

Social and Humanities Science Research, Theory

Editors

**Asst. Prof. Dr. Şükrü ÜNAR
Dr. Senem KARAGÖZ**



LIVRE DE LYON

2021

Social Sciences

SOCIAL AND HUMANITIES SCIENCE: RESEARCH, THEORY

ISBN 978-2-38236-226-6



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Social and Humanities Science

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LIVRE DE LYON

Lyon 2021

Social and Humanities Science: Research, Theory

Editors • Asst. Prof. Dr. Şükrü ÜNAR • Orcid: 0000-0003-0724-5265

Dr. Senem KARAGÖZ • Orcid: 0000 0003 4865 3281

Cover Design • Clarica Consulting

Book Layout • Mirajul Kayal

First Published • December 2021, Lyon

ISBN: 978-2-38236-226-6

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Publisher • Livre de Lyon

Address • 37 rue marietton, 69009, Lyon France

website • <http://www.livredelyon.com>

e-mail • livredelyon@gmail.com



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PREFACE

Dear readers,

Human beings, who have been in a constant interaction since the first time they appeared on earth, have been partially or completely deprived of this interaction in different periods of history. Due to the pandemic in the current time period, this social interaction has partially stopped. In such times, electronic publications have played a vital role in continuing academic studies and reaching the large masses. The 17 articles included in this study, which is published electronically and will appeal to the large masses, have been written by valuable scientists from various disciplines serving social sciences. The usefulness of Social Sciences will only be beneficial with the collaborative work of different branches of science. The book includes some studies from the fields such as economics, health, international relations, humanities and administrative sciences, and fine arts.

We would like to thank the valuable scientists who have worked in this book including important studies from different disciplines, for their contributions.

Asst. Prof. Dr. Şükrü ÜNAR
Dr. Senem KARAGÖZ
December 2021

CONTENTS

	PREFACE	I
CHAPTER 1	CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS IN THE CRIMINAL COURT TRANSCRIPTS	1
CHAPTER 2	CONTEXT AND MOTIVE BEHIND THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE	19
CHAPTER 3	TRANSITION TO PARENTHOOD: THE ROLE OF MARITAL ADJUSTMENT, RELATIONSHIP QUALITY AND POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION IN PREDICTING PARENTAL SELF EFFICACY	31
CHAPTER 4	ACADEMICIANS' OPINIONS ON DISTANCE EDUCATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC	45
CHAPTER 5	GEOGRAPHY AND SPATIAL CITIZENSHIP	77
CHAPTER 6	PALEOCLIMATIC CHANGES AND EFFECTS IN PLIOCENE, AFRICA	97
CHAPTER 7	PRELIMINARY EVALUATION ON THE KURGANS OF TURKIC PERIOD AT ELEKE SAZY VALLEY	107
CHAPTER 8	TILES OF THE HÜNKÂR MAHFİLİ OF THE BIG KHAN MOSQUE OF HANSARAY	119
CHAPTER 9	THE GROWTH OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP BY REFUGEES IN TURKEY	127
CHAPTER 10	OTHERING AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN HANIF KUREISHI'S <i>THE BLACK ALBUM</i>	141
CHAPTER 11	USING ANTI-SEMITIC DISCOURSE FOR SHAPING SHARED IDENTITY IN AUTOCRATIC REGIMES	159
CHAPTER 12	RETHINKING THE LEGISLATIVE ROLE(S) OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IN THE POST-LISBON PERIOD	167
CHAPTER 13	THE EU'S DYNAMICS IN THE INTERNATIONALIZATION PROCESS OF THE TURKISH HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM	181
CHAPTER 14	EXAMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN E-HEALTH LITERACY AND SOCIAL MEDIA ADDICTION IN HEALTH SCIENCES FACULTY STUDENTS	199
CHAPTER 15	THE WAYS OF ENHANCING EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE AT ORGANIZATIONS	215

CHAPTER 16	EVALUATING URBAN TOURISM MOVEMENTS AND TOURISTS’ SATISFACTION OF URBAN HISTORIC LANDSCAPES	231
CHAPTER 17	DEFINITION, IMPORTANCE AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF LOGISTICS FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE PRESENT	243

CHAPTER 10

OTHERING AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN HANIF KUREISHI'S *THE BLACK ALBUM*

Halit ALKAN

(Dr.), Mardin Artuklu University,

e-mail: alkan.halit@yahoo.com

ORCID: 0000-0002-7170-6196

1. Introduction

Every person is expected to get the necessary knowledge obtained through reason to go beyond the inequality of natural differences among people. So, social development is possible if there is an intellectual civilization free of prejudices and superstitions. According to Condorcet, the increasing cohesion of world culture would cause the advancement of history in order that humans would become a truly cosmopolitan whole rather than being divided into various cultural groups (Outram, 2013, p. 65). The starting of British colonialism goes back to the early 16th century to find new markets for free trade, to seize other countries' wealth, to gain supremacy over other colonial European states. (Çelikel, 2011, p. 19). Besides, Westerners take on the so-called 'civilizing mission' as a duty because they believe in their own civilization's supremacy. For this reason, Western ideology has created arbitrary borders between itself and the 'other' and has named the 'other's land as the 'Orient' and 'the land of the barbarians' (Bernasconi, 2012, p. 152). The term 'other' refers to the category of people considered as different from the dominant social group (Murfin & Ray, 2009, p. 359). In this context, the discourse of 'othering'¹ has been created especially during the colonial period and in literature. In terms of colonial studies, the term 'othering' is used in work *Orientalism* (1979) by Edward Said. Through this discourse, the East is regarded as the opposite of the

¹ The discourse of othering' in this study is retrieved from both the book chapter by Alkan, H. (2020). *The Discourse of 'Othering' in E.M. Forster's A Passage to India*. E. İslamoğlu and E. Elif (Eds.), in *Sosyal Bilimlerde Yeni Araştırmalar-IV* (p. 219-228). Ankara: Berikan Yayınevi; and the conference paper by Alkan, H. (2020). The Discourse of 'Othering' in Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*. M. Muntazır (Ed.). In *3rd International New York Conference on Evolving Trends in Interdisciplinary Research & Practices* (p. 134-140). Adıyaman: IKSAD Publishing House.

West. The East is also otherized to state the supremacy of the West's identity. According to this discourse, South Asian, East Asian and Middle Eastern cultures are regarded as underdeveloped, irrational and static as opposed to the Western cultures which are developed, rational and dynamic. Ania Loomba states that Edward Said's thesis of Orientalism is a vision of political reality that considers the binary opposition between the strange orient as the East and the familiar Europe as the West (1998, p. 47). Likewise, John McLeod says that the East is regarded as the 'other' while the West has a superior rank in Orientalism (2000, p. 41). The hegemony of the West uses orientalism to portray the East as the inferior 'other' of the West in order to strengthen the superior civilization of the West (Moore-Gilbert, 1997, p. 39). Edward Said's basic understanding of the term orientalism is expressed as follows:

Although the West uses orientalism as the discipline to learn, discover, and practise the Orient, Edward Said expresses that he has been using that word as a collection of vocabularies, images and dreams available to everyone who tries to say what lies the east of the dividing line. (1979, p. 73)

Edward Said states that the discourse of orientalism is a way of recreating the desired reality of the non-Western world: "*Western cultural institutions are responsible for the creation of those 'others', the Orientals, whose very difference from the Occident helps establish that binary opposition by which Europe's own identity can be established*" (Ashcroft & Ahluwalia, 2001, p. 63). Similarly, Elleke Boehmer argues that the European is portrayed in relation to an 'other' (2005, p. 77). In this context, colonized people are defined as less human, savage man, headless mass or less civilized in contrast to the supremacy of Europe. To establish binary distinction between the colonizer and the colonized in terms of colonial discourse, the colonized subject is described as the 'other' by the colonizer's culture (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1998, p. 169). Therefore, to ensure the hegemony of the colonizer over the colonized people, the description of the two sides during the colonial encounter is used through discourse. John McLeod identifies the Orient's core stereotypes by saying that the Orient is strange (abnormal), timeless (backward), corrupt (untrustworthy), and feminine (submissive) which paves the way to the conclusion that the Orient needs the West to be civilized towards the higher moral ideals well-maintained in the West (2000, p. 44-6).

During the decolonization years after the Second World War, large numbers of migrants, refugees and nomadic workers look for economic opportunities,

asylum and security in European countries (Smith & Brinker-Gabler, 1997, p. 1-2). After independence, the validity of colonialism becomes a part of the identity of the post-colonial immigrant, and therefore, immigrants, who carry their colonial identity on themselves, cannot escape being foreigners in the society and culture they migrated to and are also regarded as the ‘other’ (Çelikel, 2011, p. 64). For this reason, the discourse of ‘othering’ which is produced during the colonial period maintains in the post-colonial period as it can be seen in Hanif Kureishi’s *The Black Album* (1995).

2. Method

After the colonies gain independence, especially after the Second World War when the post-colonial migration intensifies in the 1950s, many novels about migration and immigrants begin to be published. In this sense, Hanif Kureishi’s *The Black Album* provides readers to analyse the discourse of ‘othering’ in terms of religion, race and culture to establish one’s identity. Hanif Kureishi was born in London in 1954, to an English mother and a Pakistani father. He read philosophy at King’s College. He is a British playwright and novelist of English and Pakistani descent. His aforementioned novel is analysed in the light of the opinions of important social theorists such as Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, Gayatri C. Spivak, and Stuart Hall in terms of the discourse of ‘othering’.

Edward Said argues the discourse of ‘othering’ on binary opposition between Western and Eastern civilizations. Eastern cultures are considered as underdeveloped, irrational and static as the opposite of the Western cultures which are developed, rational and dynamic. Homi K. Bhabha deals with the discourse of ‘othering’ through the concept of ambivalence. According to Bhabha, in the process of ‘othering’ in the post-colonial period, the colonized subject rejects the situation that has grabbed her or him so that s/he is equal to the dominant subject and produces ambivalence by imitating the colonizer. Bhabha states that in the case of ambivalence, the representations of the host culture not only cause an identity crisis in the individual by otherizing the ‘other’ person but also lead her or him, who tries to avoid being otherized, into imitation (1994, p. 38). Gayatri C. Spivak draws attention to the representational problems of third world women in terms of the discourse of ‘othering’. Spivak describes the other as subordinate. According to Spivak, the racist white British subject (imperial subject), reflecting the representations of the European-colonial discourse in post-colonial England, excludes the immigrant-other described by the on-going colonial discourse from society. Spivak expresses that people can be defined only in terms of differences (1994, p. 79). Stuart Hall argues the discourse of

‘othering’ through the concepts of identity and representation. Hall states that centralist representational attitudes in metropolitan regards excluded people as the ‘other’: “*We are not only formed differently, but also the ‘other’ according to classifications reflecting Western knowledge within such regimes. They have the power to see us and experience us as the other*” (1990, p. 225). Stuart Hall expresses that this process occurs through consent.

3. Othering and Cultural Identity in *The Black Album*

Hanif Kureishi’s *The Black Album* introduces the fanatical Islamist groups of Asian origin around Shahid Hassan who comes to London to study at college from his Muslim Pakistani family, who runs a tourism agency in Kent, England. His parents do not attach much importance to follow religious rituals and to adopt Pakistani values. In fact, they ignore racial discrimination, but white British people do not consider Shahid as part of the British nation, which leaves Shahid to remain in-between spaces. Representations of cultures from outside England are mostly individuals from families from the former colonies of the empire, who were born in England but could not escape the post-colonial immigrant identity attributed by their host, and these individuals from the former colonies are now part of London because they try to find ethnic and cultural identity in British society. After his father dies from heart attack, Shahid, as the child of a Pakistani immigrant family, starts to study at a college in London. Shahid goes out to have dinner with his Pakistani friends like himself from his dormitory, and the streets of London excite him with its multiculturalism. It is a disappointment for Shahid to realize that that post-colonial London involves a crisis beneath its promising multicultural structure and rich appearance:

All the same, the different odours of Indian, Chinese, Italian and Greek food wafting from open doorways gladdened Shahid, as they had done the first time he passed them, full of anticipation and expectation, humping his suitcases. Between the restaurants, though, many of the shops had been closed down and boarded over or they’d been converted to thrift or charity shops. Shahid had considered Londoners particularly munificent, until his Pakistani landlord explained, laughing, that the origin of such shops was bankruptcy rather than virtue. (Kureishi, 1995, p. 3-4)

For Shahid, who was born and raised in Kent where his immigrant family lives, coming to London means stepping into freedom because with its multicultural structure, London offers an environment where the individual can

easily mingle with the crowds and make the differences in her or his identity more invisible. Shahid also associates London's cultural wealth with economic wealth. When he sees that serious economic depressions may occur in such a city, Shahid is disappointed that the London he dreams of is in poverty. Therefore, the Englishness that he is trying to integrate is in a state of collapse. Observing this, his uncle Asif summarizes the inverted power relationship between the colonizer and the colonized:

Mind you uncle Asif, in whose house he and Chili used to stay every winter, lying in hammocks beneath the mango trees in the courtyard and discussing which parties to attend, liked to entertain his nephews with his satirical views. He'd say that the Pakistanis in England now had to do everything, win the sports, present the news and run the shops and businesses, as well as having to fuck the women. 'Your country's gone to the wogs!' He labelled this 'the brown man's burden'. (Kureishi, 1995, p. 6)

The change in the balance of power emphasized by uncle Asif emerges as a result of the post-colonial immigrants who have been otherized by definitions such as foreigner or immigrant, starting to show their presence in social life in the post-colonial period, starting a business, and men marrying or having relationships with British women. Frantz Fanon makes the following determinations regarding the sexual desire for white women:

Out of the blackest part of my soul, across the zebra striping of my mind, surges this desire to be suddenly *white*. I wish to be acknowledged not as *black* but as *white*. Now ... who but a white woman can do this for me? By loving me she proves that I am worthy of white love. I am loved like a white man. (2008, p. 45)

According to Fanon, the way to see that post-colonial immigrants, non-European others, are valued as much as white people and gain acceptance of their own existence is to be with white women. Asif carries out his desire to be as valuable as a white person by being worthy of the love of the white woman. The way to overcome this anxiety and the colour that causes his body to be perceived as the 'other' is to have sexual relations with white women. Thus, the post-colonial immigrants are performing in the centre of the empire the same of what the British imperialists have done during the colonial period who have seized power in the colonized lands, married local women, and sought exotic pleasures in the colonial lands.

Riaz Al-Hussain is the leader of a group of Muslims at the college. When Shahid, Chad and Riaz try to get to know each, Shahid tells about his experiences in Kent, England: *“Everywhere I went I was the only dark-skinned person... How did this make people see me?... I was convinced they were full of sneering and disgust and hatred”* (Kureishi, 1995, p. 10). Although Shahid is born in Kent, England, he reveals his feelings of being otherized by the British because he is from Pakistani origin. As Shahid wants a new start in a new place with new people, he thinks London *“would feel like his; he wouldn’t be excluded; there had to be ways in which he could belong”* (Kureishi, 1995, p. 16). Shahid expresses how he wants to be a racist by stating his dislike of Asian girls:

Even they came on to me, I couldn’t bear it. I thought you know, wink at an Asian girl and she’ll want to marry you up. I wouldn’t touch brown flesh, except with a branding iron. I hated all foreign bastards’ ... ‘I argued ... why can’t I be a racist like everyone else?’ (Kureishi, 1995, p. 11)

In order to reinforce his desire to be a racist, Shahid states that he wants to join the British National Party. These words show that Shahid wants to be a part of British community because he feels British. The post-colonial immigrants inevitably move away from their own authenticity:

In the early morning rush, as he shoved through the turnstiles, past the two security guards who occasionally frisked students for weapons, and into the lightless basement canteen for coffee, Shahid felt more spirited than he had since starting the course. He had breakfast with two people in his class, an Asian woman in salwar kamiz and blue jean jacket, and her friend, a young black woman in baggy white dungarees, trainers and round gold spectacles. (Kureishi, 1995, p. 24)

In the practice of everyday life, the children of post-colonial immigrants, who have managed to survive in the centre of the empire in London by deciphering the cultural codes specific to the centre, reflect the cultural hybridity they live in on their clothes. By combining traditional clothing forms they have learned from their parents with clothing and accessories specific to Western culture, they hybridize both their own culture and the culture of the colonizer. The resulting inconsistency and the humorous situation created by the incongruity constitute one of the first cultural contradictions Shahid experienced in London, where he has come to seek freedom.

Deedee Osgood is a white British instructor at the college. She is married to Brownlow who is a professor at the same college. Deedee is known as a liberal postmodernist and feminist person. Her student Shahid is known as a dark-skinned Pakistani origin and a member of an Islamic group. Deedee finds out Shahid's interest in Prince when he visits her in her office. Seeing that he is looking at Prince's poster, Deedee talks about Prince: *"He's half black and half white, half man, half woman, half size, feminine but macho too. His work contains and extends the history of black American music"* (Kureishi, 1995, p. 25). Shahid likes the well sound of Prince because he considers Prince to be a river of talent who can play soul and funk and rock and rap. Thanks to the common interest in music, namely Prince as a singer with a hybrid identity, Deedee and Shahid become closer. Simon Frith states as follows:

Music is thus the cultural form best able both to cross borders – sounds carry across fences and walls and oceans, across classes, races and nations – and to define places; in clubs, scenes, and raves, listening on headphones, radio and in the concert hall, we are only where the music takes us. (1996, p. 125)

Prince's music symbolises the trends in the contemporary world because pop is represented *"as the crossroads not only of different cultural influences but as a site in which plurality of identity – whether at the level of ethnicity, class, gender or sexuality- is celebrated"* (Moore-Gilbert, 2001, p. 118). Thanks to the power of music, a relationship is established between a white British instructor and a black Pakistani student, who has ties with an Islamic group. Music enables them to overcome race and class barriers. Music takes them to a transcendental space where they can free themselves from the restrictions of practical living. For this reason, Deedee wants Shahid to prepare his term paper on Prince. During their first meeting at Deedee's house, they watch the Prince videos and this becomes the starting point of their relationship.

Shahid's elder brother Chili thinks that people are weak and lazy, but he realizes that people resist change that would improve their lives because they lack courage. Chili believes in self-help to improve, so he despises the immigrants who do not improve their lives. He also believes that one can succeed through the opportunities offered by life. The same attitude is also observed in his relation with women because he considers them as a different form of commodity: *"Chili called himself a predator. When a woman offered herself – it was the most satisfying moment. Often, it wasn't even necessary to sleep with her. A look in her eyes, of eagerness, gladness, acquiescence, was sufficient"*

(Kureishi, 1995, p. 51). Chili gives his girlfriends too much grief and respect in order to speak to them. He does not have real friends, but 'personal' friends who are usually criminals. Chili can start both any affair and any job spontaneously. His power of starting is reflected on both personal and financial affairs. Chili uses drugs and experiments with criminality. Chili's uncle Asif thinks that the problem about Chili is that the money has come too easily to him. The words of uncle Asif about their migration to England are regarded as an indication that the immigrant's indigenization cannot be completed by learning the language of his new homeland and learning to survive:

It's easy for people, especially if they're young... to forget that we've barely arrived over in England. 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. (Kureishi, 1995, p. 54)

It reveals the complex discourses of the post-colonial individual or immigrant, who has to define herself or himself and acquires an identity within the racism and colonialism s/he is exposed to. While trying to fill the gap created by the cultural differences between their previous lives and their new lives, immigrants who have an identity crisis find themselves in two different cultural worlds that are incompatible with each other. Thanks to his family background, Shahid can embrace religious friendship and sexuality offered by his liberal instructor Deedee Osgood at the same time (Sezer, 2010, p. 46). When Deedee invites Shahid out, he has to be careful not to call her Miss because she seems tense: *"Compared to most people, it was obvious that she led an agreeable life and was probably quite frivolous. Hadn't she admitted that, saying she longed for pleasure?"* (Kureishi, 1995, p. 57). They talk about black history and contemporary culture. However, they break with conventions, cross racial and religious boundaries by getting involved in a passionate love affair. Therefore, liberalism offered by a white postmodernist instructor Deedee Osgood provides a chance to escape the absolutism of religion in his life.

At the dormitory, Shahid thinks about his childhood. He remembers that his mother acts as if racism does not exist. When his mother learns that Shahid writes a story titled 'Paki Wog Fuck Off Home' about racism at the age of fifteen, she becomes angry, telling Shahid that *"people do not want this hate in their lives"* (Kureishi, 1995, p. 73). His mother discourages him from becoming a writer. Shahid has experienced racial abuse in his childhood, but his mother

does not take it into consideration: *“Even when Shahid vomited and defecated with fear before going to school, or when he returned with cuts, bruises and his bag slashed with knives, she [his mother] behaved as if so appalling an insult couldn’t exist”* (Kureishi, 1995, p. 73). Although Shahid was born in England, he has been otherized since his childhood because of his Pakistani origin and black skin. His childhood memory explains the reason why Shahid expresses above that he wants to be a racist by stating his dislike of Asian girls because he wants to be a part of British community.

Riaz’s group is formed for defending themselves against humiliation and racist attacks. To arrange for the family a Bengali estate, Riaz finds a quick solution: *“Until the family moved, he would guard the flat and seek out the culprits, along with Hat, Chad, Shahid and other boys and girls from the college”* (Kureishi, 1995, p. 90). The strong solidarity within the group shows their awareness for acting together in order to decrease the negative effects of racism. Through their comradeship, the fundamentalist Muslims not only try to withstand the colonial pressure and degradation, but also satisfy their need to belong somewhere for being left out of Asians. Shahid has never been a strict follower of Islam because his father does not have strong ideas about religion. When his father is asked about his faith, he likes to say; *“yes, I have a belief [and] it’s called working until my arse aches!”* (Kureishi, 1995, p. 92). When Tipoo prays in the house, his father complains about the noise during repeats of his favourite programme, ‘The World at War’. Shahid wants to befriend Riaz and Chad, Muslim students at the college, out of loneliness because he is afraid his ignorance would place him in no man’s land, but he has to know them, their past and what they hope for. Shahid wants to be with his Muslim friends because it provides him a sense of belonging to his people.

When Tahira who is one of Shahid’s Muslim friends sees that Chad opens his legs in tight trousers while sitting, she expresses the troubles of the Muslim women because of their clothes and headscarf in compliance with their religious principles:

But we women go to lot of trouble to conceal our allures. 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. (Kureishi, 1995, p. 105)

Although the members of the society should be able to live in accordance with their beliefs, Tahira experiences a religious discrimination. She is otherized only

because of her clothes and religious faith. She cannot protect herself against such racist attacks. Deedee tells Shahid that “*Chad has been adopted by a white couple, but his foster mother is a racist who talks about Pakis saying they have to join British society*” (Kureishi, 1995, p. 106). Growing up orphaned in England, Chad of Pakistani origin is also in search of identity. He speaks English and Urdu, but cannot speak either language as his mother tongue and he is aware that he belongs to nowhere while becoming a teenager:

When he got to be a teenager he saw he had no roots, no connections with Pakistan, couldn't even speak the language. So he went to Urdu classes. But when he tried asking for the salt in Southall everybody fell about his accent. In England white people looked at him as if he were going to steal their car or their hand bag, particularly as he dressed like a ragamuffin. But in Pakistan they looked at him even more strangely. (Kureishi, 1995, p. 107)

Immigration has caused divisions in Chad's identity. Immigrants who are forced to leave their possessions and deny their history are always rendered defenceless (Bald, 1995, p. 70). In cases where the immigrant comes from the former colony, such as Chad, immigration means not only the loss of belonging, but also the experience of racism. Chad's lack of sense of belonging, his exposure to racism places his relationship with its British hosts on an axis of two centuries of history, memories and traces of British imperialism. Born in England as an immigrant child, Chad, who has been educated and raised in England, has value judgments specific to British culture rather than the values of his parents. However, he cannot avoid being labelled 'immigrant', namely the 'other' by white British people because of the colour of his skin and sometimes the way he dresses. Although he has no knowledge of where his ancestors came from, and all his manners and culture have been shaped by the British culture in which he was born, he cannot gain acceptance as native neither in England nor in his parents' homeland. Due to its ethnic diversity, London has ceased to appear as a British city and has started to host a cultural diversity with its multicultural population belonging to different religions and different ethnic origins. Deedee narrates Shahid's radical Islamist countryman Chad's search for identity, and his language and belonging problems in England:

Trevor Buss's soul got lost in translation, as it were. Someone said he even tried the Labour Party, to try to find a place. But it was too racist and his anger was too much... Trevor Buss dressed better

than anyone and he made me tapes of music I'd never have heard.
(Kureishi, 1995, p. 107-108)

The adoptive family names him Trevor, but as a teenager searching for his own roots, he chooses the name Chad. He does not know his true identity at all. Although he has been brought up as a British teenager with his clothing, accent and habits, and he has been able to obtain opportunities that a second generation immigrant could not obtain, his colour, which makes his ethnic origin easily recognized, is enough for him to be labelled as a post-colonial immigrant by the British. Realizing the impossibility of getting rid of this labelling, Chad searches for his Muslim roots with an anti-Western discourse, and tries to find his identity by joining a radical Islamist group. It is possible to interpret the situation of Chad who is in the process of searching for identity in two phases. In the first phase, in which he acquired a new identity as Trevor Buss, he represents the indigenous people who are redefined during the colonial period, and takes an English name by redefining their ethnic origin. His education, culture, name and way of life are determined by the colonizer. Colonialism ignores the 'other' and separates it from its cultural identity. While Chad experiences these in the first phase of the identity crisis, in the second phase, the culture that is ignored during the colonial period turns into an entity in the multicultural environment of London, and this entity leads him to find his own definition of identity radically. When Deede says that Riaz has been dismissed of his parents' house for blaming his father for drinking alcohol, Shahid defends Riaz and claims that "*Riaz is one of the kindest people [and] ... an individual who's gone against the whole society*" (Kureishi, 1995, p. 109-10). This fundamentalist group emphasizes their difference from the Western ones. In this sense, the colonized judges the colonizer. Shahid does not want to leave his friends because they have something to fight for and they are his people, so he has pledged himself to them.

Being one of the postmodernist correlatives, sexuality has an important role in assaulting the fixed notions provided by the Enlightenment project. Steven Connor states that postmodernist situation owes its ambiguity to transcending sexual boundaries:

Sex has become the form and the name of transcendence. . . Sex has been subject to economic transaction, to buying and selling as a commodity, for centuries. But what seems to have come about in the last couple of decades is a situation in which sex becomes the very medium in which other exchanges take place. You do not pay for sex with money; you pay for everything in the currency of sex. (2004, p. 11)

Deedee who is a white British and married to Brownlow has extra-marital relationship with her student Shahid who is a Muslim Pakistani. Deedee is older than Shahid and she is the dominant one in their relationship. The common practice of the relationship between elder male instructors and younger female students is reversed. By subverting gender roles, they transcend gender boundaries and prove that their identities are constructed through sexuality. In their intercourse, Deedee acts like a man and Shahid welcomes her dominance when Deedee wants Shahid to wear make-up: “*She hummed and fussed over him, reddening his lips, darkening his eyelashes, applying blusher, pushing a pencil under his eye. She backcombed his hair*” (Kureishi, 1995, p. 117). Shahid gets distressed by gender switching at first but takes pleasure in the freedom it brings later because creating a new identity saves him from the burden of responsibilities:

He liked the feel of his new female face. He could be demure, flirtatious, teasing, a star; a burden went, a certain responsibility had been removed. He didn't have to take the lead. He even wondered what it might be like to go out as a woman, and be looked at differently. (Kureishi, 1995, p. 117-8)

The postmodernist mode of thinking offers the pluralities through liberalism. When Deedee wants Shahid to walk like a model, he feels the spirit of his new appearance. When Deedee turns Shahid into the object of her desire, Bradley Buhanan expresses this situation as follows:

In adopting the mindless posture of a ‘model’ Shahid has essentially been turned into a commodity for Deedee to consume and identify with, and he has lost his autonomy in precisely the same way that feminism argues that women have lost theirs when their bodies are objectified by men. This scene also carries unpleasant overtones of Edward Said's theory of Orientalism, which describes the process whereby Asian male bodies are seen as feminine, perverse and abjectly animalistic. (2007, p. 63)

In the same way, Deedee objectifies herself as a sexual commodity for Shahid's gaze because she tears an open condom, rolls the rubber on to a finger and anoints it with KY, and masturbates to please Shahid. It reveals that the previous experience of Shahid's putting on make-up is not a kind of oppression but exchange of pleasures. They do not strict themselves within the boundaries of traditional understanding of sexuality and gender.

The leader Riaz and the group members bring forward their identity through religion. They formulate a Muslim identity to be freed from the humiliating label of being called a Paki as Chad shouts out, they want to be called “*no more Paki [but] a Muslim*” (Kureishi, 1995, p. 128). They engage with Islam that provides a unified self. The mosque is the place where various strata of society come together by destroying hierarchies of race and class:

Here race and class barriers had been suspended. There were businessmen in expensive suits, others in London Underground and Post Office uniforms; bowed old men in salwar kamiz fiddled with beads. Chic lads with ponytails, working in computers, exchanged business cards with young men in suits. Forty Ethiopians sat to the side of one room, addressed by one of their robes. (Kureishi, 1995, p. 132)

As an instructor, Deedee deliberately chooses novels from Black and Women’s writing as well as popular genres for her courses to show historical links between metropolitan ‘high’ culture and imperialism. However, Shahid criticises the way Deedee suggests novels because he thinks that she should not be the one to shape people’s tastes: “*It wasn’t pleasure telling people that culture would benefit them, particularly if they couldn’t see what it was for. As it was, they were constantly being informed of their inferiority*” (Kureishi, 1995, p. 134). Seeing that Deedee imposes contemporary literature on her black students, Shahid considers it a kind of humiliation, implying that black students cannot understand high literature. Instead of being educated through postmodernist works reminding him of his otherized situation, Shahid wants to be educated through canonical works like the white students at other colleges. Kenneth C. Kaleta states that “*Shadid is the student who must question his teacher, the younger brother who must assert his identity, the son who must go his own way*” (1998, p. 137).

Islam shows solidarity in overcoming race and class barriers. The immigrants maintain their lives in the suburbs with low standards while the British lead more privileged lives:

Surely these people [the British] had just enough to make their lives bearable? None of them was starving. They were not peasants. But in this place there was no God, political belief or spiritual sustenance. What government or party believed that these people mattered? Any available work was the meanest kind. (Kureishi, 1995, p. 136)

Shahid thinks that the dwellers need to be educated in order to make their lives bearable. As he feels responsible for his people, Shahid decides to talk about it with Riaz. When immigrants who maintain their lives in lower conditions are attacked by racist British people, Riaz and Shahid decide to protect these immigrants and take turns in living with them. During one of the monitoring, Chad, Tahira and Shahid hear a brick being hurled at the window. When they go outside, they see that it is a woman with her two children reproaching them: *“Paki! Paki! Paki! ... You stolen our jobs! Taken our housing! Paki got everything! Give it back and go home!”* (Kureishi, 1995, p. 139). After the woman cries out her hatred and spiteful manner, she and her children run away. The British people fear to experience the replacement of the colonizer with the colonized.

When a novel that is considered to be blasphemous is published, it antagonizes the fundamentalist group and many Muslims worldwide. A fatwa is declared about allowing its author’s death penalty. Shahid believes in freedom of speech because he also actively involves in literature not only as a reader but also as a writer. Therefore, he cannot understand the reason why a person should be killed because of expressing one’s thoughts through a novel. Shahid tells Riaz that the idea of killing a man for writing a book *“makes [him] feel a little sick”* (Kureishi, 1995, p. 172). Shahid asks the group to oppose fatwa and respect literature as it is. At last, Riaz decide to arrange the novel burning exhibition at the college.

Chili only cares about respect and useful contacts around. In Chili’s hands are his car keys, sunglasses of Ray-Bans, and a cigarette box of Marlboro. Chili aims to attract people and gain respect through what he possesses such as various suits for each season, cashmere coats, sunglasses, electronic devices, and colognes. Chili tells Shahid the reason why he does not want to do the family business because of his hatred towards the Pakistanis:

You see them, our people, the Pakis, in their dirty shops, surly, humourless, their fat sons and ugly daughters watching you, taking the money. The prices are extortionate, because they open all hours. The new Jews, everyone hates them. In a few years the kids will kick their parents in the teeth. Sitting in some crummy shop, it won’t be enough for them. (Kureishi, 1995, p. 201)

Chili blames his people for not having decent lives. He does not want to work for the family business in order not to have contact with Pakistanis who do not

improve their lives. Chili who has married his cousin Zulma at the age of twenty moves away to a flat in Brighton.

Deedee's husband Brownlow is from upper-middle class and a Marxist type. He is a professor at the same college. Brownlow has a close relationship with the fundamentalists and supports the novel burners because he thinks that freedom of speech reinforces the power of liberals. He tells Shahid his ideas: "*If only- if only this were merely a book matter but you don't believe the liberals – who are working for themselves up into a pompous lather – are fighting for literary freedom, do you?*" (Kureishi, 1995, p. 215). Brownlow thinks that the liberals are the weakest people and they shit their pants when their power is threatened. Although Brownlow seems to support anti-racism and to hate imperialist fascism and white domination by being on the side of the oppressed immigrants, he is only after gaining political popularity. During the novel burning exhibition at the college, the white liberal postmodernist Deedee criticizes the fundamentalists because they try to burn the novel that they have not read. When they burn the novel, Deedee calls the police in order to have Riaz and Chad arrested. The group members consider Deedee's reaction as a very hypocritical act because although Deedee claims to be against authority, "*she turned the British state on [them]*" (Kureishi, 1995, p. 228). Being against any authority, Deedee seeks the help of the police to protect the freedom of speech.

It is difficult for Shahid to fully embrace his religious belief. In order to decide where he belongs, Shahid discuss it with his friend Hat who points out as follows: "*But our religion isn't something you can test out, like trying out a suit to see if it fit! You got to buy the whole outfit!*" (Kureishi, 1995, p. 235). When Shahid observes the fundamentalists burning a novel that is considered to be blasphemous and their attaching significance to an aubergine, he feels estranged from the group, so he chooses Deedee over Riaz. Furthermore, he questions his engagement with the fundamentalists:

How could anyone confine themselves to one system or creed? Why should they feel they had to? There was no fixed self; surely our several selves melted and mutated daily? There had to be innumerable ways of being in the world. (Kureishi, 1995, p. 274)

Shahid has a dilemma between liberalism offered by Deedee, and the sense of belonging provided by the fundamentalist group. Chili rescues his brother Shahid when his fundamentalist former friends attack him. Shahid runs away from London with Deedee. Shahid leaves the otherized group and chooses to

have a western style of life with Deedee because his western identity surpasses his eastern side.

4. Conclusion

Although leader Riaz and Chad, who prove how they can help each other through solidarity, are otherized by portraying binary opposition of different, savage, and fundamentalist, as Edward Said points out, because they burn a novel that is considered to be blasphemous and they attach significance to an aubergine. As Homi Bhabha points out, by acting like white Englishmen, Shahid tries to be a philosopher, and Chili tries to be a businessman in order to escape the exclusionary attitudes, inferiority complex and identity crisis they have suffered in multicultural British society. Nevertheless, all their imitative efforts do not save them from being otherized in post-colonial England because, as Bhabha emphasizes, the attitude against the 'other' identity and the discourse of the 'othering' are still alive in the post-colonial space and reproduced as a reflection of western thought. Tahira reflects both third world female identity and Eastern and the other representations, as Gayatri C. Spivak points out, she struggles to speak out against the social norms imposed on her, and gains awareness of the conditions in which she is the other in the post-colonial space because as a woman she wears the hijab to conceal her allure, but is constantly mocked and reviled as if she is the dirty one. She is otherized only because of her clothes and religious faith. Uncle Asif accepts the definition of the exotic eastern imposed on him by the English middle-class white identity. Although he desires to have sexual relations with white women in order to overcome the anxiety of the colour that causes his body to be perceived as the 'other', he takes place in the society by internalizing the 'other' and 'mysterious' qualities expected of him through consent, as Stuart Hall points out. However, uncle Asif cannot escape being otherized due to his colour, race, class, and culture.

Representations of cultures from outside England are mostly individuals from families from the former colonies of the empire, who were born in England but could not escape the post-colonial immigrant identity attributed by their host, and these individuals from the former colonies are now part of London because they try to find ethnic and cultural identity in British society. In terms of the discourse of 'othering', the second generation representations, reflecting the multicultural society, also face identity confusion due to the 'othering' and exclusionary attitudes directed at them, and they have difficulty in reconciling the two cultures, East and West, they carried. Hanif Kureishi criticizes racism,

fundamentalism, Marxism and even liberalism because everybody can become hypocritical to bring forward their thoughts and live on principles they favour. Kureishi does not prefer one side to the other side.

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