2011:246)

4.4 Thatcherism: Decline of Socialism and Rise of Entrepreneur Culture in Kureishi's Works.

The advent of Thatcherism triggered the decline of Socialism in the 70s and 80s Britain. Thatcher had been highly critical of socialism and her anti-socialist views can be clearly

seen in her interview with the reporter Douglas Keay, for *Woman's Own* magazine, where she expresses,

> I think we have gone through a period when too many children and people have been given to understand 'I have a problem, it is the Government's job to cope with it!' or 'I have a problem, I will go and get a grant to cope with it!' 'I am homeless, the Government must house me!' and so they are casting their problems on society and who is society? There is no such thing! There are individual men and women and there are families and no government can do anything except through people and people look to themselves first. It is our duty to look after ourselves and then also to help look after our neighbour and life is a reciprocal business and people have got the entitlements too much in mind without the obligations ... (Thatcher, 1987).

She believed in society in terms of individualism and self-empowerment and that individuals and families are the towers of the strength of the society we live in. According to her, to depend on society is to "run away from the real decisions, practical responsibility and effective action" (Thatcher's "no such thing as society"). Thatcher as a prime minister undertook a comprehensive free-market program to tame inflation, restrain spending, cut taxes, privatize industries, bring unions to heels, and deregulate the financial industry (Lowry, 2011). Eva in *The Buddha of Suburbia* is a typical representative of Thatcher. Kureishi describes her as a 'glorious middle-aged woman, clever and graceful … There was nothing suburban about her; she'd risen above herself' (*BoS,* 261). Eva's close allegiance to Thatcher's political ideologies of individual initiative and self-reliance is easily noticeable in her statements where she encourages self-empowerment and criticizes those who are dependent on the government. She argues, "We have to empower ourselves. Look at those people who live on sordid housing estates. They expect others- the Government- to do everything for them … We have to find a way to enable them to grow" (*BoS*, 263). The novel *The Buddha of Suburbia* was published in 1990 when the Conservative Party was in power and its ideology of self-improvement and individual responsibility seemed dominant (Buchanan, 2007:19). Thatcher's statement can further be illustrated by the Englishman's statement in *My Beautiful*

Laundrette when he states, “The only prejudice in England is against the useless” (*MBL,* 53). The business entrepreneurs started enjoying Thatcherism. They are fulfilling the objectives of Thatcher by creating jobs for the unemployed people in Britain. Nasser states, “Mrs. Thatcher will be pleased with me” (*MBL,* 46). The new entrepreneur Omar has been celebrated by his uncle, Nasser, “And we’ll drink to Thatcher and your beautiful laundrette” (*MBL,* 72). The fact that Thatcherism disregarded the socialist ideologies and promoted materialism which helped creating a capitalist society can be realised in the distinct fates of two brothers, Nasser and Omar’s dad, Papa. The Englishman’s statement in Nasser’s party established that how Thatcher’s capitalist ideology encourages the creation of an economically powerful class irrespective of whites or non-whites. According to the Englishman, “May be Omar’s father didn’t make chances for himself. Look at you, Salim, five times richer and more powerful than me” (*MBL*, p 53).

Omar’s father, Papa who is ideologically a socialist remains behind and caged in the four walls of his dilapidated flat and at times braying monotonous socialist principles to his son. This character in the film becomes a mouthpiece of the reckless downfall of socialism during Thatcher’s rule in the 80s Britain. Papa expresses his anger and frustration in these words, “This damn country has done us in. That’s why I am like this. We should be there. Home.” (*MBL*, 105)

The film deploys multiple layers of ironies, among them, one of the prominent ironies is the contrasting lifestyle of two immigrant brothers belonging to the same aristocratic family from Karachi in Pakistan. Omar’s father, a Pakistani by birth, is a journalist by profession and a socialist by ideology, is nothing but an individual addicted to alcohol and leading a monotonous life glued to his TV and bed. His social class and profile can be realized when he reveals that the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was his close friend. He wrote many books against the politicians and they wanted him to seek him out. Papa’s dilapidated flat in south London, his misery and failures and

his frustration reflect that in Thatcher's Britain there are no opportunities for people who had opposing socialist views. It is ironical to see how an educated journalist lives in misery whereas his brother Nasser who has very little education rather takes advantage of Thatcher's economic policies of the free market of the 1980s to become a successful businessman. Papa insists that his brother Nasser fixes Omar with a job and gets him settled with one of his daughters. Omar, initially appointed as a car washer by his uncle, gets introduced to the extended family of Nasser and eventually takes charge of the poorly maintained laundrette. Together with Johnny who is his school friend and lover, Omar transforms this run-down squalid laundrette into a gorgeous money-making factory. Omar ignores his father's instruction that education can uplift them from the clutch of the monopoly of the British people and follows his uncle's advice, "There's money in muck" (*MBL,* 55). He never thought his son will be so desperate to make money that he will abandon his higher education. He tries to convince Omar not to get involved too much with his uncle Nasser, "Don't get too involved with that crook. You've got to study. We are under siege by the white man. For us education is power… Don't let me down" (*MBL,* 50). Papa till the end cannot erase his memory that how this Britain tortured his own people, and how the National Front marched against the influx of immigrants. He regrets it when his son Omar befriends Johnny who, he was aware, had been actively involved in such hatred against them. He expresses his realisation to Omar, "They hate us in England. And all you do is kiss their arses and think of yourself as a little Britishers!" (*MBL,* 58). Though at times he becomes nostalgic about his home country, about the privileged and luxurious life in Karachi, but is instantly made aware by his brother Nasser that even going back would not be worth it because their home country has been swallowed by the religious ideology. There is no liberty, no freedom of making money. In Nasser's words, "But that country has been sodomized by religion. It is beginning to

interfere with the making of money. Compared with everywhere, it is a little heaven here" (*MBL*,106).

Kureishi's second screenplay, *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* also reflects the similar themes of racism, social realism and how Thatcher encouraged materialism in the British society. The central character, Rafi Rahman, just like Papa in *MBL*, is also symbolic of the fading socialism in 1980s Britain. He was born in India but educated in London. Before his exile to Britain, he was an autocratic leader in the Asian subcontinent. During his rule he crashed the opposition leaders, "opposition people sometimes-were tortured and murdered" (*SRGL,* 228). His argument with Rosie in the restaurant reveals his longing for the imperial past and his frustration against homosexuals and religious people. Being a communist, Rafi was associated with Khrushchev, the leader of the communist party in the Soviet Union and worked as a communist comrade in his country. As a communist leader, he expelled the Western Imperialists and crashed the religious fundamentalists in his country. Their government revolutionized the proletariat section of the society. Rafi became furious with Rosie when she charged him with killing and torturing the mullahs-religious people in the subcontinent. Rafi angrily blamed Rosie for not realizing the whole social, economic and political scenario in the Asian subcontinent. According to Rafi, she misjudged the entire political, social and economic structure of the colonized nations by comparing them with the Western countries under the same parameters. There is a huge gap between a developed country like Britain where Rosie lives in and a postcolonial country to which Rafi belongs. For people like Rosie belonging to a developed nation, the issues and concerns are far ahead than the people living in the poorer nations like India and Pakistan where the major issues are related to poverty, human rights, imperialism and feudalism. Rafi criticizes Rosie "You've never suffered! Never had to make hard political decisions! … You are only concerned with homosexuals and women! ... We were concerned with poverty, imperialism, feudalism! Real issues that

burn people!" (*SRGL,* 229). In his opinion, the backwardness of the colonized nations is the by-product of imperialism. He outrageously declares to Rosie, "I come from a land ground into dust by 200 years of imperialism. We are still dominated by the West and you reproach us for using the methods you taught us. I helped people for their own good and damaged others for the same reason-just like you in your feeble profession!" (*SRGL,* 229). He tries to justify that what he did in his country, as he claims, was for the sake of the welfare of the whole nation. His justification was further substantiated by his son, Sammy in whose words Rafi was a man of, "Great generosity and optimism! He did miracles for that country. He was a freedom fighter" (*SRGL,* 231).

4.5 Thatcherism: Rise of Racism and Socioeconomic Class Divisions.

Since Thatcher's coming in the power in 1979 and her controversial comments on immigration had contributed many racial riots in Britain. Jenny Bourne directly makes Thatcher responsible for racial disturbances in the article, "May we bring harmony? Thatcher's legacy on 'race'" in these words, "She [Thatcher] was responsible for ushering in, following the 'riots' of 1981…" (Bourne, 2013:87). The socio-economic policies implemented by Thatcher not only targeted the immigrants but also had a great impact on the British working-class whites. During her tenure as a prime minister, the prejudices, discrimination, and racism against minorities increased manifold. Ironically, they were not confined only to the immigrants but also created a rift among the socioeconomic classes irrespective of race and ethnicity. This is evident in Kureishi's first novel, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, where the minor characters working in Pyke's theatre are also being exploited due to their racial and social status. The entire cast of Pyke's theatre has been designed according to their race, socioeconomic class and ethnic identity. Every day they become the victims of racial discrimination and class distinction by the upper-class whites. Due to the discrimination and exploitation, this deprived section of society which is

mostly constituted by the working-class people tries to take refuge under the fading socialism with the advent of Thatcherism in British politics in the 80s. They adhere to the proletariat ideology in contrast to the existing capitalist political agenda. They conduct regular meetings, raise money for their party fund, talk about Cuba, and Russia and are highly anxious and critical of the government's socio-economic policies with its failures and successes. The working-class actor Terry always sleeps with a knife beside his bed because of the threat he faces every day. Another talented artist, Gene, though not present physically in the story prevalent intensely and haunting emotionally among the cast, has fallen victim to racism and class discrimination in the theatre community. His girlfriend, Eleanor, is also desperately working with her parties to establish a socialist government. Matthew, a co-actor in the theatre says Gene was the best mime he ever met. He was a West Indian actor, who never got the work he deserved in the theatre. His social status and racial background forced him to play the role of criminals and taxi drivers. His life has been ripped apart by racial abuses and class discrimination which is the consequence of Thatcherism in the white society. According to Buchanan, "… he (Gene) is simply ceased to exist, in his own mind, and chose to kill himself" (Buchanan, 2007:50). The characters like Gene who could not endure the culture's assumptions about race and class are forced to be doomed. But, in contrast, a character like Karim realises the consequences of Gene's death, "No amount of self-confidence or determination can resist society's indifference, and thus it is better to inhabit racial or class-based stereotypes for the sake of being accepted…" (Buchanan, 2007:50). Karim comments about Gene, "Sweet Gene, … London's best mime…killed himself because every day, by a look, a remark, an attitude, the English told him they hated him; they never let him forget they thought him a nigger, a slave, a lower being… We became part of England and yet proudly stood outside it" (*BoS,* 227). He became mentally collapsed and drug-addicted, and out of frustration, he killed himself at a very young age. The plight of Gene can be associated

with the common non-whites during the 80s Britain when it was plagued with class and racial discrimination from Kureishi's illustration in his autobiographical essay, "The Rainbow Sign" where he describes a black kid being so obsessed with the white color of skin that he jumped into a bath of boiling water to whiten his skin because burn skin turns white. This same concern of color of skin for equal rights and opportunities in British society can be substantiated in Nazneen's conversation about her husband's promotion in his job with Razia in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*. Nazneen says, "My husband says they are racist, particularly Mr Dalloway. He thinks he will get the promotion, but it will take him longer than any white man. He says that if he painted his skin pink and white then there would be no problem" (Ali, 2003:58).

The image of Thatcher's election campaign showing her increasing popularity in the British society.

Fig. 4-2: Lady Thatcher privately complained that too many Asian immigrants were being allowed into Britain. CREDIT: Photo: John Downing.

4.6 Anti-Thatcherism: In the Perspective of Kureishi's Works.

Kureishi as a critic of Thatcher challenges her economic policies which help only a particular section of the young generation by neglecting a major section of society. Thatcher's emerging economic policy helped the new entrepreneurs to thrive in their businesses and made them successful entrepreneurs in Britain. Among them, the most notable are Omar and Johnny in *My Beautiful Laundrette* and Chili in *The Black Album*. The relationship between Omar and Johnny in the film can be symbolic of rising capitalism in 1980s postcolonial Britain. Omar being a son of a Pakistani father and British mother is a hybrid, a capitalist by ideology, and homosexual by identity. Johnny is a lower working-class homeless lad living with his gang. Johnny actively worked for the National Front and acted brutally against the Asian immigrants in Britain. Both of them were school friends and in future, they become business partners occasionally feeding each other's sexual desires. But ironically, at first, no one from Omar's family or community is ready to accept Johnny as his business partner. It is only Omar who realizes Johnny's importance in growing the business. Their partnership is quite similar to the partnership between Nasser and Salim. Omar completely follows the path of dreaming big money laid by his uncle Nasser and his partner Salim. He closely observes the failure of his socialist father and the success of his capitalist uncle Nasser and Salim. He smartly disregards his father's ideological path and follows his uncle's advice that there is "money in the muck" (*MBL,* 55) and also realizes, "… we're nothing in England without money" (*MBL,* 85). Omar's involvement with the business and his effort to rebuild a laundrette from the collapse is more the outcome of the greed that Thatcher's free-market policies created in the 1980s Britain. Successful entrepreneurs such as Salim or Nasser are presented as the semblance of endless greed for wealth rather than representing a holistic economic and social development that Thatcher's economic policies made easy for these entrepreneurs. They only value money and even have no sympathy for their own people,

which is revealed in Nasser's reply to Johnny when vacating his rented house illegally occupied by a Pakistani. He replies, "But we're professional businessmen. Not professional Pakistanis" (*MBL,* 77). To become a successful entrepreneur, one needs the capital which can be available only to a capitalist. In Omar's case, he was financed by his uncle Nasser and Salim. Without this capital he is just one of the "deadbeat children… hang about the road like pigeons, making a mess, doing nothing" (*MBL,* 80) as Johnny or other punks do in the street. In the same way, Salim had been helped by Omar's uncles to become a successful businessman. He tells Omar, "Years ago your uncles lifted me up. And I will do the same for you" (*MBL,* 97). These greedy capitalists can go to any extent to fulfil their hunger for money. For this same reason, Salim secretly smuggles drugs in the garb of a religious Muslim man's beard through the airport. To Salim, it's not immoral to supply drugs to the kids, rather it's a business. When Johnny reveals to Salim that he knows what his business is and who the people he deals with, Salim replies, "I give them what they want. I don't criticize. I supply. The laws of business apply" (*MBL,* 99). Omar is following the same path. He steals Salim's drugs and Johnny helps him to sell those drugs in the secret black market. With the help of this illegal money, they renovate the whole laundrette, and eventually establish a profitable beautiful laundrette. This is just the beginning of Omar's big-money dream that he longs for. He states, "I want big money. I'm not gonna be beat down by this country" (*MBL,* 88). In the laundrette, the childhood brutal memories rush through his mind, how he had been chased and beaten by his fellow schoolmates including his friend Johnny. The power of wealth has changed all that now. He reminds Johnny, "When we were at school, you and your lot kicked me all around the place. And what are you doing now? Washing my floor. That's how I like it. Now get to work. Get to work I said. Or you're fired" (*MBL,* 88). Kureishi has presented this scene of Omar's masterful attitude towards Johnny as reverse racism in the film similar to the abuse of Helen, Karim's white girlfriend in *The Buddha of Suburbia* where one of the

Asians, Anwar's relative starts behaving weirdly towards Helen and also muttering, "Pork, pork, pork, VD, VD…white woman, white woman" (*BoS,* 84-85). Finally, Omar is pleased to see Johnny is serving him which he thinks is his revenge for the past humiliation he received from Johnny and other racists. As Bart Moore-Gilbert notes in his book *Hanif Kureishi*, "Johnny's dependence on Omar plays off the colonialist trope of the 'faithful servant'" and also parodies "the colonist project of 'civilizing' the brutal natives" (Gilbert, 2001:73). The bond between Omar and Johnny represents a new entrepreneur culture which transcends racial, cultural or class discrimination. This can be better understood by Nasser's statement to Johnny, "There's no race question in the new enterprise culture" (*MBL,* 77). The relationship between Chili and Strapper in *The Black Album* can be compared to Omar and Johnny here. According to Buchanan, "Like Johnny, Strapper also seeks economic advancement by alliances with Asians; in Strapper's case, it is Shahid's brother Chili who has promised Strapper a way up … injecting him with that misleading substance, hope" (Buchanan, 2007:64). Strapper and Johnny both represent working-class young men exploited by the upper-class Asian entrepreneurs such as Omar, Chili, Nasser and Salim.

Johnny's character in the film is more sympathetic. Johnny has been exploited by the immigrants Omar and Salim. He has been made to realize that he belongs to a working class that is even much inferior to the immigrants. Nasser rents him to evict the illegal Pakistani occupier from his rental house. And in turn, he offers Johnny to stay in the same house for free because he knew that Johnny will be useful in the future. Omar purposely exploits and seduces Johnny for his personal benefits, such as to confront the other racists, to safeguard his business, for selling drugs in the right place which Johnny is well aware of, and for his sexual pleasure. The homosexual relationship between Charlie and Karim in *The Buddha of Suburbia* resembles Omar's inter-racial and homosexual relationship with Johnny in *My Beautiful Laundrette*. Their relationship becomes an experiment on

their sexuality which they are aware of. They are very much dependent on each other. Their erotic love affair is so powerful that it can even overcome their racial and revengeful attitude toward each other. Ball comments on the partnership of Omar and Johnny, "Like the Indians once recruited by British imperialist armies to keep order among their fellows and protect British institutions, Johnny is hired in part to shield Omar and his laundrette from hostile elements of London society" (Ball, 2004:228). Charlie's relationship with Karim in *The Buddha of Suburbia* resembles Omar's relationship with Johnny in *My Beautiful Laundrette*. Like Omar, Charlie as a suburban working-class young also does not compromise his career and emerging talent. When Charlie's effort to sell himself as a pop commodity fails in Britain, he moves to America to find fame and success. He appropriates working-class youth culture as his mother appropriates Indianness which is to be culturally visible at any cost (Buchanan, 2007:46). Just as Charlie's intimacy with Karim helps to prepare his entry into the theatrical world, in a similar way Omar's friendship with Johnny helps Johnny to break the shackles of working-class restrictions and flourish in the world of enterprise.

Johnny's character is shaped by the 1980s societal phenomenon in Britain which made him a racist. He belongs to a lower working-class society where many young people like him are homeless and jobless. Eventually, he starts working for the National Front, and throws bottles and bricks at the immigrants during marches. His Pakistani British school friend, Omar gives him the opportunity to work in his laundrette which offers Johnny a new sense of belonging apart from his punk group. He tolerates every humiliation due to his social and economic class background from the elite class of Asian immigrants. Because of his class, Johnny hesitates to enter Nasser's house, instead, he waits outside in the car. He silently overhears Omar referring him to Tania as a, "… lower class. He won't come in without being asked. Unless he's doing a burglary" (*MBL,* 70). Later, at another party in Nasser's house, Johnny has been asked to take charge of the music by

Salim's wife, Cherry (*MBL*, 96). Moreover, Johnny also confronts the anger and disgust of his own gang mates who disapprove of his association with Omar. They cannot accept the fact that someone from their group serves a Pakistani man. In fact, they expect that these Pakis such as Omar should serve them. Genghis, one of the racist punks, reminds Johnny "They came here to work for us. That's why we brought them over. OK?" (*MBL*, 73). He further questions Johnny, "Why are you working for them? For these people? You were with us once. For England" (*MBL*,73). One of the white actors in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Boyd, in the theatre reveals his anger and frustration against Karim because he has not been selected for Pyke's show because of his color and social class. He angrily says, "If I weren't white and middle-class, I'd have been in Pyke's show now" (*BoS*, 165).

Similarly, Charlie's failure in *The Buddha of Suburbia* as a musician reflects how class politics plays an important role in the society in the 80s Britain. He does not get recognition as a young musician in his own country, Britain. He as a suburban young man lost in London competing with the young contemporary musicians. At this juncture Charlie becomes suicidal. In Karim's words about Charlie, "I am suicidal, he (Charlie) announced grandly… He said he was circling in that round of despair where you don't care one iota what happens to you or anyone else" (*BoS*, 128). Charlie, as a musician once frustrated in Britain, starts flourishing in America with his music; he is thriving and progressing in such a way that he does not want to come back to his home country. Charlie insists Karim to stay with him in America because he believes that Americans never bring you down like the English, "England's decrepit. No one believes in anything … swamp of prejudice, class confusion" (*BoS*, 256). Karim clearly draws a clear line of fame and successful life between Britain and America. Charlie survives this class discrimination in his own English working-class society by moving to America.

Kureishi explicitly illustrates the plight of the white working-class in Britain at the time of Thatcher. Often racism in Kureishi's works has been analysed by many critics as the

result of interconnectedness between race and class. Critics such as Nahem Yousaf argue that Kureishi's "hybridised citizens and their cultural identities are inextricably linked with class politics" (Yousaf, 1996). The film *My Beautiful Laundrette* presents the clash of working-class people against the middle and upper class. Racism or the revolt against the immigrants are the outcomes of the frustration among the working-class people due to their inability to confront the white middle-class or upper-class people. And eventually, they target the immigrants, who are economically and socially close to them. Whether it is Rachel or Johnny from *My Beautiful Laundrette* or Bettina in *My Son the Fanatic* or Margaret in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, all of them represent the white working-class people who long for a sense of belonging in their own society. In this regard, Rita Felski has made a very significant comment that Haroon's family in *The Buddha of Suburbia* represents the lower middle class which is a "cage of umbrellas and steely regularity" marked by respectability, rigidity and gray routine … guilt about money, anxiety about status, and fear of the neighbors' disapproval" (Felski, 2000). She further notes that the lower middle class is almost non-existent since the ubiquitous English pub is considered vulgar, working-class (Felski, 2000:37). Buchanan propagates Felski's argument that in the mid and late twentieth century, the lower middle class as portrayed by George Orwell, "inhabits a world that is almost completely lacking in spontaneity, sensuality or pleasure and is often associated with racism" (Buchanan, 2007:17).

The last conversation between Rachel and Tania in *My Beautiful Laundrette* inside the laundrette highlights an important factor of prevalent social class distinction in the society. They project how to confront the reality of social class barriers and understand the world ahead of them. Rachel questions Tania, "But tell me, who do you live off? And you must understand, we are of different generations and different classes. Everything is waiting for you. The only thing that has ever waited for me is your father" (*MBL*, 83). Rachel here clearly realizes that she would not belong anywhere because of her lower-class

background and for this reason she feels privileged to be a mistress of an upper-class immigrant like Nasser. Asha Sen states that Rachel occupies a disempowered position in the society but her dependency is class and generation based (Sen, 2000). Despite the fact that there exists true love between them, Rachel feels guilty for separating Nasser from his family. She realizes the pain of suffering that Tania and Bilquis had been undergoing due to her affair with Nasser. She also realizes all the efforts Bilquis exerts to get rid of her from their life. At last, both the women, Rachel and Tania leave Nasser devasted. Tania leaves her father for London. She always wanted to escape her imprisoned life because she was well aware of her father's authoritative frame of mind. She knows that he will never let her be involved in the family business but rather will force her to marry the man of his choice. She has been frustrated living an oppressed life in her own family. Her confrontation with Rachel clears the way for her freedom from the bondage of Nasser's patriarchy. She seeks financial help from Omar instead of her wealthy father because she knows he will never help her. She says, "I want to leave home. I need to break away. You'll have to help me financially" (*MBL*, 83). Bilquis's position is more pitiful than that of her daughter Tania because she cannot escape her family as Tania managed to do. Pathetically, she is unable to find her space within her own community. She cannot enjoy the party with the guests in her own house where most of them are Pakistani. Silently watching everyone; the conversation between Omar and Tania or Zaki and Salim and others. However, she tries to revolt against her husband's affair with Rachel with the help of some supernatural powers. Kureishi added these comical elements in the film such as the magic potion that Bilquis prepares to separate Rachel from her husband, the shaking furniture and the walking trousers as well as the scar on Rachel's body which according to Asha Sen, "suggests the power of the uncanny that cannot be accommodated within realist narratives but which, the postcolonial supplement, is relational and disruptive of them" (Sen, 2000:67).

Kureishi's character, Eva, Karim's stepmother in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, represents an example of a social climber as she continuously advances through the different social milieu to fit into it. According to Buchanan, Eva is Kureishi's embodiment of Thatcherite ideals and capitalist energies, and she provides a stark contrast to the self-pitying inertia of Margaret (Buchanan, 2007:18). Similarly, Deedee in *The Black Album* resembles Eva and Tania in regards to escaping the social bondage to live an independent life of freedom in the 80s Britain. Deedee, a former sex worker and lower-class student (Buchanan, 2007:17) is a lecturer of History in the college and she, like Eva, is completely unhappy with her husband Brownlow and now they are planning to break up. Deedee represents the time of crisis in Britain during the 90s when women and other minorities became desperate to come to the forefront to represent themselves. Unlike her husband Brownlow who laments for fading communism, she looks for escapism or rather fights for liberalism. She is symbolic of the women in the 90s who are ready to break the shackles of societal norms that kept them confined in the household chores. Her character has a close resemblance to Jamila in *The Buddha of Suburbia* and her feministic perspective comes out in the statement, "… that women in the 1980s, even the lefties, had aimed to get into powerful positions, be independent, achieve. But it had cost them … Too many had forfeited the possibility of children. For what? In the end, a career was merely a job, not a whole life. How little enjoyment there had been! In those days of commitment while the world remained unchanged … pleasure could only be provisional and guilty" (*BA*, 126). Kureishi in his essay "The Rainbow Sign" explains how these women stood for the emerging modern women of the late 20th century after the sexual revolution in the sixties, "…wanted to be independent and to enter into relationships-as many as they liked, with whom they liked-out of choice. They didn't merely want to reproduce the old patterns of living. The future was to be determined by choice and reason and not by custom" (RS, 18). In the 80s, women tried to live their independent life and worked hard to support

themselves. Many women abandoned the idea of giving birth. They endeavored to hold key positions in politics or in society. Kureishi sets forth the socio-political picture of Britain which has been started during the mid-70s in the following statement:

> There was a period, in the mid-seventies, when we imagined history was moving our way. Gays, blacks, women, were asserting and organizing themselves. Less than ten years later, after the Falklands, CND and the miners' strike, even I could see the movement was in a contrary direction. Thatcher had concentrated the struggle. But she'd worn everyone down. Where did we go from here? (*BA,* 116).

4.7 *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*: Reflection of Racism and Social Injustice during Thatcher.

Kureishi's second screenplay, *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid,* was first broadcast in 1987. This film is a second partnership between Kureishi and Frears whose central characters, Sammy and Rosie are played by Ayub Khan-Din and Frances Barber respectively. Sammy's father, Rafi, is played by famous Bollywood actor, Shashi Kapoor. Revealing the sources of the film, Kureishi explains in his essay, "Some Time with Stephen", that one of the sources was the story of an old couple in the Japanese film *Tokyo Story* who receives very contemptible treatment during their visit to their children in the city. Another source was the character of an Asian politician in a play which Kureishi wrote but was not staged, where the politician had an affair with a young woman. A part of his idea is also derived from the story of one of his family members who loved an Englishwoman but abandoned her and left for his home country by promising to return back to England and marry her but in reality, only kept her waiting (Kureishi, 1992:140). Unlike *My Beautiful Laundrette, Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* did not receive much publicity and popularity although the film was made with great precision and care. However, it can never be denied that this film lacks vigour and is less thought-provoking than *My Beautiful Laundrette*. Though Kureishi considers it in a different way when he comments on *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*, "But I think it's probably a more interesting

film than it was given credit [for] at the time (Kaleta, 1998:49). Kaleta's comment is also worth mentioning here which in his words, "*Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* is above all an exhilarating story and an exhilarating film, sometimes mesmerizing and often hilarious (Kaleta, 1998:55). Rather, this film casts consist of more mature and prominent actors such as Clare Bloom as Alice, stage actress Frances Barber, and rock star Roland Gift as Danny. The film comprises popular themes of 80s Britain which includes representation of the marginalized section of English society. The newness in the film was due to the depiction of British life not explored before (Kureishi, 1992:120). Kureishi expected that this film would be a continuation of the work he had started with "*Laundrette*- the mixture of realism and surrealism, seriousness and comedy, art and gratuitous sex" (Kureishi, 1992:120). The film's surrealistic feature is maintained through a fragmented depiction of its narrative. Kureishi attempts to present the complex issues of the immigrants as well as the white working-class people of the English society in the film which according to Pratibha Parmar, a British filmmaker of South Asian descent, is marginal to "mainstream, the malestream, and the whitestream" of the British society (Bahri & Vasudeva, 1996:167-184). The sole depiction of the film lies in the fact that how Thatcherism affected the working-class whites and the immigrants in the backdrops of social injustice and racism; how society was divided into a group of respected working class who squeezed the benefits of Thatcher's so-called entrepreneurial revolution and a group, rather a under-class, involved into drugs, robbery, and all types of anti-social activities and live a homeless life.

The social realist movies of Kureishi such as *My Beautiful Laundrette, Sammy and Rosie Get Laid,* and *London Kills Me* which took over British cinema during this period screened the marginalised section of the British society, mainly the ethnic minorities and the working-class British who were utterly shocked by the 'materialistic culture'

4.8 Thatcher's Economic Policy: Celebration of Individualism and Decline of Collective Identity through Kureishi's Films.

The film, *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid,* projects Tory's program under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher of transforming the wasteland, inner city of London, into a hub of economic development by evicting the illegal squatters. While Thatcher's effort was to boost the British economy by creating economic opportunities through entrepreneurship, encouraging small businesses and jobs, and inviting global investors; the flip side of the British economy and society were burning in the furnace of racism, social injustice, poverty and unemployment as her economic policies "favoured the individual over the collective state" (Friedman, 1993: xi-xx.). Among her entrepreneurs were the budding immigrant businessmen like Nasser, Salim and their Asian as well as white partners while the majority of working-class lads like Johnny and the group are deprived. Her disproportionate economic policy led many young people into a crisis of unemployment which made them indulge in anti-social activities like looting and robbing. Their future became uncertain under these circumstances of economic favouritism. In the film, Kureishi presents a chaotic picture of London, in the scene where a group of young kids with masks and scarves around their faces forcefully enter a flat and rob it. The film also depicts the anger and frustration among the unprivileged section of the society who could not access the opportunities in business and services and their hatred was manifested over the successful immigrant entrepreneurs and business people. The successful entrepreneurs like Omar, Salim, and Nasser were targeted by the underprivileged white working-class lads in *My Beautful Laundrette*. In a similar way, Asian shopkeeper, Ajeeb has been targeted by the looters in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*. His conversation with Sammy reveals the jealousy of the working class over the successful entrepreneurs, "Samir, I tell you, the trash took everything in the looting. They're jealous of us. But why? In this country aren't we all in the same position?" (*SRGL,* 222). Kureishi asserts in the

essay, “Sex and Secularity”, that the very common desire among Hussein, Omar, and Salim in *My Beautiful Laundrette* is to be rich and to show off their wealth and prosperity. Chili in *The Black Album* also possesses the same desire to be rich and show off to others. This desire of demonstrating their wealth to others “induce violent envy in some of the poor and dispossessed, and may even encourage their desire to kill the rich” (Kureishi, 2011:243-44). This is one of the reasons why Salim has been targeted by the white working-class lads in *My Beautiful Laundrette*. Thatcher’s economic policies were protective to those colonials who supported the state’s neoliberal economic structure with profits, profited from, and even exploited the system in return. Thatcher termed this class of Indian and Pakistani colonials as ‘meritocrats’ who heralded her policies that propped up capitalism, business and nuclear family values (Ogden, 1990:175). Frears calls Thatcher ‘repressive’ and ‘callous’. He commented to Robert Lindsey in an article that appeared in *The New York Times* called ‘The Dangerous Leap of Stephen Frears’. He criticizes Thatcher in his words, “She has divided the country between North and South, between the employed and unemployed, between the rich and poor, between the people who’ve got and the people who haven’t” (Frears, 1988).

In the same context, a notable Sri Lankan writer, Ambalavaner Sivanadan, notes a similar tone on how Thatcher’s policy helped individuals to accumulate wealth and deprived a major section of the society. He expresses,

> Thatcher’s Tory party of 1979 inaugurated an overall attack on the working class and the welfare state in the framework of a law-and-order society. In articulating and clarifying the ideology of British racism in the run-up to the elections, Thatcher had established a climate in which officials in the health service, employment, education, housing, social and welfare services would, without benefit of edict, insist on passports and identity checks before affording a service to black citizens (Sivanandan, 2000: 61-80).

The film begins with the voice of Thatcher’s speech in the background celebrating her victory for her third term as a prime minister in June 1987. Thatcher ends her speech with

the words, “We’ve got a big job to do in some of those inner cities” (McLeod, 2004:141). It can be established from her speech that she had the motive of gentrification of the inner cities which might be her ‘big job’. The speech also clearly distinguishes the living condition of the inner cities and the suburbs. The suburbs were mostly populated by the white British and were a domain of “proper, British family” (Gairola, 2017). The inner cities were mostly occupied by immigrants and the working-class population with poor living conditions. Even some of the areas in the inner cities were illegally occupied by squats like Danny and the kid’s community in the film. The beginning of the film *My Beautiful Laundrette* when Johnny and his friend illegally occupy Salim’s newly bought house or the space-cleaning scene at end of the film *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* on the waste ground in the inner city of London where the illegal occupiers and squatters are residing demonstrate the plight of homelessness of the inner-city Londoners under Thatcher’s government. Thatcher laments the state of “some of those inner cities” (Margaret Thatcher’s 1987 election-night speech) which is self-contradictory. On one side, she aspires to transform inner cities with the lucrative plan of urban gentrification, on the other side there are revolts, riots, and chaos in the streets against the state represented by the metropolitan police and Conservative politicians including Thatcher herself. From the perspective of Kureishi’s *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*, Thatcher’s use of ‘big job’ in her speech refers to her despotic approach to dealing with the inner cities. As a critic of Thatcher and her neoliberal capitalist policy, Kureishi in the film focuses on the eviction of the wasteland caravan site for property development as evidence of Thatcher’s disregard and autocratic attitude toward the inner-city population of London. The complicit conversation between the Tory MP and the property developer in the film overheard by Danny and Rafi further substantiates Thatcher’s strategy of fulfilling her ‘big job’ approach. Danny who is a representative of the caravan dwellers spits at their

conversation which is symbolic of his utter disgust for the authorities. The conversation between the TORY MP and the Property developer,

TORY MP: You're a wealthy, intelligent businessman.

(Danny *spits*). You've got to invest in this area-for your sake and ours.

You can do whatever you like.

PROPERTY DEVELOPER: I want that open space under the motorway- then we can talk (*SRGL,* 216).

The characters of Shahid's Papa in *The Black Album* and Fizzie and Mr Schitz in *My Son the Fanatic* are significant examples of promoting Thatcher's economic entrepreneurship. These characters from Kureishi's works admire consumerism and distrust art and literature. Britain during Thatcher is plunged into consumerism which offered golden opportunities for the budding entrepreneurs like Shahid's Papa, Fizzie, Mr. Schitz and many others. These people emerge as true disciples of Thatcher and her economic policy. Shahid's Papa advises him to "live in the real world" (*BA,* 75) and discourages him to be a writer. Just like a true follower of Thatcher, his religion or faith or belief was just "work". When asked about his faith, he replied, "Yes, I have a belief. It's called working until my arse aches!" (*BA,* 92). He was very proud of his macho elder son Chili because of his interest in generating money for their family business of travel agency. People like Papa (Shahid's Papa) and other entrepreneurs are climbing the economic ladder to reach the level of middle-class businessmen by taking the advantage of Thatcher's free-market policy which in turn instigated anger and jealousy among the white working-class people resulting in violence against the Asian immigrants in Britain. Kureishi in his autobiographical essay, "The Rainbow Sign", states, "Our cities are full of Asian shops… Those Pakistanis who have worked hard to establish businesses, now vote Tory and give money to the Conservative Party…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" (RS, 28).

These people express loyalty to the British middle classes rather than to other Pakistani or Indian people.

The adaptation of the short story, "My Son the Fanatic", into the film broadens the vista of the various issues that the author tries to address in the post-colonial era in Britain which also witnesses the crisis of employment and rise of prostitution in the 1980s. For example, Mr Schitz and Fizzie symbolize Britain's shifting economy which is under the sway of globalization. It is the time when everyone is given a chance to make an investment and become a part of the global economic market, whether it's Fizzie from India or Mr Schitz from Germany. It also brings forth the bitter truth about the lives of young people like Bettina whose choice of career is a mere consequence of the economic crisis. It is only through the movie one can realize how grim and complicated the situation is for the girls like Bettina. The responsibility to support a family has driven her to opt for prostitution strangling her wish to become a teacher.

4.9 Anti-Thatcherism in Kureishi: Undermining Racial Stereotypes in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*.

The film, *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* breaks the stereotype of representing blacks as only rioters or looters and protesters as Kureishi in the film represents them as victims of police atrocities and social injustice. He talks about the grim reality of the prejudiced representation of the black people in his essay, "Some Time with Stephen", "The difficulty arises from the fact that black people are so rarely represented on TV; if when they are shown, they're only throwing rocks at the police, you're in danger of reinforcing considerable prejudice" (Kureishi, 1992:139). Again, he breaks the stereotype by beginning the film with the shooting of a black woman by the police in search of her son and which initiates the rioting and looting of the local stores as well as burning the cars in the streets following in the later scenes. Coincidentally, Kureishi's presentation of the loss of a black life at the hand of a merciless white police officer has a close resemblance

with the recent killing of an unarmed black African-American, George Floyd, by a white police officer in Minneapolis, USA (BBC News, 2020). This incident of killing a black man triggered a worldwide protest in the name of BLM (Black Lives Matter). The incident was followed by riots, looting, and destruction in major cities in America. The atrocities or the inhuman treatment of the black people at the hands of the racist white police officers is not a new phenomenon but has always been carried out a decade after decade. The insignificance and the triviality of the black lives can be easily realized from the brutal killing of George Floyd in recent days and also the killing of the black mother in Kureishi's play *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid.* Both of them are the victims of structural racism and are targeted because of their race which was defined by colors. The Critical Race Theorists such as professor Mari Matsuda, a law professor at the University of Hawaii says, "The problem is not bad people… The problem is a system that reproduces bad outcomes. It is both humane and inclusive to say, 'We have done things that have hurt all of us, and we need to find a way out.'" (Fortin, 2021). The killings of these individuals define how racism has been, social and historical context, practiced in the British society. The image shows the police brutality against the black people and how they exercise disproportionate power against the blacks in Britain in the 70s and 80s.

Fig. 4-3: Peter Marlow Race Riots in Lewisham. Police making an arrest. England. London. GB. 1977. Copyright: Peter Marlow/ Magnum Photos.

In the beginning, after the shooting of a black woman by the police, the black people start a protest against this police atrocity. Since Thatcher's coming into power in 1979, there was a significant rise in riots in Britain which were related to institutionalized racism on the part of the police, social deprivation of the black minority in jobs and housing; and distrust of the police and authority which was further substantiated by the Scarman report 1981, wherein Lord Scarman mentions that the catalyst for the riots in Britain was mainly because of racial discrimination and oppression on the nonwhites. Thatcher's economic and social policies created controversies and insecurities among the white working-class citizens and the ethnic minorities who were mainly the immigrants, from the Commonwealth countries, who came to Britain in the last decades of the 20th century as low-paid manual workers. Under these circumstances, the black community, as well as the white proletariat, became vulnerable which induced them into violent and anti-social activities such as drug selling, looting, burglary, and protesting. According to Sammy, these violent activities are carried out by the young people, "Those depraved deprived are right out of control" (*SRGL*, 233). The Conservative party elected in 1979 had instituted new powers for the Police under the Vagrancy Act 1824 to stop and search people based on only a 'reasonable suspicion' that an offence had been committed popularly known as 'sus' or 'suspicion' law. The police were entrusted by the Conservative party to enforce the 'Operation Swamp' to stop and search the youths mostly from the ethnic minority community. These laws were applied disproportionately to the black community in Brixton in 1981 which caused widespread resentment amongst the young black and Asian immigrants. The majority of these were not immigrants; they were British-born children of immigrants (Britain's 1981 Urban Riots, *Searchlight*, 1981). Thatcher's 1978 interview on the television show *Granta,* expressed her views on immigrants and race,

> I think it means that people are really rather afraid that this country Might be swamped by people of different culture. The British Character has done so much for democracy, for law, and done so Much throughout the world that if there is any fear that it

> might be Swamped, then people are going to be rather hostile to those coming In. We are a British nation with British characters (Segal, 1996:282).

Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* also describes similar kind of atrocities and racist treatment of the blacks at hands of the white police officers. Gene, a black theatre actor had to suffer racial violence on and off stage. On the stage, he was offered the only roles of criminals and taxi drivers. As Marlene, wife of a theatre director Pyke, suggests, "The police were always picking him up and giving him a going over. Taxis drove straight past him. People said there were no free tables in empty restaurants. He lived in a bad world in nice old England" (*BoS,* 201). The ongoing conflict between the Asian and African diaspora communities and the Metropolitan Police during the 80s and 90s Britain often triggered riots in the inner cities of London. The words of a London police officer recorded by Yasmin Alibhai Brown clearly exposed the fact that racism in the 80s was state-sponsored. His statement, "Thatcher let it be known to us, the police, that we could do anything to keep in control the enemy within… I know that when I was on duty in Notting Hill Gate, I would go for the blacks more than I should have done, but you get into kind of state, like you are in the army and the enemy is enemy. No wonder the blacks never trusted us" (Brown, 2001:81). Kureishi in his film presents a very similar cruel and irresponsible approach of the police towards the black civilians in the scene where a white young policeman kills a black woman at her house. The opening scene has close proximity to a similar incident of police brutality on 28th September 1985 when the armed police officers stormed into the house of Dorothy 'Cherry' Groce in the mostly black populated area of Brixton in South London in search of a young man they believed connected to an armed robbery (Dorothy 'Cherry' Groce, *The Guardian,* 2014). When they did not find the suspect, they shot the suspect's mother, Dorothy, in the chest while lying in her bedroom. This left her permanently paralyzed and consequently sparked riots in Brixton in 1985 which killed one photographer, fifty people injured and 200 arrested. But shockingly, the police inspector Douglas Lovelock was cleared of all criminal charges

(McLeod, 2004:140). The brutal and horrendous incident of the killing of an innocent black woman led to a violent protest among the young vulnerable groups in the film. The protesters started looting the local stores and electronic shops and burning vehicles in the streets. Interestingly, such violent protests and revolts are supported by white working-class people like Rosie. She feels, "… these revolts are an affirmation of the human spirit. A kind of justice is being done" (*SRGL,* 212). Moreover, she insists Sammy take part in this protest actively, "When black people were attacked before and defended themselves, you didn't use to stay in and have your supper" (*SRGL,* 207).

Kureishi's use of the speech of Thatcher in the background of the film combined with the shooting of the black woman in the film emphasizes Gilroy's description of the morbid representations of black identity in Britain. Gilroy says, "the process of black settlement has been continually described in military metaphors which offer war and conquest as the central analogies for immigration" (Gilroy, 1993:45). To support his argument Gilroy quotes Enoch Powell's statement which is, "when he looks into the eyes of Asia that the Englishman comes face to face with those who would dispute with him the possession of his native land" (Gilroy, 1993:45). John McLeod in his book, *Postcolonial London* states, "By the 1970s racist attitudes were at the heart of authoritarian forms of state control and clearly animating the discourse of nation, citizenship and law and order which impacted readily in London and elsewhere (McLeod, 2004:130). Paul Gilroy also states that the black Britons became increasingly portrayed, "as law-breakers and criminals, as a dangerous class and underclass" (Gilroy, 1991:75). In the film, *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*, Kureishi re-explores these gruesome and morbid images of immigrants, created by the Conservative politicians, in a very romantic and subversive way by challenging the prevalent heteronormativity and nonracial relationship of the British society. As Leonard Quart writes, "Thatcher entered office attacking the permissive society and trumpeting traditional bourgeois values like respectability, family, and nation-and a strain of

Thatcherism promoted a repressive agenda on law and order, abortion, and homosexuality" (Friedman, 2006:15-29).

From the beginning till the end of the film, the blacks though minority represent a significant role to safeguard their identity; sometime as victims, sometime as protesters. The relentless fight of the blacks for their rights and justice pervades the entire film. The film ends with the eviction of the kid's community from the wasteland of the South London caravan site leads to protests among the black minorities. Danny and Rafi take part in this protest non-violently. Although the state and the police are able to vacate the site, the kids remained defiant, cheerful, and rebellious; some of them sit on the top of the moving caravans and played music as they go. This very attitude of the minority community establishes the fact that this protest is never-ending and the kids are ready to restart their life in another part of the wasteland in London.

4.10 Rafi: Representation of a Complex and Challenging Psychology in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*.

Rafi is a very complex character in the film and it is very difficult to define him from a single definite perspective. Kureishi presents him with lots of intricacies. In terms of familial relationship, he emerges as a patriarchal and pro-Thatcherite character; whereas his approach to joining the protest at the wasteland caravan site projects him anti-Thatcherite. As a leader in his own country, his economic policies were similar to Thatcher's economic ideologies when he cracked down on the protesters. Rosie's findings of Rafi from the Amnesty International Office and newspaper cuttings and articles about his sinister past of torturing and killing of Mullahs-religious people in his country discover him a fascist leader. On the contrary, Rafi's words to Alice are where he accuses "the West of being decadent, sex-mad and diseased" (*SRGL,* 245). He proudly declares his religious, conservative and patriarchal attitude to Alice, "I 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" (*SRGL,* 245). Finally, he has never been a content character in the film. He resembles the character of Haroon in *The Buddha of Suburbia* like an insatiable character in search of something of which he himself is not completely aware. Postcolonial London is a far cry from the England of their youth. One of the primary reasons for his return to Britain was to reunite with his love, Alice, but unfortunately, he is not content with this love and surprisingly abandons her again. Even after accepting the fact that "we must contain and limit ourselves and learn to be content" (*SRGL,* 245) he commits suicide because he realizes the natural bond with Sammy is more important than any other love which is devastated. Moreover, he urges his son to come back home- to his home country but ironically his home is ready to execute him.

In postcolonial Britain, Rafi emerges as a neocolonial autocrat. He had been a political dictator in his own country where he was involved in many atrocities like shooting the rioters, torturing and killing religious people-mullahs and other cruelties. When he was accused of a criminal past by Rosie, he justifies his actions as the residue of 200 years of imperialism. Rafi returns to London with the hope of restarting his life with his son Sammy and Sammy's wife Rosie, having a grandchild and convincing his son to buy a flat. But unfortunately, he realizes that the vague and surreal relationship between Sammy and Rosie can never fulfil his dream. Moreover, he realizes that he is no longer wanted by them. He expresses this feeling to Alice, "Sammy and Rosie have no human feeling for me. It would be terribly painful to have me living here?" (*SRGL,* 253). Ultimately his guilt-consciousness appears to him in the form of a ghost which represents all the torturing and killing he has done in the past. The ghost appears to him covered in blood and shit with serious burns over his body. The body is criss-crossed with wires from the electric shock treatment he received in detention. His face is covered with a rubber mask through which it is impossible to breathe. When he removes the mask, Rafi sees a man

half-headed and one eye gauged out resembling the one he had murdered (Buchanan, 2007:130). Frederick Luis Aldama not only notes that while it is possible to see the appearance of Rafi's ghost victim- turned- tormentor as an instance of magical realism but also suggests that it is presented as an outgrowth of Rafi's growing disenchantment with his once-beloved London and his withdrawal into solipsistic self-doubt (Aldama, 2003). This surrealistic conversation between Rafi and the ghost makes Rafi accepts his guilt. He seeks forgiveness from the ghost. It is very ironical that Rafi as a political leader who had been a symbol of autocracy and issued orders to kill those who opposed him in his own country is now actively taking part in a similar kind of protest with the proletariat in Britain. He as a leader ordered the shooting of the protesters whom he thought were a hindrance to the progress of the country. His words to the ghost in a scene, "The country needed a sense of direction, of identity. People like you (Ghosts) organizing into unions, discourage and disrupted all progress" (*SRGL,* 259). At this point, Rafi realizes that whatever he did with the protesters was a brutal act and this makes him seek forgiveness from the ghost. Ultimately, Rafi in distress hangs himself. Although Kureishi did not want Rafi to commit suicide out of his guilt but because of his sense of hopelessness in life- no one wants him now; there's nowhere for him to go, neither at home nor in Britain which he expresses in the essay "Some Time with Stephen" (Kureishi, 1992:137).

4.11 Conclusion.

Kureishi's works reflect the impact of Thatcher's revolutionary economic policies on different sections of the society and in doing so, he emerges as a critic of Thatcherism. This chapter has successfully explained how Thatcher failed to eradicate the class hierarchy which was one of her main objectives of implementing entrepreneurial policies. Rather, this chapter finds out her policies increased the class division of working-class and under-class, and created a hierarchy of economic status in the British society. It can be established that her lack of insight into the policies of entrepreneurship, and free

market limited the wealth and power concentrated in the hands of few capitalists such as Nasser, Selim, and Omar. Although to some extent, the class hierarchy has been re-shuffled, it can be argued that only a few people who had the privilege of capital could squeeze the benefits of Thatcher's policies. In this way, the rich became richer and the poor became poorer thus enlarging the gap between the rich and poor in the society. The failure of her policies raised a generation of unemployed youths who engage themselves in drug smuggling, robbing, illegally occupying properties, and increasing homelessness among them. This deprived section of the society becomes envious and jealous of the Asian immigrants who are successful businessmen and entrepreneurs. Thus, the chapter finds a link between this feeling of enviousness and the racism among the working-class whites against these economically prosperous immigrants.

The other aspect of this chapter also successfully highlights how a revolution in the British Film Industry takes place with the shift from British heritage films to the social realist films. The authors like Hanif Kureishi and the director like Stephen Frears propagate such revolution because they address the realistic social issues such as poverty, burglary, rioting, homelessness, unemployment, and anti-government demonstration. These core level social issues are neglected in the past as the British heritage films were mainly derived their themes from Britain's glorious time period which included the beautiful countryside, the glory of the powerful British Empire, splendid and lavish higher-class society, and aristocrats. Kureishi's screenplays such as *My Beautiful Laundrette*, and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*, for the first time, become remarkable in the British Film Industry as their main themes are taken from the under-class or poor section of the society and its real issues which are completely different from the heritage films. Moreover, the success of these films lies in the fact that they address a majority section of the British society and their day-to-day aspects of life.

Chapter: 5

Clash of Cultures and of Generations: A Complexity of Immigrants' Life.

5.1 Introduction.

This chapter mainly deals with the psychological, cultural, and religious disparities between the first-generation and second-generation Asian immigrants in the 80s and 90s Britain, as depicted in Kureishi's works. In his works, Kureishi delineates the experiences of a wide range of immigrants such as successful entrepreneurs, dreamers, identity seekers, seeking economic opportunities, and political exiles in Britain. The disparities among the individuals of two generations lead to clashes which affect familial relationships, religious ideologies, and the conceptualization of their British identities. These disparities also create different concepts of 'home' and 'belongingness'. Kureishi describes this diasporic relationship of these immigrants between their ancestral land and Britain as a host country in a more subtle and nuanced way. The first-generation immigrants in Britain are born and raised up in their home country with their traditional values, cultures, and ideologies. They expect that these values and traditions would be followed and practised by their second-generation offspring. Some of them also expect that their unfulfilled dreams would be realised and achieved by their children. But the second-generation immigrants are born and raised in Britain with a completely different set of values and culture. As a consequence of this disparity, they wish to live a more liberal life with independence and freedom of choice. The clash of cultures between the two generations originates here. I have applied Bhabha's theoretical framework of liminality, in-betweenness, and the concept of third space of enunciation to analyse these clashes and concerns of these two generations as represented in Kureishi's texts with special reference to Monica Ali's debut novel, *Brick Lane* (2003).

My interest for this chapter emerges from Ayub Khan Din's play, *East is East* which was first staged in 1996 in Royal Court Theatre, London. The play, set in 1970, depicts a

Pakistani immigrant George married to a white woman Ella who bears him seven children. They belong to a working-class family running a fish-and-chip shop in Salford. An Asian immigrant father who is determined to raise his children according to traditional Pakistani Muslims' religious and cultural values. The inter-generational conflict begins when the second generation of immigrants started to identify themselves more with the British values than with their parent's religious, and cultural values and ancestral traditions which becomes unacceptable to the immigrant father. The protagonist out of his anger and frustration calls his children 'bastard' and in return, they call him 'Paki'. The gap and the difference between first-generation parents and second-generation children are interestingly presented in this play. The clash of thoughts and attitudes is very important and relevant in the context of the time period when the play is set in. Kureishi in his autobiographical essay, "The Rainbow Sign", also presents a similar picture of the second-generation Asian immigrants who are the generation of lost people in Britain. A sense of homelessness and non-belongingness prevails in their lives. The critical and complex situation of this generation is defined by Kureishi in the following words,

> …I know Pakistanis and Indians born and brought up here who consider their position to be the result of a diaspora: they are in exile, awaiting return to a better place, where they belong… this 'belonging' will be total…It is not difficult to see how much illusion and falsity there is in this view. How much disappointment and unhappiness might be involved in going 'home' only to see the extent to which you have been formed by England (RS, 35).

A similar note of tragedy and clashes is also expressed by Chanu, a first-generation immigrant father, in Ali's *Brick Lane* to his friend Dr Azad. According to Chanu, when their second-generation children move to Western cultures and lifestyles, it can lead to clashes of generations and cultures. Further, he argues that the process of assimilation and integration in British society can also lead to the identity crisis of the second generation in his words,

> This is the tragedy of our lives. To be an immigrant is to live out a tragedy." … "The clash of cultures ... And of generations (*BL,* 91).

> I'm talking about the clash between Western values and our own. I'm talking about the struggle to assimilate and the need to preserve one's identity and heritage. I'm talking about children who don't know what their identity is. I'm talking about the feelings of alienation engendered by a society where racism is prevalent (*BL,* 92).

5.2 The Irony of Belonging for both the First and the Second Generation of Immigrants.

The first generation of Asian immigrants, as depicted in Kureishi's works, who arrived in Britain after the Second World War either belonged to the upper classes or were factory workers and labourers from the Indian sub-continent with the intention of returning back to their homeland. Although they were geographically miles apart from their home country, they were psychologically, culturally, and religiously very much connected to it. In the course of time, the return home never happened and eventually, they settled in Britain with their second-generation offspring. Even after years of living in Britain, some of the ambivalent first-generation immigrants such as Anwar in *The Buddha of Suburbia* and Chanu in *Brick Lane* struggle to assimilate into British society. As they could not fulfil their dreams to go back to their home country, they live in a very psychologically complex and critical situation away from home which Monica Ali terms 'Going Home Syndrome', a disease that afflicts many first-generation immigrants in Britain (Ali, 2003:24). In this situation, as they fail to go back to their country, they try to live and create an Asian life by retrieving and practicing a bit of their culture, values, religion, and national identity while living in Britain. The intense bonding of the first generation with their own culture can be realized when Chanu moans at the plight of the immigrants longing for their home in his words, "They don't ever really leave home. Their bodies are here but their hearts are back there. And anyway, look how they live: just recreating the

villages here" (Ali, 2003:24). This complex psychological state of 'ambivalence', according to Bhabha, stops them from assimilating fully with British society. It is ambivalence because of their complex attraction and repulsion of the host culture. The failure of assimilation with British culture and the failure to return back to the homeland or genuinely follow their culture and religion compels them to slip into a 'liminal space' or an 'in-between space' wherein the exchange of cultures takes place. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin define this as a transcultural space wherein there is a continual process of movement and interchange between different states such as personal or communal self-hood (Ashcroft et al. 2007:117). Eventually, they create their own space or a comfort zone, the 'third space' in Bhabha's theory as they try to construct or find out colonizer-colonized relations, interdependence and the mutual construction of subjectivities (Bhabha, 1994:37).

The concept of belonging for second-generation immigrants is quite different from their first-generation counterparts. As the second generation is born and brought up in Britain, their bonding with their ethnic and cultural roots is not connected as with the first-generation parents. Unlike the first generation, they do not long for their roots. Since their birth, they are so integrated and assimilated with the British culture and values that they do not look back to their ancestral roots. It is quite evident in Kureishi's works as well as Ali's *Brick Lane* that none of the second-generation immigrants is in touch with their extended family members back in their ancestral land. They learn about their ethnic roots only through oral stories from their parents. Karim in *The Buddha of Suburbia* comes to know about India and his father's luxurious life in Bombay from the story told by his father Haroon. Karim never visited India. Similarly, Shahana, Chanu's daughter, in *Brick Lane* runs away from home when her father forces her to go back to Bangladesh, the country which is an imaginary land for her. When first-generation immigrants face racial discrimination, violence, and challenges in Britain, they start longing for their homeland.

But in the case of second-generation immigrants, either they turn rebellious against the racial discrimination and challenges or they get united under the realm of religious identity and extremism, and some accept them submissively. For example, first-generation immigrants such as Shahid's Papa in *The Black Album*, Rafi in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* or Haroon and Anwar in *The Buddha of Suburbia* or Parvez in *My Son the Fanatic* accepted racism and discrimination indifferently and remained unprotesting. But the second-generation immigrants such as Danny and the kids' community in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* or Jamila in *The Buddha o Suburbia* or Chad in *The Black Album*, Karim, Nazneen's lover in *Brick Lane* and Farid in *My Son the Fanatic* are not ready to accept such racial discrimination. Rather they are ready to fight back for their rights. These second-generation Asian immigrants are described as '*inter alia*' or "suspended between cultures", who are prone to religious radicalization and extremism which interferes with their integration into the dominant British culture (Ghuman, 2003; Saeed, 2007:443-462).

In the above context, the character of Haroon has a home 'India' to express his sense of belongingness. He adopts the ideology of Indian saint Gautam Buddha as his identity to create a space in Britain. Haroon's nostalgia for his home country can be realized when he misses his affluent and grand lifestyle in Bombay which is expressed in his statement, "We old Indians come to like this England less and less and we return to an imagined India" (*BoS,* 74). But Karim, Haroon's son, who is born and raised in Britain neither has India nor Britain to express his emotions and belongingness. When he faces exploitation and discrimination at school, from his friends, from his girlfriend's father, and in the theatre, he remained indifferent to them because this kind of treatment is very common for him or any of his kind. Because of his upbringing in Britain, he struggles to adopt the culture and tradition of his Asian roots; and because of his color and ethnicity, he struggles to fit in among the whites. The concept of home and his sense of belonging remain a dream for him. Ambivalence in his belonging can be realized while in America

with Charlie, he becomes restless to come back to Britain. Charlie tries to convince him to stay together in America which can give them opportunities and success but Karim desperately longs to come back home, to England, the only place he belongs to. Kureishi himself being a second-generation immigrant also expresses a similar kind of attachment to Britain in his autobiographical essay, "The Rainbow Sign". He expresses his own sense of non-belongingness to Pakistan, the country of his ancestors. During his visit to Pakistan, he realizes, "… there was always going to be the necessary return to England. I came home… to my country" (RS, 33). The concept of home or the home country for the second generations like Karim or Kureishi himself is very much paradoxical because although they consider England as home but in reality, the home is not ready to accept them. For both of them, the sense of home and belongingness is obscure. Karim is in a state of limbo as he is not able to identify himself with home. The tragedy of belongingness and home for them is crucial and questionable as they consider England is their home but to what extent, England is ready for them. Monica Ali's novel also portrays a similar tragedy of belongingness to Britain for her character Karim who like Karim Amir in *The Buddha of Suburbia* is born and brought up in Britain and has no connection with his ancestral homeland, Bangladesh. The protagonist Nazneen speculates about Karim, her lover, in her words, "Karim had never even been to Bangladesh. Nazneen felt a stab of pity. Karim was born a foreigner. When he spoke in Bengali, he stammered. Why had it puzzled her? She saw only what she wanted to see. Karim did not have his place in the world. That is why he defended it" (Ali, 2003:375). Rafi in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* tries to convince his son Sammy to come back home (Home Country) as he realizes that London has become a cesspit and it is no more the place he idealized. But Sammy as a second-generation immigrant identifies himself with England as home and London as its bosom. Sammy further reinforces his belongingness to London in his words to his father, "We love our city and we belong to it. Neither of us are English, we're

Londoners you see" (*SRGL*, 234). It becomes clear from Sammy's words that no amount of hatred or atrocities against them can break their ties with London.

Anwar, in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, as a first-generation immigrant remains in ambiguity in his relationship with Britain. Originally from an elite-class Indian family with a degree in aeronautical engineering, he is running a vegetable shop in Penge with a stereotypical Muslim identity with a long beard and wearing a religious cap. Anwar as a typical representative of the Asian patriarchal father authoritatively deals with his family when forces his daughter Jamila to marry an Indian man of his choice. He fails to assimilate into British society and also could not fulfil his dream of going back to his country. Finally, he dies a pathetic death. Anwar's state of ambivalence can be noticed when he dwindles between his nostalgic past and his dreams of utopia. On one side, he gravely misses his home country India, the city of Bombay where he grew up, the beach, and misses his mother and school friends but surprisingly, he wants to go to Las Vegas for gambling. Jamila, Anwar's daughter, who is a second-generation immigrant, possesses a completely different set of ideologies from her father because of her liberal (Western) upbringing in Britain. She wants to live a free and liberal life which is threatened by her father's suppressing and domineering attitude as he tries to administer her life with his own choices. Like any other second-generation immigrant, she has no connection with her ancestral land, so the only home confined to her is Britain. When her belongingness to this land is threatened by racism, exploitation, and discrimination, she turns rebellious and fights back. She stands strong against the racial violence and atrocities faced by the multi-ethnic immigrants in Britain.

The economically successful class of first-generation immigrants represented in Kureishi's works such as Shahid's Papa in *The Black Album*, Nasser and Salim in *My Beautiful Laundrette* are more concerned about making money, setting up businesses and

entrepreneurship in Britain and remain very indifferent towards racism, discrimination or violence against the immigrants. The sense of belongingness to Britain for them is mainly confined to achieving economic success. They want to impose and carry on the same legacy of business and wealth upon their second-generation counterparts. This is why Shahid's father, Papa, neglects his concerns about racism and violence and advises him to only focus on business and money. After being victimised by racism and failing to get family support, Shahid discovers a comfort zone and a sense of belongingness in Riaz and his group which represents his own Muslim community. Shahid belongs to a nuclear family of father, mother, elder brother Chili and his wife Zulma. They run a travel agency in Britain. After the death of his father, the family is left scattered, Chili leaves the family business and starts fighting with Zulma, and his mother is caught by unhappiness and the purposelessness of life. Now he is away from family and engages in drug dealing. Shahid moves to London for further study which gives him a new way of belonging to London which he expresses in his words, "The city would feel like his; he wouldn't be excluded; there would be ways in which he could belong" (*BA*, 16) like Karim Amir moves to London from the suburbs expresses the sense of belonging to London where he does not feel exposed. Similarly, another second-generation immigrant Chad in the novel is also in a similar crisis of belongingness. He is denounced by the whites because of his race and color, and receives a very unwelcoming or rather a mocking treatment from his own Asian community because of his British accent. This repulsion from both sides forces him to search for an alternate source of belongingness that Riaz and his group provide him. The second generation of immigrants have no ancestral roots to look back, rather they are left with only one home, Britain. When their attachment to Britain is challenged by racism, exploitation, and discrimination, they stand defiant and fight back to establish their existence in society and become an integral part of it.

Kureishi's short story (My Son the Fanatic), screenplay and later film, *My Son the Fanatic*, mainly deals with the themes of identity, a sense of belongingness to Britain, religion, integration and the relationship between a father and his son. How patriarchy and fanaticism can groom each other and how they challenge their relationship with Britain in a single place can be exemplified through this story. The underlying theme also represents the struggle of the Asian immigrants to face in this alien society which refuses to accept them and treat them as equals. Parvez, the central character of the film, tries his utmost to intermingle and assimilate with the British people and their society. Unlike Chanu in *Brick Lane*, Parvez not only leaves his country but also abandons his religion and culture; and embraces the West where he drinks wine, eats pork, and listens to Western music. Till the end, he tries hard to fit into this British society. Finally, he advises his wife Minoo to not go back to their country which they left long before and does not belong to them anymore which he expresses in his words, "There is nothing there for me… This is our home" (*MSF,* 121). Perhaps this is the irony of Parvez's concept of home and belongingness for not being able to embrace his own homeland, rather he runs after the land which is not ready to accept him. He fails to concretize his sense of home because of his ambivalent nature. There remains a contrast between Parvez and his son Farid and his wife Minoo in the conception of a sense of belonging and being a part of British society. With all compromises and losses in his immigration to Britain, Parvez considers all of it as part of his experience and adventures; to him, it seems to be worth surviving in this dreamland.

Kureishi states in the essay, "The Road Exactly" about the hopes, desires, and expectations of his father's generation who immigrated to Britain in these words, "My father's generation came to Britain full of hope and expectation. It would be an adventure, it would be difficult, but it would be worth it" (Kureishi, 1997: xi). To achieve those dreams, they even become indifferent to any form of racism. The same attitude as

Kureishi's father has been adopted by Parvez in the story. He refuses to acknowledge the cold behavior of the whites. Rather, he remains completely indifferent toward racism and discrimination in this society. When Parvez along with Bettina and Mr Schitz visit the pub, he is made an object of mockery by a fat vulgar comedian. The comedian overtly made fun of the Paki, Salman Rushdie's work as Satanic Arses, and Muslims. Parvez is the only man of color present in the pub and everyone laughs and jeers at him. He remains completely indifferent toward the comedian. Bettina feels disgusted and retaliates when a white man tries to throw a roll of bread. Parvez is very much aware of the reality of racism and abuse from the whites who consider him merely a little man. He is also aware that despite being hospitable towards white people and inviting them into his house, he has never received any invitation from them. His obsession to integrate with the English people can be realised in his words, "But I invited the English. Come- share my food! And all the years I've lived here, not one single Englishman has invited me to his house- apart from Fingerhut, who is a top-class gentleman! I still make the effort" (Kureishi, 1997:65). So, the invitation from the Fingerhut family turns out to be a very important achievement to socialize with the whites for Parvez in his whole twenty-five years of life living in Britain. His happiness and excitement are revealed during the photo session of his son's engagement with Madelaine in the Fingerhut family. This invitation from the Fingerhut family increases his confidence and sense of superiority among his fellowmen. He always boasts that he is more sophisticated than his other fellow drivers and is proud of his son's performance in his words, "Ali excelled at cricket, swimming and football, and how attentive a scholar he was, getting A's in most subjects" (My Son the Fanatic). Moreover, his son's engagement with the daughter of Mr. Fingerhut who according to Parvez is a 'top policeman' (*MSF,* 10) puts him in a higher stratum of the society. In his conversation with Mr. Schitz, he expresses his snobbishness in regards to the other fellow drivers, "Sir, a lot of these drivers are very low-class types. They can hardly speak English"

(*MSF*, 32). But at last, the break-up between Farid and Madelaine becomes a shock for Parvez as it was the last hope for him to intermingle with the whites and erase the inferiority of being a low-class Asian immigrant. The outburst of Parvez's anger at his son's break-up shows how a dominant father is he when fails to accept his son's freedom of choice. In this context, Parvez is frustrated and his son's action drives him fanatic. His son being a second-generation immigrant seems to be more sensible in his sense of belonging when he realizes how unfeasible this relationship was and how cold was the behavior of his hosts, "And couldn't you see how much he (Mr. Fingerhut) hated his daughter being with me, and how … repellent he found you? I never want to see those people again" (*MSF*, 68). But Parvez ignores this reality of their cold welcome and shuns his son and indulges in arguments trying to defend his belonging to this country. However, in the short story as well as in the film, Parvez fanatically starts beating and kicking his son. There is a contrast in the way Parvez and his son Farid deal with their sense of belonging and being a part of British society.

The frustration of discrimination is unacceptable for a second-generation immigrant like Farid. In his argument with his father, Farid tries to establish the shallowness of the sense of belonging to Britain that how far genuinely one tries to belong to this land, the sense of inferiority always prevails. But Farid, a second-generation child, is not ready to feel inferior. He undoubtedly establishes the fact that "Whatever we do here we will always be inferior. They will never accept us as like them. But I am not inferior! Don't they patronize and insult us? How many times have they beaten you?" (*MSF,* 65-66). Kureishi in his essay, "The Road Exactly", explains the inferiority of the first generation in terms of colonialism in their home country and the inferiority of the second generation due to racism in their home country Britain. The clash arises when the first generation, unlike the second generation, does not want to address this inferiority. Kureishi explains the plight of discrimination for both generations in his words,

> It must not be forgotten … that the backgrounds to the lives of these young people includes colonialism – being made to feel inferior in your own country. And then, in Britain, racism; again, being made to feel inferior in your own country (*MSF*, xi).

Unlike his father who is a first-generation immigrant, Farid struggles hard to establish his belongingness to Britain and that leads him to disillusionment and estrangement. Farid seems to develop considerable anger and frustration when he tries to discover his space in Britain. He realizes that the society is constraining, limiting and degrading and he feels to be a victim of racism and discrimination in the country where he is born and raised up. Chanu's realization, in Ali's *Brick Lane*, about integration and assimilation into British society is the same as Farid's. He says to his friend Dr. Azad, "This is the tragedy. When you expect to be so-called integrated. But you will never get the same treatment. Never" (Ali, 2003:204). Even after living in Britain for years, many first-generation immigrants fail to comprehend that they live as second-class citizens in Britain. It's noteworthy to quote the symbolic comments that Asif, Shahid's uncle, in *The Black Album* makes in these words, "It takes several generations to become accustomed to a place. We think we're settled down, but we're like brides who've just crossed the threshold. We have to watch ourselves, otherwise we will wake up one day to find we have made a calamitous marriage" (*BA,* 54). From this statement, it can be established that integration and assimilation into British society is a far cry for these first- and second-generation Asian immigrants. To whatever extent these immigrants go to integrate with the whites, there will always remain an unbridgeable gap between them. This lack of integration and assimilation critically affects the second generation because of the complexities created by their parents. Chanu tries to prepare his daughters to move to their home Bangladesh, the country they know only by its name from their book. He proudly declares to Dr Azad, "In all my life, I feel this is the best decision I have made-to take my daughters back home. I am preparing them" (Ali, 2003:205). But his second-generation daughter, Shahana is

not ready to go to Bangladesh and in the end, she runs away from home to escape this deportation.

Kureishi's screenplay and film, *My Beautiful Laundrette*, portrays the characters, Nasser and his brother Papa who is Omar's father, in a very complex and interesting way. Both of them represent a sense of belonging and exclusion in Britain in a different way. The complexities of their differences in social and economic class, freedom of lifestyles, longing for acceptance into the host country, and the challenges of the immigrants, are exceptionally well rendered by Kureishi through these two characters in the film. Omar's father with his conflicting self cannot leave Britain even though he lives a monotonous bedridden life and moans about the future of his son, Omar's career. He cannot go to his home country because of the fear of execution. Nasser is unable to move away from Britain because his dream of making money is only possible here. Although he has been rejected by his mistress Rachel and his daughter Tania who runs away from home, he does not feel nostalgic like his brother, Omar's father. One way or the other, they both are safe and secure in Britain.

5.3 Struggle of in-between Space for the Second-Generation Immigrants: In the Perspective of Home and Society.

Maintaining a smooth and productive relationship between the first and the second generation of immigrants is a challenging experience for both generations. Kureishi in his works has explored different facets of relationships among which the father/son relationship has been very closely scrutinized. He tackles the familial relationship, among the second-generation characters, which sustains under the external factors of racism, identity crisis, violence and discrimination in a racist Britain of the 80s and 90s. Apart from these, they also go through internal psychological crises due to the patriarchal values that their first-generation parents are entrenched in. The first-generation immigrants who

came to Britain were from various social backgrounds and classes from the colonies. But, the entire class hierarchy was completely diminished and all were treated under the identity badge of immigrants on their arrival in Britain. When the upper-class first-generation degrades to the bottom of the class hierarchy, they tend to place aspirations and dreams of rising up in the society on their offspring. But the second generation fails to realize their parents' fantasies. This leads to the emergence of a clash between them. For example, first-generation parents such as Haroon, Parvez, and Shahid's Papa rest their unachieved dreams and aspirations on their second-generation children.

The second-generation immigrant child Karim in *The Buddha of Suburbia* becomes lonely and withdrawn when the family splits because of his father, Haroon's affair with Eva. Haroon's aspirations to rise in the social milieu and identity consciousness drives him to trade on Buddhism. To raise himself from the working class, Haroon leaves his wife Margaret and moves with Eva, a clever and graceful lady, who transcended her middle-class status. Haroon's affair with Eva and his impersonation of Buddha shatter Karim's familial relationship. Karim realizes, "Dad shouldn't hurt Mum, should he? She doesn't deserve it" (*BoS,* 54) which makes his Mum's life, "fundamentally hell" (*BoS*, 105). After his parents split, Karim's sense of home is devastated. He cannot settle in a single place, rather he keeps on oscillating from one person to another in search of a stable relationship which he describes, "I was lonely for the first time in life, and an itinerant" (*BoS*, 94). He abandons his education when his father moves away with Eva, his mother goes to auntie Jean with his brother Allie, and his friend Jamila too moves with Changez into their new flat. He fails in almost all subjects. He expresses his disgust to his father, "… I'm not in the right mood for studying. I'm too disturbed by all the stuff that's happening. You leaving Mum and all. It's a big deal. It affects my life" (*BoS,* 110). Because of his failure to establish any successful relationships among his family and friends, he feels meaninglessness and disillusionment which leads him into an identity

crisis. The immigrants who settled in Britain mostly lived in a nuclear family setup like Karim. In absence of any extended family, the feeling of non-belongingness for a lonely immigrant child such as Karim becomes deeper and more frustrating.

The familial relationship for both generations is a very important factor for union and making a connection to each other. Family plays a vital role for these immigrants to morally support each other in their crisis. Chanu, in *Brick Lane,* expresses to his wife Nazneen about his emotional attachment to his family, "All these years I dreamed of going home a Big Man. Only now, when it's nearly finished for me, I realized what is important. As long as I have my family with me, my wife, my daughters, I am as strong as any man alive" (Ali, 2003:400). Kureishi in his essay, "The Rainbow Sign", describes the shallow and fake intimacy among the people in the London suburbs. Even after living for years together, people could not develop an intimate relationship with each other, Kureishi describes this kind of life as feckless and rootless, "There was much false intimacy and forced friendship. People didn't take responsibility for each other" (RS, 17). Discovering the difference in the family relationship between the East and the West during his visit to Pakistan, Kureishi describes how he admired the warmth of a joint family setup which he had never come across in Britain. He describes, "... the close-bonding within the families and about the intimacy and interference of an extended family and a more public way of life" (RS, 17). Abandoned by both society and family, Karim moves to his childhood friend Jamila who lives with her husband Changez in a flat. This relationship offers him temporary hope and fills his loneliness. Karim expresses his contentment in his relationship with Jamila and Changez, "It was only with these two that I felt part of a family. The three of us bound together by ties stronger than personality, and stronger than the liking or disliking of each other" (*BoS,* 124). But unfortunately, because of his guilt-consciousness about deceiving Changez, he moves away from them.

Karim's identity is not only affected by the unstable familial relationship, but the societal relationship also massively destabilizes him. He struggles hard to integrate and assimilate into society, but he is left in despair as the racist society fails to accommodate him. Racial comments for the Asians such as Pakis, Blackies and Curry-face are rampant in the suburbs because these areas are full of anti-immigrant groups, and riotous people and they have their own pubs and clubs. They shouted slogans against the black Asians. Karim is afraid of the racist whites around him and he knew the suitable time and area of the suburbs better for cycling. Many times, he saves himself from passing by trucks, from shoes or spits. The immigrants' life like Karim are pervaded by fear of violence and death all the time. His younger brother Amar changed his name to "Allie" to avoid any racial discrimination in their society and at school. Even after achieving success in the theatre, Karim is still living in despair. The novel ends with Karim sitting at a party and the entire universe circling him, feeling lonely among the crowd, and dislocated among his own family, he is still in search of something yet to be achieved. He remains deprived of a healthy family and a society which should be based on integrity and moral purpose at its core.

Another second-generation Asian immigrant child in *The Black Album* is Shahid, whose childhood experience is also not bereft of racism. Kureishi describes Shahid's racial experience as similar to Karim's. Like Karim, the experiences of racism have influenced and affected Shahid's societal and familial relationships. The lifelong terrible racial experiences create barriers for them to integrate and assimilate into British society which can be realized in Shahid's words,

> I had been kicked around and chased a lot, you know. It made me terrifyingly sensitive. I kept thinking there was something I lacked…. Everywhere I went I was the only dark-skinned person. How did this make people see me? I began to be scared of going into certain places. I didn't know what they were thinking. I was convinced they were full of sneering and disgust and hatred. And

> if they were pleasant, I imagined they were hypocrites. I became paranoid…" (*BA*, 10).

It is evident how he unleashes his anger and his emotion in liminality when he, "… banged the scene into his machine as he relived it, recording the dismal fear and fury in a jagged ... prose that expressed him, like a soul singer screaming into a microphone" (*BA*, 72). Shahid's life is an ordeal of encountering different challenges such as facing racial violence and physical abuse at school, his experience of racism is suppressed by his mother and criticized by his father. His brother Chili considers him, "a hopeless little shit" (*BA*, 40). The outcomes of these ordeals greatly affect his belongingness and sense of identity.

In an argument with Deedee, Shahid replies to her in anger when she questions his involvement in the protest led by Riaz, "We're third-class citizens, even lower than the white working-class. Racist violence is getting worse! Papa thought it would stop, that we'd be accepted here as English. We haven't been! We're not equal! … However far we go, we'll always be underneath!" (*BA*, 209). According to Buchanan this sort of racism is not just confined to the character when he says, "the protagonist Shahid confesses that he too has internalized the racism he had encountered in his youth when his mind invaded by killing-nigger fantasies … abusing Pakis, niggers, Chinks, Irish, any foreign scum" (Buchanan, 2007:15).

Kureishi's character Jamila، who is a defiant second-generation immigrant child is not ready to accept her first-generation father's cultural and traditional values. She grows with her independent political and social ideologies. She is also a by-product of the suburbs in Peckham but becomes a radical figure in the novel. As she is somewhat much closer to the white working-class than Karim, she experiences a brutal form of racism which turns her "more politicised and aggressive" (Buchanan, 2007:42), "She was preparing for the guerrilla war she knew would be necessary when the whites finally

turned on the blacks … The area in which Jamila lived was closer to London than our suburbs, and far poorer. It was full of neo-fascist groups, thugs who had their own pubs and clubs and shops" (*BoS,* 56). Her relationship with her family as well as with society remains unstable. She abandons the family due to the clash of values and ideologies with her father and is in rebellion with society because of her revolutionary thoughts and ideologies.

In parallel, both generations of immigrants influence each other in building up their relationships. The clash between them emerges because of the differences of their distinct cultures and traditions as a result of different geographical locations. In Kureishi's works, the first-generation immigrants such as Haroon, Anwar, Shahid's Papa, Parvez, and Nasser, although they live in Britain, are still influenced by their traditional values. They expect to define and dictate the lives of their second-generation counterparts who have been raised up in a completely different set-up with opposite values and traditions. These parents place their aspirations and dreams on their children but in the end, they face disappointment when their second-generation children fail to achieve them. These parents fail to realize that their children are no more a product of a monolithic and conservative culture in which they themselves had been brought up but rather they are the hybrid products of multicultural and liberal British society.

The relationship between Chanu and his friend Dr Azad, in Ali's *Brick Lane*, is very fascinating. They maintain a very friendly relation but at the same time they secretly feel jealous of each other. The protagonist, Chanu, has a degree from a reputable university in Bangladesh but struggles to get a job matching his degree and is compelled to take on a lowly job for a minimum wage. He feels he has no respect and money. But Chanu has a beautiful family, which is his strength and purpose in life. His friend, Dr Azad, is a rich man and has respect in society. But he is devoid of familial love and warmth in his relationship with the family. The happiness of their relationship is interlinked to each

other. Nazneen clearly understands what kept Chanu and Dr Azad together for a long time. She realizes,

> The doctor had status and respect and money, the lack of which caused Chanu to suffer. But the doctor had no family; none he could speak of without suffering. Chanu had a proper wife and daughters who behaved themselves. But this clever man, for all his books, was nothing better than a rickshaw wallah. And so they entwined their lives to drink from the pools of each other's sadness. From these special watering holes, each man drew strength (*BL*, 271).

This is how they distance themselves from their main space to create one special place of their own which according to Bhabha is a liminal space where they live in contentment for a while.

5.4 The First-Generation of Immigrants: A Typical Representation of Patriarchy.

In delineating the first-generation immigrants, Kureishi represents their patriarchal aspects in his works. To secure a position in Britain, the first-generation immigrants try to impose their own traditional values and legacies upon their second-generation children. Because of the different education with liberal values and traditions, their children are very reluctant to practice and adopt those values and legacies of their parents. There are many insecurities and challenges that first-generation immigrant parents face like studying a particular subject, choosing a certain career, and the marriage of their children. The patriarchal parents compel their children to get married to someone from their ancestral land because they fear that their culture, values, and religion would be lost if they practice interracial marriage. The forced marriage of Jamila and Changez in *The Buddha of Suburbia* is one such example. Because of the forced marriage, the first-generation parent Anwar not only fails to integrate and assimilate into British society but also tries to influence his second-generation daughter Jamila to keep distant from mainstream British society. Jamila's marriage with Changez is a typical representation of

the patriarchal Asian arranged-marriage system. Anwar's family in India chose Changez as a suitable match for Jamila which Anwar accepts undoubtedly without Jamila's consent. Eventually, the marriage fails and the gap and clash between the generations persistently increase. Haroon in the same novel, a first-generation immigrant father, also exerts similar patriarchal pressure on his son Karim to pursue medicine as his career. Haroon wants his son Karim to carry the legacy of medicine from his family which was left unaccomplished by himself but he wants his son Karim to fulfil this dream. He boasts in front of Karim's teacher, "Medicine is in our whole family" (*BoS,* 7) and Karim would be a leading doctor in London. He completely ignores Karim's desires and fails to realize what psychological complexities his son is undergoing.

On the contrary, a father such as Parvez, in *My Son the Fanatic*, who possesses a liberal attitude but exerts patriarchal dominance upon their children in marriage to rise in the hierarchy in society. A stereotypical patriarchal father, Parvez, wants to dictate to his son Farid both academically and personally. He forced Farid to study Accountancy and also tries to persuade him to marry an English girl of his (Parvez) choice. But Farid who is representing the second generation wants to live his life according to his own code of conduct. Parvez overlooks the cold response and hospitality of the Fingerhut family when his son Farid is getting engaged, but Farid is not ready to accept such an unfriendly approach. Rather he protests by breaking the relationship. Parvez compels his son Farid to accompany him to the restaurant as part of the obligation for a son to his father. He says, "… no appointment could be more important than that of a son with his father" (*MSF,* 102). His treatment of his wife, Minoo, is also predominantly patriarchal as he confines her only to the household chores and as his carer. At the end, when Minoo discovers the relationship between Parvez and Bettina, she leaves him for her home.

Shahid's Papa in *The Black Album* is also a typical representation of patriarchy. As a first-generation immigrant businessman, he is very obvious and confident that their family business would be managed and looked after by his children, Shahid and his elder brother Chili. Unfortunately, he is unable to realize that the business is not the taste of his children. He threatens Shahid not to engage in his career in art but to concentrate on their family business. Papa says, "… why he had started writing 'such damn bloody things'… You're not the type to do this. Can't you stick to your studies? I'll break your bloody fingers if you try anything like that again" (*BA,* 75). Papa always wanted his sons to be lawyers, bankers, doctors, or a trader because the artists are poor people in society. After Papa's death, Chili leaves the family business and becomes a wild and undaunted drug baron. Shahid realizes that he and his brother could be a greater disappointment for their Papa because of their failure to stick to Papa's desires. According to Shahid Papa lived a 'decent life, but Shahid notes, "we are led to ask, where did it get him? More importantly, where did it get his sons? The poor …, worked his ass off, and for what? He wanted people to say how smart his sons were. But had they benefitted?" (*BA*, 53). He regrets his Papa's futile hope and dream which he brought with him to this country.

Kureishi's character, Nasser, in the film *My Beautiful Laundrette* is warming, loving and highly seductive. He has been portrayed as completely materialistic and sexual. Kureishi presents him as an emblem of an Asian patriarchal character and a true professional Pakistani in regard to his dominance over his wife Bilquis and daughter Tania at home. He completely dominates his family and ignores his daughter's sexual and intellectual desires. He just wants her to marry Omar and live a life of confinement as her mother lives with him. He restricts his illiterate wife only to take care of him and his family. He never lets her have access to the outside world but only allows her to be a silent observer of it. Because of her lack of English language, she does not get involved in public life,

just keeps watching others from behind the door. At the same time, Nasser keeps a white mistress, Rachel, with him outside the home in the business place.

Chanu in *Brick Lane*, is a representative of the first-generation patriarchal Asian immigrant. He rests his hopes and dreams on his newborn son, Raqib who represents second-generation immigrants. Chanu's unfulfilled dreams of success are now expected to be accomplished by his son. For Chanu, his son opens up a new horizon of expectations and ideas. According to him, his son is "An empty vessel to be filled with ideas. An avenger: forming, growing. A future business partner. A professor: home-grown. A Chanu: this time with chances seized, not missed" (Ali, 2003:67). Similarly, Shahid's Papa in *The Black Album* wants his son Chilli to take up their family business which Kureishi defines as, "… their remaining ambition rested with their sons, particularly the eldest" (*BA*, 53). Parvez, like Chanu, who is working as a taxi driver in London aspires his son Farid to study accountancy and to get a lucrative job to live a respectable life which he himself could not achieve. These first-generation immigrants such as Parvez and Chanu fail to realize the wishes of the second-generation immigrants, rather they try to enforce a sense of responsibility on their offspring. Most of the characters representing first-generation immigrants in Kureishi's works came to Britain with many dreams and expectations that when not fulfilled rested upon their second-generation counterparts. But unfortunately, the latter are not prepared to accept them because of their upbringing with liberal Western values. This is where the clash continues between both generations.

Most south Asian first-generation immigrants especially those belonging to India, Pakistani and Bangladeshi minority communities represented through the texts of Kureishi and Ali prefer to live a secluded life and keep themselves away from the mainstream white British community. In most families in these communities, the patriarchal norms are exercised on their women and they live in more conservative

circumstances. These women are mainly meant to look after the family and raise their children and are not allowed to mingle with people of other communities, partly because of their language barrier and partly because of the impact of patriarchal ideology. They live in the West recreating their native land to create a space of their belonging. Chanu in *Brick Lane* prohibits his wife Nazneen from joining college to learn the English language and reminds her of her limited role, confined to household chores like feeding the baby and changing nappies (Ali, 2003:62). Similarly, Minu in the film *My Son the Fanatic* keeps herself away from the outside world and completely engaged with taking care of the family. Like a typical Asian housewife, she caresses her husband Parvez by massaging his feet after he returns from work. She is unable to speak English even after her long stay in Britain only because she has been kept away from the English-speaking community. Bilquis in *My Beautiful Laundrette* is another victim of the same traditional patriarchal ideology. She has been left far behind by her husband Nasser from mainstream British society. Her role in the house party is only to provide food. She has no active part in the party, rather she observes everyone from behind and from a distance. Later she is also seen making a magical potion to get rid of Rachel from her husband Nasser. Her action is symbolic of the fact that as she has been kept secluded from integrating with Western society, so she could not separate herself from her Eastern practices.

5.5 Changez: A Symbolic Portrayal of Obsession for the West.

The character of Changez is very crucial in *The Buddha of Suburbia* because of his paradoxical representation of both generations of immigrants. Although Changez is a first-generation immigrant, his space is represented in-between the first and second generation of Asian immigrants. He represents the Asian youth who fancies the West as a place of wealth, excitement, and sexual freedom. He has been brought to Britain as an apparently ideal son-in-law for an insecure first-generation immigrant father, Anwar. But

his actual intention is to seek immigration to Britain and to fulfil his obsession with the West. Even after leading an unsuccessful married life, he never complains because this is the only way to remain in Britain. Although his wife Jamila ignores him, he lives a very contented life with a Japanese prostitute Shinko. Significantly, his arrival in Britain has been celebrated by his friends and family members for many days in Bombay. They are not aware of any challenges the immigrants like Changez face in Britain. Ironically, these immigrants like Changez do not want to disclose the reality of their life in Britain. Rather they show off and feel proud of being part of Britain. Kureishi describes this sort of mixture of ambition, obsession, and excitement to live in the West as a dangerous psychological cocktail that he discovered during his time living in the suburbs where the suburban lads had a similar kind of desire to move away from there. This longing of the suburban lads is symbolic that the suburbs are marginalised and not as vibrant and full of opportunities as London. Kureishi describes both the desire of the suburban lads and the young Pakistanis as "It was a dangerous psychological cocktail consisting of ambition, suppressed excitement, bitterness and sexual longing" (RS, 16). Kureishi found that how young people like Changez in Pakistan are desperate to come to Britain or migrate to other Middle-Eastern countries. Kureishi calls this obsession with the West among the young people 'Gulf Syndrome' in his essay, "The Rainbow Sign". He further illustrates this longing for the West among the youths of the Third World countries in another essay, "Sex and Secularity", describing their obsession with the West. They can easily realize the free lifestyle of sex and secularity in the West through media. In Kureishi's words, "Everyone could see, via satellite and video, not only how wealthy the West was, but how sexualized it had become. All "sex and secularity over there, yaar, as I heard it put" (Kureishi, 2011:243). Kureishi also expresses how these young Asians conceive the notion of white women and free sex in the West in these words, "… having been informed

in Bombay by a race-track acquaintance that you merely had to whisper the word 'undress' in England and white women would start slipping out of their underwear" (*BoS,* 189).

Settling down and becoming citizens in this country for these lower-working-class immigrants is a complex and tedious process. Due to this reason, Changez remains under psychological stress of being deported from Britain if his so-called wife Jamila leaves him alone. At this stage, he always requests her to keep him in her house. For him staying in Britain is far more important than saving his marriage and relationship with Jamila. He is well aware of the fact that if he is deported, he would never come back to Britain again. He has a very tenuous foothold in Britain and is even psychologically more uncertain with regards to his belongingness to Britain. A similar experience of one of the pioneering migrants like Changez in Britain during the 50s and 60s is recorded by Kavita Puri in an interview where the lower-working class immigrants are reluctant to travel to their home country. They could not travel to their home country because of high travel costs, fear of intimidation by their friends and family, and also because of the strict re-entry procedure to Britain. Kavita Puri reveals, "All the people we spoke to thought they would go home after a few years. But the reality was it was expensive to buy a ticket home, and they also did not want to be deemed a failure. As growing restrictions began to be imposed on migrants, some were also worried if they went back they may not be able to return" (Puri, 2014).

5.6 Disparity and Disintegration of Immigrants' Dreams and Hopes for the First-Generation of Asian Immigrants in Britain.

A huge disparity in the expectations and hopes among the first-generation Asian immigrants can be seen in Kureishi's as well as in Ali's characters who arrived in Britain during the mid-20th century. They came here with a preconceived notion that this country would be a promised land for them. They imagined that they would be safe and secure,

and would receive fair and equal treatment without any exploitation and discrimination. They never expected that they would be the victims of racial violence, economic and social discrimination, and physical abuse here. As a result of this, they are compelled to join the ordinary workforce which is an incongruity between what they actually want and what they actually become in this dreamland. It is evident that the first-generation immigrants such as Haroon and Anwar in *The Buddha of Suburbia*; and Shahid's father in *The Black Album* belong to the elite class of Indians who came to Britain with the aim of achieving fame and success. But in reality, they realize that they are not the same or equal to the whites in Britain and consequently they are compelled to join ordinary jobs of clerkship and run a vegetable shop in Britain. The fate of Shahid's father, Papa is similar to Haroon and Anwar. Like many other Asian immigrants in the 80s and 90s, Shahid's family also belongs to an upper-class society from Karachi in Pakistan but his father runs a small travel agency in Britain. Rafi in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* belongs to a very wealthy and powerful family. But he is in political exile in Britain and finally kills himself. Rafi, according to Sammy, is "… a great patriarch and a little king, surrounded by servants" (*SRGL,* 199) in his home country. Similarly, in Ali's *Brick Lane*, Mr. Iqbal belongs to an affluent family from Bangladesh. In his house, there were many servants who worked for him. He is an educated man. Chanu expresses his surprise to his daughter Shahana about Mr. Iqbal, "Why can he not rise out of that little hole here, always buried under newspapers and his hands black with ink? In Chittagong he would live like a prince, but here he is just doing the donkey work by day and sleeping in a little rat hole at night" (Ali, 2003:266). Chanu being a well-qualified and educated person, in *Brick Lane*, reflects his own frustration of failure in Britain for not being treated equally and fairly as the whites in these words, "When I came I was a young man. I had ambitions. Big Dreams. When I got off the aeroplane I had my degree certificate in my suitcase and a few pounds in my pocket. I thought there would be a red carpet out for me. I was going

to join the Civil Service and become Private Secretary to the Prime Minister" (Ali, 2003:26).

In *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid,* Rafi's gradual rejection by his son Sammy eventually leads him to suicide which is the subversion of his idyllic concept of familial relationship and Britain as an epitome of civilization. He left England twenty years ago with the concept 'England is hot buttered toast on a fork in front of an open fire. And cunty fingers" (*SRGL,* 200). Rafi as a first-generation immigrant visualized England as a land of orderliness, civilization, and heterosexual values. After twenty years when he returns back to London, he is baffled to see that it is out of control now- streets are burning, murder, looting and violence all around. Rafi who upholds Victorian family values is also shocked at the celebration of homosexuality in 80s Britain. His reaction to the bed scene of Rani and Vivia can be realized as his frustration against same-sex intimacy. He curses Rani and Vivia, "What are you doing, you perverted half-sexed lesbians cursed by God?... God save my eyes from the sights I'm seeing!" (*SRGL*, 249-50). Towards the end of the film, Rafi walks through the desolate tunnels and grim streets of South London where under a railway bridge, he finds the wretched rejects are sheltering-the poor, the senile, the insane, the disabled. Some of them sleeping in cardboard boxes and others in sleeping bags. He tries to convince his second-generation son Sammy that, "London has become a cesspit" (*SRGL,* 233) and urges him to return home where he would feel rich and powerful and valuable.

The situation, after the end of British rule, turned awful in their country as the religious restrictions applied strongly; with the growing number of bandits, corruption among the ruling bodies, laziness, lack of motivation, the holes in the roads, the absence of roads, the roads on fire and many more (*BA*, 107). Shahid's father regrets when he looks back into his country, "1945- a new country, a fresh start! ... How many people have such an

opportunity! Why can't we run things without torturing and murdering one another, without corruption and exploitation? What's wrong with us?" (*BA,* 107). He feels depressed and regrets the end of colonial power. They wanted to escape into a better life in a place where they can live freely, where no one would look down upon them. According to Shahid, "Their parents had come to England to make an affluent and stable life in a country not run by tyrants" (*BA,* 53). These immigrants feel economically and politically unsafe in their own country which according to them, "… the impossible task of living in a country which couldn't accommodate intelligence, initiative, imagination, and in which most endeavor bogged down into hopelessness" (*BA,* 54).

The immigrants tolerate every resentment and hatred from the racists with the hope of a better future but at last, their fate remains the same till death. Chanu reveals his disappointment to his wife Nazneen when he fails to fulfil his dreams to come to Britain in his words, "Why should I stay here in this foreign land, if it did not make me rich?... Here I am only a small man, but there… I could be big. Big Man. That's how it happened" (Ali, 2003:108). Interestingly none of these immigrants discloses the irony of their British life to the extended families in their home country. Instead, they work hard day and night to fulfil their desire to live in Britain as well as to fulfil the expectation of the family members in their home country. Apart from these difficulties, they also encounter hatred, racial discrimination, and physical and verbal abuse from the lower working-class and the deprived young whites. An instance of a Bengali person who is physically and verbally abused by the local young hooligans is revealed in these words "As I told you, they have punched me in my guts. For five years I have lived there, but it is getting worse. Also my sister and my brother and his wife are writing to me saying, have you forgotten us, you are living in luxury there, why don't you send the money we need…" (*BA,* 36-37). Similarly, in Ali's *Brick Lane,* according to Chanu, people back in Bangladesh think, "… there is gold lying about in the streets here and I am just hoarding it all in my palace"

(Ali, 2003:26). In Kavita Puri's interview with first-generation South Asian immigrants, it is revealed that they had preconceived notions about Britain from the glory of the British Empire during the colonial time which according to them, "… England was full of palaces, and the streets were paved with gold. They were quite shocked when they arrived and found that it was not like that. They were shocked that there was poverty" (Puri, 2014). The chase for their dreamland Britain ultimately turns into shocking and traumatic experiences among these immigrants. But ironically, despite their struggles, they are very unlikely to return to their home countries. In this way, Kureishi, as well as Ali, paradoxically depict the ambivalence in the lives of the immigrants in Britain.

5.7. Immigrants and Their Life in Exile: An Unfulfilled Dream of Returning Home.

Kureishi's works examine the immigrants who came to Britain after the Second World War with the hope of better life and did not imagine that they would be stuck in Britain or that returning home for them would remain a dream. One of the classes of immigrants who came to this country without anticipating that they would be the victims of racism, discrimination, and violence at the hands of the white racists. But in the course of due to these above circumstances, they start longing for their home and eventually want to return home. This class of immigrants who are stuck in Britain is represented through Haroon, Anwar, and Parvez in Kureishi's works, and Razia's husband in Ali's *Brick Lane*. This class of immigrants live closely with the lower working-class whites; thus, they face racism and discrimination. The other class is represented by the affluent business class or upper-class immigrants such as Nasser, Salim, Omar, Chili, and Zulma who are also stuck in Britain because of their greed for money, power and political threats. These successful business class immigrants do not want to leave Britain which gives them money and power that they would not be able to earn the same in their home country. Moreover, because of their affluent economic status, they live far above racism, abuse, and discrimination in society. They act as the masters to the lower working-class whites as

they create economic opportunities for the unemployed whites. Salim and Nasser in *My Beautiful Laundrette* represent powerful business-class immigrants whose position in society is parallel to any upper-class whites. As racism has been more actively prevalent among the lower working-class whites, so upper-class immigrants such as Salim and Nasser are not directly affected by it. They do not want to sacrifice this life and status by going back to their home country.

Kureishi also presents a class of first-generation immigrants who are highly intellectual and autocratic political leaders. They had fled their country and are in exile in Britain as returning to their country would mean their execution. The character such as Omar's papa in *My Beautiful Laundrette*, who has once worked as a journalist in Pakistan is living in exile in Britain. Similarly, Rafi was a politician in his home country but now is in exile in Britain in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*. Omar's papa lives a miserable and bedridden life in Britain and moans about the existing political and economic chaos and fading socialism. Rafi as a leader has had a sinister past and his political career has had a record of the criminality of torturing and killing people which is revealed from newspaper cuttings, along with photographs of Rafi published in journals and articles from subcontinent newspapers as well as Amnesty office exposed by Rosie's friends Rani and Vivia. Their home country ousted them and was about to execute them which is why they had to flee to Britain for refuge. Both live with their children in the hope of returning home but unfortunately returning home remains a dream for both of them. Mr Iqbal in *Brick Lane* represents a class of intellectual immigrants who comes from an upper-class family in Bangladesh but lives an impoverished life like Omar's father. His family background can be compared with Haroon and Anwar in *The Buddha of Suburbia*.

A section of first-generation immigrants migrated to Britain because of being non-religious or atheist and some were even communists. Zulma in *The Black Album* is one

such example. Zulma had to face insults from her friends because of her anti-religious statement. She is more concerned about the poor economic condition of their country rather than indulging in religion which she expresses in her words, "That inane God stuff jolly well irritates me when we don't even have housing, hospitals and education" (*BA*, 189). She belongs to a prominent and land-owning family from Karachi where she used to fly planes and travel in camel carts and drove an imported Fiat Uno. She has close contact with influential people such as famous politicians, businessmen, and fashionable actors like Karim Amir. When Zulma decides to return home, Chilli argues that there is no place for a liberal person like her as their home country is governed by extremist religious groups. He argues, "There the lunatics are running the asylum. There is nothing for anyone with a free mind!" (*BA*, 251). Zulma is a misfit in their home country. What is interesting is that although a class of immigrants like Zulma is aware of racism and abuse, they still believe that the situation in their native country is even worse. Similarly, Shahid's extended family in Karachi also does not possess any strong Islamic religious background. When Shahid and his cousins go to a mosque to attend prayer, his uncles do not bother with religious practices rather they indulged in activities prohibited in Islam like drinking whisky. They also watch imported videos from Britain. Kureishi's description of first-generation immigrants and of those who are in exile is very balanced as all of them, irrespective of their socioeconomic classes, share a similar sense of exclusion and challenges.

Kureishi's works also represent a class of Pakistani society who are anglophiles and possess high degrees of English class snobbery in their own country. Pakistan is governed by strong religious values which clash with Western values. Because of their love for Englishness or Western ideologies, this section of the class lives in exile in their own country. One such example is Shahid's Papa's generation who are living in Pakistan. One of Shahid's cousins, who refuses to speak English, believes that this generation with

British accents and degrees of English class snobbery looks down upon their own people as inferior and these anglophiles should be forced to live with peasants in a village like the way Gandhi lived (*BA,* 92). Kureishi's autobiographical essay, "The Rainbow Sign", also expresses a similar attitude in the words of the intellectual lawyer whom Kureishi meets in Pakistan. In the lawyer's opinion, the section of the society who are attracted towards the English snobbery and the desiccated from the marginalized section of the society was, "a plague class with no values" and he also criticizes them, "Their education, their intellectual snobbery, made them un-Islamic. They didn't understand the masses and they spoke in English to cut themselves off from the people… They'd been contaminated by the West, they didn't know their own country, and the sooner they got out and were beaten up by racists abroad the better" (RS, 23).

The immigrants such as Parvez, Haroon, and Anwar in Kureishi's works and Chanu, and Razia's husband in Ali's *Brick Lane* are unable to visit their families and relatives back in their home countries because of their poor economic status in Britain. These lower-class working immigrants prolong their stay in Britain for several years after their first arrival. Most of them work as daily wage earners such as taxi drivers, shop owners or working in restaurants with a very low average income which makes it difficult for them to manage their travel expenses. Apart from this, they have additional responsibilities to support their family members and relatives in their home countries. In Bettina's conversation with Parvez in *My Son the Fanatic,* it can be realized that why Parvez could not travel to his country, he replies, "No time, no money" (*MSF,* 123). In a similar context, Dr. Azad in *Brick Lane,* referring to the lower working-class Bangladeshi immigrants who are stuck in Britain just like Parvez, says, "Every year they think, just one more year. But whatever they save, it's never enough" (Ali, 2003:24). Chanu in the novel also expresses the same concern for the immigrants on the accidental death of Razia's husband, "This is the tragedy… Man works like a donkey. Working like a donkey here,

but never made a go. In his heart, he never left the village… What can you do? An uneducated man like that. This is the immigrant tragedy" (Ali, 2003:115). Parvez in this film expresses his frustration with his wife who has been sending money to her relatives in Pakistan. He blames his wife for their own poor financial condition. In his words: "All you do is send my money to your lazy relatives! What are they eating there- diamonds?" (*MSF*, 38). Parvez in the film pathetically expresses his sorrow and helplessness to Bettina while describing his twenty-five years stay and never looking back to his home country even on the occasions of his parents' funeral. He expresses his feelings to Bettina in his words: "… Over 25 years passed away. I never saw my mother's face again! How I miss them, my parents, and they've been dead all this time!" (*MSF*, 52). The desire for money and life in Britain keeps these lower-class immigrants so busy that they fail to realize that they have spent almost all of their life. Similarly, Chanu as an immigrant father looks at his daughter Shahana and reflects back on his dream in these words,

> Sometimes I look back and I am shocked. Every day of my life I have prepared for success, worked for it, waited for it, and you don't notice how the days pass until nearly a lifetime has finished. Then it hits you-the thing you have been waiting for has gone by. And it was going in the other direction. It's like I've been waiting on the wrong side of the road for a bus that was already full (*BL*, 265).

5.8 Educational Institutions: A Breeding Ground of Racism for Second Generations.

Most of the second generation of immigrants in Kureishi's works experience racial violence as well as physical abuse at educational institutions. This kind of organized racism which is generated in schools and colleges makes second-generation immigrants more vulnerable. Consequently, it greatly influences their relationship with Britain and shapes their identity. Second-generation characters such as Karim, Omar, Shahid, Jamila, and Chad are the victims of racism at an early age at their schools. The trauma of racism

becomes a life-long experience for them which finds expression in frustration, protest, and anger later in their life.

Karim in *The Buddha of Suburbia* has been physically and mentally abused by his teachers as well as by his classmates at school. He has been punched and kicked by the teacher for his misbehaviour or is sometimes confined in a room. He has been bullied and mocked as shitface and curryface which are the slang words used for Indians because of their physical features as well as their cultural food habit of curry spices. He expresses how he has been a victim of racism under the guise of affection, "I was sick too of being affectionately called Shitface and Curryface…" (*BoS,* 63). Most of the time he returns home with spit, snots, chalk and wood shavings on his coat which is in Karim's words, "Every day I considered myself lucky to get home from school without serious injury" (*BoS,* 63). Many children like Karim are forced to take up woodwork at school as their teachers underestimated them because of their ethnicity. They believe that these children from ethnic minority groups cannot deal with intellectualities such as books or knowledge. These children are even intimidated by considering that woodwork or other physical labour would be easier for them. Karim mocks his father's dream that his son (Karim) would be a leading doctor in London. He surprises, "What world is he living in?" (*BoS*, 63). Even Kureishi himself encountered such racism at school when being beaten up by his white classmates and called 'Pakistani Pete' by his teacher (Buchanan, 2007:14). Kureishi depicts such racism at schools in a very subtle way which can be categorized as structural and institutional. Racism at schools can be traced back to 70s Britain from the extracts of the oral history transcript Kashmiri Lives Project (GB3228.79.28) by Anjum Malik, an Asian immigrant who arrived in Britain in 1968 as a young girl. Anjum voices out her experiences of racism at school, "And I experienced tremendous racism at school … My headteacher's favourite saying to Asian kids was, 'Go back to where you came from, stop wasting my time … I spent a lot of time in corridors throughout my

school years' When she protested, she would get chucked out of school all the time" (BAME Communities, 2001).

Similarly, Omar in *My Beautiful Laundrette* reminds Johnny how he and his gang racially attacked him. In the laundrette, his childhood brutal racial memories rush through his mind, how he had been chased and beaten by his fellow schoolmates including his partner, Johnny. Now Omar as a wealthy businessman reminds Johnny, "When we were at school, you and your lot kicked me all around the place. And what are you doing now? Washing my floor. That's how I like it. Now get to work. Get to work I said. Or you're fired" (*MBL,* 88).

Shahid in *The Black Album* is unable to take on the challenges of racism at school. He as a schoolboy falls victim to racism when his own classmates who are supposed to be friendly and supportive start chanting, "Paki Wog Fuck Off Home…Paki, Paki, Paki, Out, Out, Out." OR "… he returned with cuts, bruises and his bag slashed with knives" (*BA,* 72-73). Later when he moves to London to study in a college in which the majority of the students are non-whites. The college is deprived of essential academic resources such as libraries, sports facilities, and proper academic counselling. The students are more engaged with protests, and demonstrations. In Kureishi's words:

> The college was a cramped Victorian building, an old secondary school… It was sixty per cent black and Asian, with an ineffective library, and no sports facilities. Its reputation was less in the academic area but more for gang rivalries, drugs, thieving and political violence. It was said that college reunions were held in Wandsworth Prison (*BA*, 1995:24).

It is obvious that an institution like this cannot produce a well-educated scholar or a morally responsible citizen, rather it can groom several aggressive and violent extremist groups like that of Riaz. The college had academicians like Deedee Osgood who are more

interested to deliver lectures on subjects that suited their taste rather than teaching stuff that gives their students an advantage in life. According to Shahid,

> She and other post-modern types encouraged their students to study anything that took their interest, from Madonna's hair to a history of the leather jacket. Was it really learning or diversion dressed up in the latest words? Were students in better colleges studying stuff to give them an advantage in life? Could this place be like those youth clubs that merely kept bad kids out of trouble? (*BA*, 26).

This college also becomes a breeding place for extremists such as Riaz and his groups who work actively to radicalize other fellow students instead of carrying out their education. They organize meetings, lead agitations, and conduct violent activities such as burning *book.* It is ironic that an institution or a college represents a place of wisdom and knowledge and where books should be restored and protected. But shockingly the religious fanatics burn the *book* without knowing its content. Rather, the group leader Riaz condemns Shahid's habit of book-reading as he feels that books are not real as the world outside is very violent (*BA*, 14).

5.9 Shahid and his Ambivalent Self: A Consequence of Racism and an Offshoot of Patriarchy.

Shahid like Karim Amir in *The Buddha of Suburbia* represents a second-generation immigrant child who has been brought up in a patriarchal family setup. His father, a businessman, always encourages him to take up the family business and forces him to remain oblivious to any external distractions such as racism and abuse in society. His father threatens to break his fingers if he tries to write about his experiences of racial violence and abuse. When he moves from a suburb to London to study in a college, his acquaintance with the Asian group and its leader Riaz gives him a sense of belonging. London, a hub of multiculturalism, tremendous opportunity, freedom, adventure and joy,

gives Shahid an opportunity to explore himself which has been ignored by the patriarchal first generation so far. Moreover, his intimacy with Riaz also gives him an opportunity to discover his religion Islam which previously he was ignorant of or has been bereft of from his family. He gets an insight into Islamic culture, and essential Islamic beliefs, and learns the basic tenets of Islam such as prayer which he had never received from his first-generation parents. He starts attending prayers at the mosque where he finds peace and tranquility to which he has been never exposed while with his parents.

Shahid's childhood identity has been shaped by his racial and patriarchal experiences in the suburb. These racial experiences were so intense that even someone's sympathy seems to be mocking. But in London, for the first time, Shahid gets an opportunity to express his horrifying and terrifying racial experiences to someone like Riaz, which he has previously been suppressed by his parents. Shahid feels confident and powerful that someone is taking interest in him. He realizes, "Yes- there was something important. He couldn't leave his friends; they had something to fight for; they were his people; he had pledged himself to them" (*BA,* 125). Chad's assurance further strengthens Shahid's relationship with their group when he says, "I am hearing every moment of your soul cry" (*BA*, 10).

However, Shahid's psychological crisis is escalated with his bond and intimacy with Deedee which entangles him in confusion, frustration, and ambiguity. His affair with Deedee Osgood, a lecturer in the same college where he studies, opens the door to an adventurous life of sex, drugs, music, fashion, and art in 90s Britain. This aspect of London life contrasts with that of the one exposed by Riaz and the group. He finds himself in the midst of psychological complexity because he vacillates two clashing identities; one with Riaz's Islamic ideology and the other with Deedee's romantic love affair. Both of them are novel to him. His inclination towards Riaz and the Islamic group is due to his lack of belongingness to his parents who always remained indifferent to all of his

concerns and struggles which are being recognised by Riaz and his group. Similarly, Deedee emerges as a nurturing figure for Shahid as she is committed both as a sexual and intellectual companion for him. The paradox of his relationship with Deedee and Riaz makes him ambivalent.

Shahid's relationship with Riaz is completely based on religious ideologies which are against his affair with Deedee. Deedee's relationship with him is completely hidden from Riaz and his group as it is against Islamic religious ethics. On the other side, Deedee's intellectual and sexual companionship always discourages him to avoid religious fanaticism of Riaz. In the company of one, he feels he is deceiving the other which can be realized in his words, "the questions he dreaded were those that interrogated him about what he had got into with Riaz on one side, and Deedee on the other." OR "He believed everything; he believed nothing" (*BA,* 147). There are many contradictory selves that make him confused about his true and real one. Under these circumstances, Shahid is torn between these two contrasting ideologies which lead him to ambivalence in his identity. Further, Kureishi defines the fluidity of his character in these words,

> 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? (*BA,* 147).

Buchanan in his book, *hanif kureishi* also describes Shahid's in-between state of mind and how he is subjected to disillusions and banal fantasies in the following words, "… Shahid is stuck in a naïve realism, endlessly searching for his true nature, or for the object of his real desires" (Buchanan, 2007:58). Further, Buchanan defines Shahid as lost in "a room of broken mirrors, with jagged reflections backing into eternity" (Buchanan, 2007:58).

5.10 Sammy and Rafi: Failure of Filial Reconciliation.

Kureishi's film *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* (1987) is set against the backdrop of themes of race, politics, rioting, class and sexuality. Although the film dissects the relationship of the married couple Sammy, an accountant of South Asian descent and Rosie, a white social worker, the other important aspect of the film is the failure of reconciliation of the father-son relationship between Sammy and Rafi. Unlike other works of Kureishi which depict a strong affectionate relationship between father and son like Haroon/Karim, Omar's Papa/Omar and Papa/Shahid, this film projects the relationship between a first-generation father with a second-generation son differently. This film focuses on the question of how time and distance can affect their filial relationship.

The main plot of the film portrays the relationship of the couple Sammy and Rosie who maintain a bizarre relationship of freedom with their commitment to each other. Despite being husband and wife, they have no sexual intimacy between them and at the same time remain indifferent to one another about their extramarital affairs. In fact, they lead together with a very content life with each other. Sammy is in love with a white photojournalist Anna whereas Rosie maintains a relationship with a black caravan dweller, Danny. The complexities of these relationships are intermingled with the narrative of Sammy's father, Rafi Rahman, who abandoned his wife and son but has now returned to; and also left behind his white beloved Alice awaiting long ago in Britain. His return to London is primarily to escape the political persecution in his home country which he expresses to his son Sammy, "Son, I am in great danger. I am here in London partly because my life is threatened there" (*SRGL,* 209) and also an effort to reconcile his broken relationships with his son and beloved Alice. His return to his beloved city London was also because of his preconceived notion that London was a land of tranquility and civilization. He thinks London "… is the centre of civilization-tolerant, intelligent…" (*SRGL,* 206) but on his return, he discovers a different London, "out of control now"

(*SRGL*, 206). Shockingly, he has been received by his son in a very cold manner in London because years of separation made Sammy an apathetic son to his father who abandoned him as a child along with his mother. Sammy also thinks that he was neglected by Rafi when he needed him the most. Now Rafi becomes "a stranger" (*SRGL*, 208) to his son. However, at the end of the film, Rafi commits suicide because of despair due to his failure to reconcile his filial relationship with his son Sammy, unable to accept London with changing socio-economic phenomena, and unable to return home due to death threats.

5.11 Asian Immigrants: At the Bottom of the Pile in Economic Ladder.

Many Asian immigrants, as represented in the works of Kureishi and Monica Ali, live a life of deprivation and lack of proper employment which in many ways affect their relationships with Britain as well as with their second-generation counterparts. Although first-generation immigrants such as Haroon, Anwar, Mr Iqbal and Chanu possess university degrees, they are deprived and discriminated against in employment with their white counterparts. Some of them are employed but their jobs are not according to their academic profiles. Due to this discrimination, their dreams and aspirations of coming to Britain are shattered and live a very limited life at the bottom of the economic class. Kureishi describes this ethnic discrimination and generalises the miserable plight of the Asian first-generation immigrants in the essay, "Introduction: The Road Exactly" in the following words,

> With some exceptions, Asians are still at the bottom of the pile; more likely to suffer from unemployment, poor housing, discrimination and ill-health. In a sense it hasn't worked out. The 'West' was a dream that didn't come true. But one cannot go home. One is stuck (*MSF,* xi).

Like Kureishi, Monica Ali also reflects on the same feeling of discrimination and deprivation of the Asian immigrants in the context of the economic class hierarchy. The majority of the Asian immigrants always remain at the bottom of the economic hierarchy,

just next to the white working-class who are the most resentful towards the immigrants when they see the immigrants rising above in the hierarchy. Monica Ali's protagonist, Chanu, worries about his promotion in the company because he feels of being discriminated against a white co-worker. `he expresses his frustration, "… it is the white under-class, like Wilkie, who are most afraid… To him, and people like him, we are the only things standing in the way of them sliding totally to the bottom of the pile. As long as we are below them, then they are above something. If they see us rise then they are resentful because we have left our proper place… Middle classes are more secure and therefore more relaxed" (Ali, 2003:29).

Haroon and Anwar in *The Buddha of Suburbia* also came to Britain with their London dreams. They have qualifications from universities but are unable to get any job matching their degrees. Haroon works as a low-grade clerk and his friend Anwar runs a vegetable shop with his family. Whole life they struggle here and just dream to go back to their own country India but they are both stuck in Britain. Finally, Anwar dies in Britain and his dream of going home remains a dream. Like Haroon and Anwar, Chanu as a representative of first-generation immigrants ceaselessly struggles to rise up and flourish in Britain. But his dreams never turn into reality rather end up frustrated and heading back to his homeland, Bangladesh. He came to Britain as a qualified graduate from Dhaka University aspiring to join British Civil Service. But ironically, he works as an underpaid clerk and sometimes as a taxi driver in London and fails to gain any recognition in the society.

The first-generation immigrants such as Parvez in *My Son the Fanatic* or Chanu and Razia's husband in *Brick Lane* are mostly engrossed with working day and night for the sake of accumulating money. But ironically none of them can save enough money to travel to their home country. Parvez laments the grim reality of his life living in Britain

where he has to work 24/7 to support his own family and his relatives in his home country. Even after working for decades, he could not save enough money to visit his home in Pakistan nor could he attend his mother's funeral. Parvez regretfully justifies to Bettina this miserable situation by "No time, no money" (*MSF*, 123). Similarly, Chanu struggles to save money to travel to Bangladesh even after working hard for years in Britain. He supports his own family in London as well as his relatives in Bangladesh. Finally, he has to borrow money from his friend to travel home. The tragic end of Razia's husband has similar circumstances as he dies while at work. Razia reveals about her husband's hard work in these words, "He spends all day at the factory, comes home to eat, sleeps for two or three hours and then he's out again. All night" (Ali, 2003:77). The money he earns by working his fingers to the bone to support his family in London as well as his relatives in Bangladesh.

These low-wage earner immigrants are trapped in Britain due to low income. Most of these immigrants came here to make a good fortune for themselves and for their loved ones in their home country without realizing that they would be stranded in Britain. Parvez or Chanu represents the immigrants who earn very little money to support themselves and their families in their home countries. Parvez and Chanu pretend to stay very excited and enthusiastic about their life in London. But the plight of the immigrants like Parvez can be realized in his words when he reveals his gloomy and darker side to Bettina, "We were only little kids when we came. And the second we stepped from the boat we never stopped working for our families here. Over twenty-five years passed away. I never saw my mother's face again! ... they've been dead all this time" (*MSF*, 52).

5.12. Conclusion.

Kureishi's works explore multiple classes of the first and second generation of Asian immigrants and their clashes in the process of establishing their belongingness to Britain. The clashes between the generations can be better analyzed from the point of view of their economic classes. The works also highlight the economic class transition for many first-generation immigrants. The whole process of belonging for both generations revolves around their struggle to combat racism or violence and assimilate into British society. In doing so, there emerge clashes between the generations as each of them has its own distinct way of forming a relationship with Britain. Haroon and Anwar in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, although from an upper-class Indian family, after migrating to Britain, struggle with the lower working-class whites because of the failure to achieve recognition in British society. Subsequently, they slide down to the status of the working class but retain the Asian patriarchal mindset which has a detrimental effect on their second-generation counterparts. This adversely affects their belongingness to the family or to the British society because on one side they are victims of patriarchy and on the other side, they are victimized by racism. Either way, they are in a familial as well as a societal crisis in their relationship which further escalates their identity crisis. In this context, second-generation immigrants such as Karim in *The Buddha of Suburbia*, Farid in *My Son the Fanatic* (Ali in the short story "My Son the Fanatic"), and Shahid in *The Black Album* can be categorized.

The situation with second-generation immigrants is more complex and critical than that of first-generation parents as they are more integrated into the social milieu right from the beginning of their life. Kureishi's works vividly capture the brutal form of racism in educational institutions like schools and colleges where the second generations were actively engaged with. As a result, second-generation immigrants have been racially

victimized since childhood, unlike first-generation immigrants. Moreover, first-generation immigrants were fewer in numbers and also had minimum involvement in the political, social and economic oeuvre of Britain and thus confronting less hatred and racism from the white racists in the society. Second-generation immigrants such as Shahid, Karim, Jamila, Omar, Farid or Ali are higher in number and more actively engaged in different sectors of society and become a more integral part of it which were intolerable to the white racists. In an interview with Kavita Puri, an Asian immigrant who expresses how racism became intense with the growing number of immigrants in Britain, "There was goodwill towards them at that time, because they were needed. But as their number grew, people's perceptions changed" (Puri, 2014). As a result, the white working-class people assume that the immigrants have taken away their economic and social opportunities or they consider the reason behind their deprivation is this section of immigrants. The first-generation immigrants such as Papa, Shahid's father and; Haroon and Anwar are not as much victimized or exposed to racial exploitations as the second-generation immigrants. It is obvious for Shahid and his contemporaries were racially victimized, educationally & economically deprived, and socially ostracized.

The second-generation immigrants in Kureishi's works or in Monica Ali have either completely drifted away from their own roots and plunged themselves into Western values, and experimentation with sexual identities, or they have adopted the extreme form of religious identity to fit into British society. In doing so, there emerges a clash between the generations because the Western upbringing of the second-generation based on freedom of choice which is in contrast with the Eastern patriarchal upbringing. Under these circumstances, these second-generation youths struggle to carry on with their life which at times lead them to third space and ambivalence. The drifting away of the second generation from their roots and culture, as a consequence, creates a sense of fear and insecurity among the first-generation immigrants because they think that their children

would deviate from their Eastern values. For instance, many first-generation immigrants such as Anwar forces his daughter Jamila to marry a man of Eastern heritage to save his generation from the decadence of Western society. Kureishi also expresses a similar kind of concern in the "Introduction: The Road Exactly" when his acquaintance Ali and his friends reject the idea of bringing up their children because for them West is in decadence where endemic crime, homosexuality, poverty, family breakdown, drug and alcohol abuse can no more be solved by the Western freedom and democracy (*MSF*, ix). Similarly, Chanu decides to send his children back to Bangladesh before growing up in Britain because of his fear of losing their ancestral cultures and traditions in Western society. He indulges his kids in various activities related to Bangladeshi culture such as singing the national anthem, practicing art and music of their heritage. He raises his fear to his friend Dr. Azad, "… But for my part, I don't plan to risk these things happening to my children. We will go back before they get spoiled" (Ali, 2003:24). Dr. Azad also expresses to Chanu the same fear for their second-generation children who try to copy or adapt the Western culture and forget their own, "But now our children are copying what they see here, going to the pub, to nightclubs. Or drinking at home in their bedrooms where their parents think they are perfectly safe" (Ali, 2003:23). Copying or mimicking the Western dominant culture by these second-generation immigrants is more "… the sign of the inappropriate, however, a difference or recalcitrance which coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensifies surveillance, and poses an immanent threat to both 'normalized' knowledges and disciplinary powers" (Bhabha, 1994:122-23).

The concept of religion as depicted in Kureishi as well as Monica Ali's works is unique for both generations that lead them to a clash and crisis. The concept of religion for first-generation immigrants is a simple matter of tradition, faith, and practice; unlike the second-generation immigrants who consider their religion is a form of identity and a medium for them to create a space in British society. In this process, religion does not

remain a simple matter of pure faith, rather it is socially and politically influenced. Consequently, religion is misrepresented by second-generation immigrants as they propagate a rebellious form of it.

From my study in this chapter, I have discovered the disparities prevailing between the generations as immigrants in their struggle to fit into British society. I have analyzed the second-generation characters in relation to their first-generation counterparts and it can be realized that their distinct upbringings are the main cause of disparity at all levels such as culture, beliefs, and values. The very base of their upbringings is poles apart from each other as one is rooted in the Eastern values of patriarchy, conservatism, and family bonding; and the other is rooted in the Western values of freedom, liberty, and individual rights. The study also reveals the expectations of first-generation parents are not met by their second-generation children. This is one of the major causes of their clash. Moreover, the practice of racism, discrimination, and violence against immigrants by the racists has escalated the crisis of these two generations. The only point where these disparities, crises, and clashes can be mitigated by those who have the ability to reach the third space. Kureishi's second-generation characters such as Karim and Jamila in *The Buddha of Suburbia* and Omar in *My Beautiful Laundrette* are the ones who are successful to bridge the gap between them and their first-generation parents. Or they must split from their family to move on. The characters such as Farid in *My Son the Fanatic*, Shahid in *The Black Album*, Shahana in *Brick Lane*, and Naser's daughter Tania in *My Beautiful Laundrette* are such characters who left their patriarchal father to find a space to live in.

Chapter: 6

Conclusion and Contribution

The research has extensively covered Kureishi as an author as well as his works covering the time period between the 80s and 90s in Britain. Among the major works of Kureishi, it examines *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990), *The Black Album* (1995), *My Son the fanatic* (1997), *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985), *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* (1987), "The Rainbow Sign" (1992) and some of his scholarly articles. Being an author of British-Asian heritage, his works encompass versatility and uniqueness in numerous ways. His position as an author is unique as he himself experienced, observed, and analyzed the changing dynamics of British society from within it during his time period. He acts as an insider and outsider simultaneously because of his cross-racial heritage and British upbringing. The time period which Kureishi's works represent is crucial for both Kureishi himself and Britain as a nation. This is one of the most distinct time periods when Britain is undergoing significant changes with the advent of popular culture, fashion, music, and individual identity on one side; whereas the flip side of Britain is engulfed with racism, class disparity, the rise of religious extremism, and the emergence of hardliner white supremacy. Kureishi as a second-generation Asian immigrant author has grown up with the challenges of racism, hatred and discrimination against his kind in Britain. I have endeavored to analyze how, in Kureishi's works, his generation and his father's generation tried to grapple with the challenges of being immigrants and establish their own position in multi-faced Britain.

Although, all the major works of Kureishi, which the research analyzes, revolve around the themes of racism and life of the immigrants in Britain, but each of the work has a distinct and unique aspect in itself. The crux of his works lies in the paradoxical nature of addressing the themes. The research has outlined several layers of paradoxes in his writings. For instance, although, the immigrants experience racism, hatred and violence

in Britain, still they consider Britain as their home. Similarly, when he deals with religious fanaticism and extremism in his works, he fails to represent the religion in its entirety in theological point of view. As a result, his portrayal of the religion becomes satirical and this is the paradox of his representation of the religion. His representation, as a critique, of Margaret Thatcher and her socioeconomic policies also becomes paradoxical. On one side, he projects Thatcher as an anti-immigrant leader and her socioeconomic policies are detrimental to the working-class population, but paradoxically, on the other side, her policies become beneficial for some of the immigrants. In the context of his representation of the clashes between first and second-generation immigrants, he highlights the paradoxical nature of the immigrants' life. In his works, the first generation came to Britain with immigrants' dreams of better life and opportunities which in reality is shattered. On one side, they received very discriminatory and violent treatments from the white racists, on the other side, the dreams they rested on their second-generation counterpart remained unfulfilled.

This research finds a link between the treatment of the racist whites against the non-white immigrants in the 80s and 90s Britain and the colonial oppression, and atrocities of the British Empire in India against the colonized (Indians). After critically analyzing these works, the research finds out that the hatred against the colonized by the colonizers is not limited to any geographies, rather it is xenophobia of the West against the East, white against the black, native against the non-natives, and self against the other. It can be argued that the form and the type of such hatred have been altered at times but never ended. This hatred and racism against immigrants vary from place to place in Britain. For example, London is a multicultural hub where the immigrants feel more secure and less exposed in comparison to the suburbs where very few immigrants reside and experience more racism and hatred by the white racists.

In the course of the research, it also discovers the reasons as to why the time period of the 80s and 90s represented in the works of Kureishi undoubtedly experienced an unprecedented level of racism, violence, and discrimination against immigrants. The first wave of immigrants came to Britain during the 50s as labourers and factory workers who were welcomed in Britain to fill the workforce. Later in the 60s Britain saw a significant increase of immigrants and their presence could be seen in different sectors such as jobs, businesses, factories, and educational institutions. Consequently, a section of whites started fearing that their opportunities would be grabbed and they would be deprived because of these immigrants. Then they started targeting the immigrants with racial slurs, violence, riots, and discriminatory acts against them. The hatred against the immigrants was further fueled by right-wing politicians such as Enoch Powell and the Conservative leader and the then Prime Minister of Britain, Margaret Thatcher. Under these circumstances, the immigrants came under crisis and their belonging to Britain became questionable. Psychologically they felt stateless as returning home is unattainable and living in Britain is challenged. At this juncture, they start yearning for identity to establish their bond with Britain.

The chapter which deals with multiculturalism views it in the light of postcolonial Britain. After the Second World War, the influx of Asian immigrants into Britain greatly changed the monolithic white identity of Britain into a mixed-racial and multi-cultural country. These immigrants brought many diversities and newness to Britain in the form of their distinct food, fashion, music, art and many more which promoted multiculturalism with mostly positive aspects. However, as multiculturalism grows, it is evident that some anti-immigrant, white supremacists, and right-wing politicians discourage multiculturalism in the country. They desired Britain to be a purely white nation as they feared that the rising number of non-whites would take away their privileges like housing, employment, and other benefits. This means that the concept of multiculturalism is challenged due to the

increasing number of racism, violence and abuse against non-white minorities. The non-whites such as Asians with whom my research mainly deals face discrimination and unfair treatment which massively affect their belongingness and identity with Britain. The discrepancies between their expectations and the reality of Britain force them to face challenges both psychological and physical. Apparently, the reactions to these crises make them psychopathic but in Bhabha's theoretical concepts they are actually categorized as a hybrid, ambivalent, mimicking, living in liminality or slipping into a third space. The search for identity leads some of the immigrants such as Anwar in *The Buddha of Suburbia* into ambivalence and finally create their own space which according to Bhabha is the third space. The identity crisis forces Karim in *The Buddha of Suburbia* and Omar in *My Beautiful Laundrette* to be hybrid characters because of their interdependence and the mutual construction of subjectivities in a colonizer-colonized relationship. In this way, their identity becomes a social construction. Haroon's identity as a Buddha and Karim as a Mowgli in *The Buddha of Suburbia* is the outcome of the social construction because society expects to see them in that way. The Western society wants them to mimic because it, according to Bhabha, coheres to the dominant strategic function of colonial power over the colonized (Bhabha, 1994:122-23). Some of the second-generation immigrants such as Chad in *The Black Album* and Farid in *My Son the Fanatic* choose to be extremists whereas Jamila embraces the feminist ideology to revolt and identify with British society. Western liberalism fails to motivate Farid and Chad to come into its way, rather they are intimidated to follow the path of religious extremism and violence. One way or the other, their identity with religious extremism and violence is one of the flip sides of a multicultural and multiracial society in Britain. Behind each of these characters' struggle for identity, racism plays a detrimental role in all aspects. However, a section of immigrants represented through Parvez in *My Son the Fanatic*, Naser in *My Beautiful Laundrette*, and Razia in *Brick Lane*, despite being victimized by

racism and discrimination, feel content with living in Britain. They are well aware of the situation in their home countries and the challenges they face there. So, they overlook racism and violence in Britain where they are pleased to live. They are among the most successful immigrants who feel Britain is a safe haven for them. Britain becomes home for Zulma in *The Black Album* as she cannot return to her ancestral land. In a similar context, Parvez in *My Son the Fanatic* rejects the request of his wife Minoo when she insists him to accompany her home (ancestral land). But he rejects Minoo. Parvez replies, "You can't go home, Minoo. It isn't like that now. This is our home" (*MSF*, 121). This same attitude among this section of immigrants is expressed through Razia in *Brick Lane* when she gives a very sensible argument in countering Chanu's accusation of a lack of opportunities for immigrants and racism against them in Britain. She is able to establish a clear picture of the truth of her home country and Britain which she sees a lot of benefits of living here. She argues with Nazneen, "Ask him (Chanu) this, then. Is it better than our own country, or is it worse? If it is worse, then why is he here? If it is better, why does he complain?" (Ali, 2003:58). Moreover, in this context, such immigrants realize that any society can, naturally, have both bad and good people. In Razia'a statement, "And some of them you can be friendly with. Some aren't so friendly. But they leave us alone, and we leave them alone. That's enough for me" (Ali, 2003:58).

The chapter which deals with, "Representation of Islam" substantially examines how Islam as a religion has been represented ironically by Kureishi. Kureishi as an atheist, Westernized, and creative writer tries to gauge the fundamental aspects of Islam through the radical actions and practices of the religious extremists. In the 90s Britain when Kureishi writes about Islam saw a politicized form of it or a kind of repossession of Islam or a new breed of Islam which, in many aspects, different from actual Islam. Some of the prominent Muslim organizations such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir, Jamat-e-Islami, Tabligh and Young Muslim Organization UK (YMO) are among them which represent political Islam

in Britain. These politically influenced religious organizations have no connections with the core fundamentals of Islamic teachings nor are they linked to the genuine Islamic ethos. They operated on the ground of political gain in Britain. Because of this, they target the second-generation vulnerable youths. It has been a great surprise for Shahid in *The Black Album* to notice the religious enthusiasm of the younger generation and its links to a strong political vibe in Britain (*BA,* 91). This period is full of controversies centered around the publication of Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1988). The publication of this controversial book led to many mass protests in major cities in Britain and worldwide. The protest took a violent turn with extreme activities such as rioting, fire-bombing the libraries, and burning the copy of *The Satanic Verses*, which also claimed many lives. Many young Muslims especially second-generation Muslim immigrants involved in violent and extremist activities that in no way are acceptable in Islam. The religion Islam propagates peace and discourages violence in every form and nature. But Kureishi portrays the concept of Islam from the perspective of these young Muslims' ideologies and activities which can never represent Islam in its genuine and authentic form. He mostly constructs his opinion about Islam from his interaction with the general Muslim masses who can never be considered true sources of Islam. Moreover, the responses acquired from these general Muslim masses are highly personal and mixed with anger and anti-Western sentiments. Some of Kureishi's works especially *My Son the Fanatic* and *The Black Album* mainly depict the rise of Islamic radicalism and religious extremism in Britain during the 90s. The chapter traces the author's growing interest in Islam despite being an atheist. The reaction of the Muslim minorities against the publication of Rushdie's *The Satanic Verse* is the motivational force behind Kureishi's interest in Islam. Alongside this, he depicts the Holy Quran superficially while commenting on some of the verses from it without any reference and also has completely neglected the teachings of the Prophet. The Holy Quran and the teachings of the Prophet are considered the genuine

sources of Islam that Kureishi evaded in his portrayal of Islam. In his approach to actual theological Islam, he not only falls short to present it in its entirety but also misrepresents it.

This chapter also finds out how the socio-political milieu of Britain underwent a change with this publication of *The Satanic Verses* as it has, for the first time, given the Muslim minority an opportunity to unify under the realm of religious identity. The emergence of this religious identity especially among the second-generation Muslim minority is the reaction and consequence of the racism and violence they have faced for a long period of time living in Britain. Riaz and his group in *The Black Album* fight against racism and violence against immigrant Muslims and also burn a copy of the *book* on their college campus. Moreover, the fact that this protest is a politically motivated one and not a genuine religious protest is realized when the group joins hands with a local politician, George Rugman Rudder for their own interest.

In this research, I can firmly establish the fact that religious extremists are in constant war with Western ideologies and liberals. The concept of fundamentalists in Kureishi's works is mostly represented through revenge and resentment against the West. Kureishi has always been an outspoken critic of fundamentalism and racism. Both ideologies are detrimental to the very existence of a multicultural society. He opposes Islamic fundamentalism and racism as he thinks,

> …in the Islamic states, as in the West, there are plenty of dissenters and quibblers, and those hungry for mental and political freedom. These essential debates can only take place within a culture; they are what a culture is, and they demonstrate how culture opposes the domination of either materialism or puritanism. If both racism and fundamentalism are diminishers of life- … - the effort of culture must be to keep others alive by describing and celebrating their intricacy, by seeing that this is not only of value but a necessity (Kureishi, 2011:246-47).

According to him, both racism and fundamentalism are diminishers of life, it becomes the responsibility of the culture to combat them by describing and celebrating the differences of others in the society by considering the others not only by value but by its necessity.

Kureishi also states that the fundamentalists, having been excluded from the opportunities in society, are tempted to exclude others- which include gays, Jews, the media, unsubmissive women, and the writers (*MSF,* xi). For the stranded immigrants in Britain like Farid, Chad, Riaz and others; fundamentalism becomes the medium of resentment against the West and its central tenets such as democracy, pluralism, and tolerance are just a matter of jokes and abstract ideas. They were once subjugated in their own country by the West and are now victimized by racism in this country. Kureishi explains, "For those whose lives had been negated by colonialism and racism such notions could only seem a luxury and of no benefit to them; they were a kind of hypocrisy" (*MSF,* xi). The character of Ali in Kureishi's essay, "Introduction: The Road Exactly" represents the section of excluded class of young immigrants who were bereft of opportunities and deprived of rights despite having degrees and education. For these people, the Western concept of freedom and democracy "were only real for small group" (*MSF,* xi).

The young extremists such as Farid in *My Son the Fanatic,* although, born and raised up in a liberal society, but completely rejects it. Rather, they protest against this kind of society. Having been raised up in secular Britain, Farid would turn to a form of belief that denies him the pleasure of the society in which he lived. Having devoted his life to Islam, he denies the pleasure: the pleasure of sex, music, alcohol and friends. He detracts and spends time in abstinence; for in abstinence, he feels strong. Farid who has Asian heritage with English upbringing is in war within himself. Kureishi says in his extract from "Sex and Secularity", an introduction to his *Collected Screenplays* (2002),

> If it becomes too difficult to hold disparate material within, if this feels too 'mad' or becomes a 'clash', one way of coping would be to reject one entirely, perhaps by forgetting it. Another way is to be at war with it internally, trying to evacuate it, but never succeeding, an attempt Farid makes in *My Son the Fanatic*. All he does is constantly reinstate an electric tension between differences-differences that his father can bear and even enjoy, as he listens to Louis Armstrong and speaks Urdu… (Thomas, 2005:121).

The chapter which tackles the impact of Thatcher's socioeconomic policies during her tenure as a Prime Minister of Britain finds out how her policies impacted the socio-economic milieu of Britain. The chapter considerably highlights that her free-market policies such as entrepreneur culture and business opportunities inversely affected the economy and the working-class society of Britain. Thatcher's policies plunged the country into a higher rate of unemployment, created hostility and resentment among the working class which led to social disorder. The tenets of Thatcherism intended to eradicate class distinction and social hierarchies, but in reality, they widened the gap between different classes and painfully separated them from each other in the society. This chapter establishes the fact that her policies were concentrated into a few hands who squeezed the maximum benefits and the majority of the society was mostly deprived. This resulted in a failure of her policies as the rich became richer the poor remained mostly deprived. As the policies encouraged the budding entrepreneurs, a section of elite-class Asian immigrants successfully set up their businesses and lived a life not less than the upper-class whites. One such example is Salim in *My Beautiful Laundrette* and Chili in *The Black Album* who not only take advantage of Thatcher's economic policies to grow their businesses but also engage in illegal drug trading. They chose illegal and ruthless means of earning wealth and moving upward in society. Interestingly, they did not face that much racism as it was more prominent in the lower working-class people. Rather, these upper-class immigrants acted as employers to the working-class whites in the society by creating jobs and other economic opportunities. Further, the chapter discovers

a novelty with the advent of social realist films from British heritage films. These social realist films set a landmark in the British film industry. The boredom of British heritage films showcasing the glorious past of the empire and the grandeur of British upper-class lifestyles have been challenged by social realist films. The British heritage films were particularly made to cater to only upper-class and aristocratic whites and neglected a major section of the lower-class people. The social realist films, in contrast, portray the grim reality of society especially the working-class society during Thatcher's rule. The plight of the lower working class is projected through burglary, homelessness, drug dealings, rioting in the street, racism and violence against the immigrants, and mass protests in these films which are very intimately associated with the majority of the deprived and unemployed section of society. Kureishi's screenplay, *My Beautiful Laundrette* not only showcases the budding entrepreneurs and thriving businesses but also vividly projects growing racism and violence against the blacks, homelessness and joblessness, and drug trafficking. The entrepreneurs such as Omar and Salim run their illegal drug trafficking businesses behind closed doors with the help of a handful of jobless and homeless young white thugs. These self-styled greedy entrepreneurs created large-scale drug dealings besides their small-scale laundrette and car washing industry which turned Britain into a more morally callous and desperate society. These are the realities of the young entrepreneurs and the lower working-class whites who can be considered the byproducts of Thatcher's materialistic culture and free market economic policies.

Kureishi's second social realist screenplay, *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* is also set in the same undertone as *My Beautiful Laundrette*. The screenplay displays two different pictures of Britain simultaneously in the 80s. Margaret Thatcher as an autocratic leader of the Tory party forcefully evacuates the caravan dwellers in the wasteland situated in the inner city of London to make it a hub of economic development. The screenplay

highlights Thatcher's effort to boost the British economy by inviting global investors, creating jobs and opportunities for the British people, and encouraging small-scale businesses on one side, the other side is engulfed with poverty, unemployment, social insecurity, joblessness and homelessness among the underprivileged young lads. The film starts with a group of young kids with masks forcefully entering into a flat and robbing it. The grim reality of society with disorder and chaos are the upshots of Thatcher's neoliberal capitalist policies which mostly benefitted a few individuals and neglected the majority of the society. In the film, Kureishi as a critique of Thatcher focuses on how her disregard and repressive approaches disproportionately affected the poor section of British society.

The chapter of the thesis which handles the clashes of the first and the second generation of immigrants, explores and finds out the causes and reasons behind the clashes between the two generations in the 80s and 90s Britain as depicted in Kureishi's works. The chapter concludes that the unfulfilled dreams, the prevalence of patriarchy, and the conservative mindset of the first-generation immigrants initiate the clashes with their second-generation counterparts. The second generation is not ready to carry the burden of achieving unfulfilled dreams or being victims of patriarchy by their first-generation parents. Because of their upbringing with distinct values and cultures, the expectations of the first generation seem to be weird and senseless for the second generation. But the first generation who came to live a life in liberal Britain could not compromise or create a balance between their Eastern values of conservatism and Western liberalism. This leads them to frustration and the familial relationship between the generations comes into crisis. Their position is such that they create an ambivalent relation to both colonized and colonizer subjects. This critical and complex relationship motivates some of them to mimicry as the discourse of it is constructed around 'ambivalence' (Bhabha, 1994:122). In the other words, the nature of ambivalence can be associated with fluidity as it is not

definite in its identity. Kureishi's character Karim in *The Buddha of Suburbia* is one such example when his sexual identity keeps on fluctuating in between. Moreover, Karim's hybridity forms a new transcultural identity or a mixed identity with its own codes and systems to fit into society. Similarly, Shahid in *The Black Album* also swings back and forth between Deedee's liberalism and Riaz's religious conservatism. However, Omar in *My Beautiful Laundrette* remains static to homosexual identity. The sexual identity of the first-generation characters in Kureishi's works is very different from their second-generation counterpart as the first generation is not concerned with their sexual identity.

The sense of home and belonging for the second generation remains in limbo as they have no link with their ancestral root. The concepts of ancestral land and root are narrated in the form of stories from their parents. The first-generation parents forcefully try to steer their children toward their ancestral roots, culture and religion which does not make any sense to them. The second-generation children such as Karim and Jamila gain knowledge about their parental roots in Bombay confined to the description communicated verbally by their first-generation parents. Although, this research predominantly deals with the works of Kureishi, but the reference to Monica Ali's debut novel, *Brick Lane* is worthwhile to mention in this particular context. In the context of Kureishi's characters Karim and Jamila, Ali's character Shahana (Chanu's daughter) as a second-generation child has no connection with her ancestral root in Bangladesh. She comes to know about this land only as how her father Chanu describes it in his own words. Because of this lack of direct link, these second-generation children fail to identify themselves with their ancestral homelands. Moreover, racism, discrimination, and violence in Britain against them escalate their frustration and belonging to Britain comes into question. Ultimately, they face manifold challenges from their parents on one side and from the white racists on the other side. They in turn come under an identity crisis.

Although the first-generation parents left their home country long before, the culture, values, and practices of their home country didn't leave them. They want to exercise all of these values and practices upon their second-generation children without realizing whether their children are ready or not for those distant values and practices. The second-generation children are in no way ready to accept those remote cultures and values of their parents. This is the focal point of the clash between the generations. As a consequence of living in Britain with those retained distant values and cultures, the first-generation immigrants struggle hard to assimilate into British society. The first-generation characters of Kureishi want to dominate their second-generation children in every way. At the same time, they themselves want to live a liberal life in Britain according to their choice and freedom. Haroon in *The Buddha of Suburbia* has the authority to decide his own life but his son Karim does not have the same. The same crisis comes to Shahid in *The Black Album* when his father wants to decide his career for him. Omar's papa in *My Beautiful Laundrette* does not want Omar to run the laundrette, rather he urges him to continue with his study. The first-generation parent Naser in the same screenplay restricts his daughter Tania to marry a man of his choice and live a life like any other Asian housewife. Jamila's position in *The Buddha of Suburbia* is the same as Tania's in *My Beautiful Laundrette*. Jamila's father Anwar forces her to marry a man she never met. Similarly, Parvez in *My Son the Fanatic* enjoys his own life in liberal Britain but restricts his son Farid to live his (Farid's) own life according to his choice. When Parvez fails to influence his son, he starts beating and kicking Ali (in the short story, 'My Son the Fanatic'). Their lives are very much ironic in the sense that although Parvez's upbringing takes place in a religiously conservative society, he lives a very independent life of freedom with Western values where he consumes pork which is prohibited in his religion, Islam. In contrary, his son Farid who is born and brought up in liberal Britain

tends to follow the path of religion by denouncing all the Western values, cultures, and practices of life.

Most of the first-generation parents intend to live in a Western society with their Eastern values. The clash which begins internally at home continues to extend externally with the fear of slipping their second-generation children into the Western values and cultures such as nightclubbing, pubbing, and interracial marriages, especially for their daughters. Whether it is Anwar or Naser or Chanu, they are all concerned parents who would choose their Asian matches for their girls or would prefer to send these girl children back to their home country. In this regard, Chanu's statement is quite noteworthy when he says, "… But for my part, I don't plan to risk these things happening to my children. We will go back before they get spoiled" (Ali, 2003:24).

Interestingly, during my research, I have unfolded the obvious sequences among the themes which have been developed in the chapters. The research navigates mainly the time period of the 80s and 90s Britain when the country turns into a complete multicultural hub from a purely white monolithic society. But the growing multiculturalism also simultaneously experiences an increasing number of brutal racism and violence against the non-white immigrants who are the main components of a multicultural society. With the escalation of violence and abuse, the insecurity among the immigrants grows rapidly and their belonging to Britain and assimilation with its society is threatened. This initiated their perception of attachment to their ancestral land as their dream of coming to Britain is completely shattered. However, as going back home remains unachievable, they start suffering from frustration and anger which lead them to a crisis in relation to their identity. They often come across a question- who am I? and where do I belong to? In order to seek these answers, they take refuge in different identities such as religious, cultural, ideological, and sexual. Moreover, the political and

socioeconomic crisis under Thatcher's government increases the resentment of the lower-class whites against the non-white immigrants as her policies limited the wealth to a few capitalists, among whom some immigrants benefitted. Finally, the research finds out that at the same time period, the children of the primary immigrants or the first-generation immigrants grows up. The children are, in many aspects, distinct from their parents. The primary immigrants are not ready to accept this change among their children which creates a rift among them and they come across a clash- a clash of culture and of generations. This along with racism and violence aggravates their pain of immigration into Britain. 'Immigration to Britain' remains a debatable phenomenon for a section of primary immigrants such as Anwar, Haroon, Rafi, and Chanu.

Finally, in a nut shell, the research unravels the paradox of Kureishi's representation of racism faced by the immigrants in Britain during the 80s and 90s and his portrayal of the religion Islam in his works. Kureishi, on one hand, very sensitively deals with racism and projects it in a very persuasive way, but, on the other hand, his represents the religion Islam in an inadequate manner. He falls short to depict Islam as it is which may be because he is an atheist or he gathers the knowledge of Islam from the conversation with general Muslim masses which cannot treated as the authentic sources of Islam. Moreover, the other reason of misrepresentation of Islam could possibly be that he ignores the primary sources of Islam which are the Holy Quran and the teachings of the prophet.

To conclude the thesis, I would like to highlight a universal fact that the process of immigration can be dated back to the beginning of the human history. In the colonial perspective, the immigrants were the British who emigrated to their colonial lands. In the postcolonial era, the colonized people immigrated to the land of the colonizers, in this case, it is Britain. One way or the other we all are immigrants, so the process of immigration is a perennial process which will continue as long as the human exists in this

world. So, we have to accept each other irrespective of any differences among us. In light of this statement, I want to quote again Kureishi's own view on immigration when he as an immigrant has to encounter racist and anti-immigrant slogans such as 'go back to where you came from' or 'Paki! Paki! Paki! … You stolen our jobs! Taken our housing! Paki got everything! Give it back and go back home!'. In reply to these racists' vitriol slogans against the immigrants, Kureishi powerfully responds to them, "But we are all migrants from somewhere, and if we remember that, we could all go somewhere-together" (Kureishi: Knock, knock. 2014).

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